

FONC News

ISSN 1478-0631

No 153 ~ Autumn issue ~ Sept ~ November 2021

Journal of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery



*The start of a London Wildlife Trust's bat walk in Nunhead Cemetery
The next bat walk is on the 9th September 2021*

CONTENTS:

Members Information p.2

Cemetery News No 43 p.3

Future visit to Brompton Cemetery p.5

Book Review: Grave Symbols in Nunhead Cemetery p.6

Love's Young Dream - The untold story of John Ruskin and Charlotte Withers p.7

Book Review: London Cemeteries in Old Photographs p.13

Book Review: The Buried and the Lost p.14

In Search of the North West Passage - update p.15

A Garden in Nunhead - A few nature notes p.16

FONC'S 40th Anniversary: Milestones p.17

Diary Dates p.19

~ INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS ~

Membership including your contact preferences: Membership of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC) costs £2 UK (£10 overseas), renewable on the 1st April each year. Donations are always welcome. UK taxpayers are encouraged to sign a Gift Aid declaration. Please advise FONC if you wish to cancel your Gift Aid declaration, or if you change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on income and/or capital gains. Data is held by FONC to enable us to send members their copy of *FONC News* and also for the purpose of reclaiming tax. You can decide not to receive communications or change how we contact you at any time. *Please send your request to:* **FONC Membership** email: membership@fonc.org.uk

Further information about FONC and Nunhead Cemetery can be found on our excellent website managed by Simon Quill at www.fonc.org.uk

Cemetery Opening Times: 1st April to 30th September, 8.30am - 7.00pm; 1st October to 31st October, 8.30am - 5.00pm; 1st November to 28th February, 8.30am - 4.00pm; 1st March to 31st March, 8.30am - 5.00pm. *Times are subject to change.* See notice at the cemetery entrances and Southwark Council's website. The cemetery may be closed without notice for safety reasons e.g. during very windy and stormy weather.

Publications and Enquiry Desk: The Publications and Enquiry Desk (PED) is open when FONC volunteers are in attendance. A wide range of books and leaflets about Nunhead Cemetery are available for sale at FONC's portacabin from 2.00pm to 4.00pm on Sundays when cemetery tours or workdays take place. If you would like to help on an occasional Sunday please contact Jane Hart by e-mail: jane.c.hart@btconnect.com.

FONC Meetings and Events: Meetings of the trustees that take place on the third Thursday of each month are currently 'virtual'. Meetings are open to members in a non-voting capacity. If you would like to 'attend' please e-mail fonc@btconnect.com for the Zoom web-site link. Other events are announced in *FONC News* and on the FONC web-site www.fonc.org.uk

Nunhead Cemetery Staff: The cemetery staff can be contacted by phoning **020 7732 9535**. If unavailable please leave a message or call the main cemetery office at **Camberwell New Cemetery** on **020 7525 5600**.

The cemetery's address is:

Nunhead Cemetery, Linden Grove, Nunhead, LONDON, SE15 3LP

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Contributors: Michèle Louise Burford; Ann Coley; Jeff Hart; Linda Martin; Cathy Mercer. Uncredited text is by the editor. *The editor and FONC trustees do not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by contributors.*

Editorial: Where is everybody? I had hoped to add a few new names to the list of contributors but that was not to be. Please be aware that this is your publication and articles and letters are always welcome. Perhaps you have a story to tell about Nunhead Cemetery or your ancestors who might be buried there, or there may be an interesting cemetery near where you live - if so why not tell us about it?

In this issue, as well as the latest news about Nunhead Cemetery, you will find three book reviews, and Cathy Mercer invites you to join her on a visit to the magnificent Brompton Cemetery which opened in 1840, the same year as Nunhead. There's the fascinating, but rather sad story of John Ruskin's brief relationship with Miss Charlotte Withers, and we continue looking back at some of FONC's milestones over the last 40 years. I trust you will find in this issue something of interest.



Ron Woollacott

Nunhead Cemetery News No 43

By Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator

Covid-19 – is the end in sight?

FONC Trustees have been cautiously assessing how removal of restrictions and government 'guidance' affects what FONC can and cannot do in the cemetery. We are continuing 'track and trace' registrations for our tours and we have now been able to reinstate special interest group tours, including for the London Appreciation Society and the Society of Genealogists. Trustee's meetings remain 'virtual' for the time being but practical work and monument inscription recording is back to normal and the publications and information desk no longer looks like an isolation unit!

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We will also be returning to the usual arrangements for our **All Souls Service** on the 7th November and the **Remembrance Service** on the 14th November. *See Diary Dates.*

Why are we still waiting?

Although the re-surfacing of the area around the Scots Martyrs memorial and most of the programme of monument repairs begun at the end of last year have been completed, two major vaults (Foreman and Briggs) await re-assembly following long delays in removing the tree that had caused so much damage to their foundations.

The planning application for repairs to the Anglican chapel, which also remains fenced off, was only submitted on 25th May. FONC has expressed some concern about the lack of a plan to reinstate one of the chapel pinnacles which will have to be taken down for repair. FONC volunteers also continue to struggle with the lack of electricity in the dilapidated Linden Grove portacabins with no sign of a reconnection programme yet.

Reinstatement of the Limesford Road boundary walls have been further delayed by questions raised by the Southwark Diocesan Council. Nothing further has been heard of the promised public consultation by Southwark Council on the draft Conservation Management Plan for the cemetery.

FONC continually presses for swifter action on all of these issues but sometimes this can feel like pushing water uphill.

Speaking of pushing water uphill.....

New contractors have now begun further assessment of the drainage issues affecting the restoration of the East Lodge. A new plan to address the removal of water into the Thames Water conduits is needed as the previous plan proved inadequate. By the time this edition of *FONC News* is available landscaping work around the Lodge to permit accessible access ramps to be installed should have at least begun. Regrettably, this will mean removal of some trees which we know will upset many. FONC has recognised that this work is essential to allow restoration work to be carried out and, rest assured, that there will be compensating new planting as part of the full restoration project.

As HLF (Heritage Lottery Funding) is unlikely to be approved before the end of 2021, the rest of this year will be spent on further stabilising and new drainage works. In the meantime, on-site meetings have been held between

suppliers and FONC to discuss our needs and layout plans for much needed replacement portacabin facilities.

A night at the movies and bats on the loose

At the Nunhead Cemetery Open Day on the 4th September, the results of the poll to choose the film to be shown in the cemetery on the evening of 11th September will be announced.

To book a place, visit the Nunhead and Peckham Free film festival website <https://www.freefilmfestivals.org/organiser/peckham-nunhead-free-film-festival-2/> or e-mail fonc@btconnect.com.

London Wildlife Trust will also be leading the annual bat walk in Nunhead Cemetery on Thursday, 9th September. Book your place by e-mailing fonc@btconnect.com.

An invitation from Cathy Mercer to visit to Brompton Cemetery, West Brompton on Saturday 25th September 2021

You may remember reading a very similar piece in early 2020! Our original plans for April 2020 had to be cancelled due to covid-19 but we very pleased to announce this visit again, open to all FONC members and their friends and family. Brompton Cemetery is one of London's Magnificent Seven Cemeteries and was opened in 1840. It's 39 acres and its layout was inspired by St Peter's Basilica in Rome. It's owned by the Crown and managed by Royal Parks; the only cemetery in the country with this distinction.

Over 200,000 people lie buried here, with more than 35,000 headstones. Famous incumbents include Emmeline Pankhurst; Austrian tenor Richard Tauber; Fanny Brawne, John Keats' muse; and Kit Lambert, manager of The Who. There are also many Polish connections, with several members of Poland's government in exile buried here. Beatrix Potter lived nearby and is said to have taken inspiration here for several of her characters, including Squirrel Nutkin and Peter Rabbit. Brompton Cemetery received a Lottery Grant and has developed a visitors' centre and attractive café by the main entrance.

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Our two hour tour will meet at the main entrance by the gates to the cemetery and café, two minutes from West Brompton Station - turn right on leaving station. To discover the starting time and book a place please e-mail cs2000hm@care4free.net

Our excellent guide is Robert Stephenson, an old friend and supporter of FONC. The normal tour charge is £12 per person but Robert has brought this down to £10 and is also throwing in tea and biscuits at the end. I'll do a collection at the end of the tour.

Please note that this tour runs subject to covid-19 restrictions at the time and is also restricted to 25 people because of cemetery logistics.

Nearest station is West Brompton (District Line and Overground). Please note that there is no parking but it's a very short walk from the station. For details see Journey Planner on www.tfl.gov.uk

Book review by Ann Coley
A guide to the Grave Symbols in Nunhead Cemetery
by Jeffrey M Hart and Ron Woollacott

It is common in my working environment to hear the term 'every day is a school day', meaning that yet again you have learnt something new when you thought you were doing a routine task. Reading this newly updated FONC publication has proved that the expression applies just as much to a day at home (or in a cemetery).

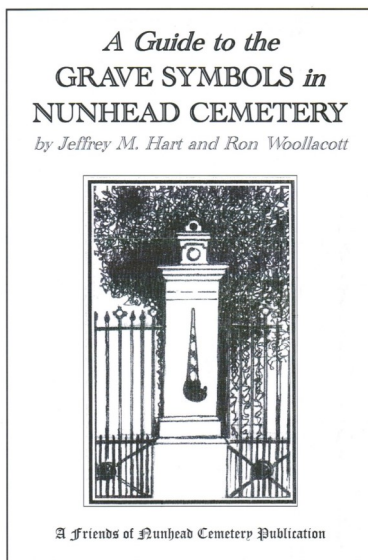
When I started wandering around cemeteries many years ago I used to wonder why there were so many sailors buried somewhere away from the sea but, of course, I was soon put right and now know that the anchor is a Christian symbol signifying hope. What I hadn't appreciated until now though was just how many symbols there were, and where their most common meaning originates. This book is laid out in an easily digested format containing photos of many of the monument types and symbols found in Nunhead Cemetery and has an easy to read style that conveys many interesting nuggets of information. It covers symbols from both the cemetery's hey-day and from more modern times, as well as the religious and secular.

I have to think that the title slightly undersells the book given that the first few pages address the different types of gravestones and monuments found

in Nunhead. I finally know why the Scottish Martyrs memorial isn't an obelisk (if you don't know then you really do need to buy the book).

It is well known amongst family and friends that I am not the most observant individual. This book has made me want to head for the cemetery, have a good look at monuments, and find those symbols I have never noticed - in particular a horse, cricket stumps, and roses in different stages of opening. What really made me think this was a school day though? It was a new word which I had to look up. The definition isn't in the book, so here it is: Cinerary - holding or intended for ashes, especially the ashes of cremated bodies. There are many examples of cinerary urns in Nunhead, just

waiting for us to look at their many and varied decorations. The book is on sale at FONC's publications and information desk in the cemetery at £3.00. Members £2.50.



Love's Young Dream:

The untold story of John Ruskin & Miss Charlotte Withers
by Michèle L Burford

'An altogether sweet and delicate creature of ordinary sort, not pretty, but quite pleasant to see, especially if her eyes were looking your way, and her mind with them' John Ruskin - *Praeterita* - 1886

The great Victorian polymath, John Ruskin (1819 -1900), lived in the parish of Camberwell from 1823 until removing to Brantwood at Lake Coniston in 1871. Ruskin was an art critic, champion of the artist J M W Turner, supporter of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a talented watercolourist, philanthropist, social thinker, and writer on numerous subjects which included political economy, botany, ornithology, geology and architecture.

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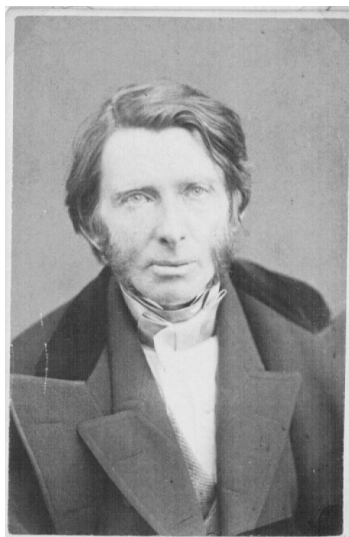
When he was a small child, Ruskin's mother, Margaret, had a religious friend who lived at the top of Camberwell Grove in the Surrey village of Camberwell; her name was Charlotte Withers née Hawkins. According to Ruskin she was 'an extremely amiable and charitable person' and lived in Croydon prior to her marriage in 1815. Ruskin's mother also lived in Croydon until she was around twenty years of age. It is possible therefore that she had known Mrs Charlotte Withers prior to their Camberwell days. Ruskin recollects, 'she was a familiar element in my mother's life.'

On 18th December 1820, Mrs Charlotte Withers gave birth to her first daughter, who was also named Charlotte; the child's father was William Carisbrook Withers, a leather seller. The baby was baptised on 28th January 1821 by the Revd Joseph Irons at the Grove Chapel in Camberwell Grove; an independent dissenting place of worship. Prior to this ministry, Joseph Irons had made such an impression in 1818 when he visited the Camden Church in Peckham (Ruskin and his father, John James Ruskin, later attended this church), that the congregation wanted him to be their minister. Grove Chapel still exists today!

Three years later, on 27th August 1824, the infant Charlotte was baptised again; this time in the Anglican Church of St John's, Horsleydown, Bermondsey by Revd Samuel Benson - her father's occupation was then recorded as a currier. Her younger sister Mary was baptised in the same church on 14th April 1826, having been previously baptised 12th June 1825 at the Grove Chapel.

On 23rd October 1826, after a few hours' illness, Mrs Charlotte Withers sadly died. She had given birth just one month earlier on 23rd September 1826 to Charlotte's youngest sister, Sophia. Ruskin does not appear to know that Charlotte had any siblings as he refers to her in *Praeterita* as being Mr Withers only daughter.

In the spring of 1838 Mr Withers, who was described by Ruskin as a coal merchant with 'a reddish and rather vacant face,' and now 'retired to the rural districts in reduced circumstances,' visited Mrs Ruskin at 28 Herne Hill, to introduce his daughter, Charlotte. According to Ruskin, he had business visiting 'his umquwhile⁽¹⁾ clientage' at the coal-wharves and left Charlotte in the care of Mrs Ruskin for around a week. The writer can find no connection with Mr Withers having any business in coal industry or the 'carboniferous business' as Ruskin describes it, he appears to have only been connected to the leather trade and later as a speculator.



John Ruskin's Carte de Visite
Collection of MLB

The young John Ruskin, on retreat from Christ Church, Oxford, is quite captivated with Charlotte, describing her in *Praeterita* as, 'a fragile, fair, freckled, sensitive slip of a girl about sixteen; (she was in fact eighteen) graceful in an unfinished and small wild-flower sort of a way, extremely intelligent, affectionate, wholly right minded, and mild in piety.'

Charlotte stayed with the Ruskins for a week and during that time John and Charlotte got to like each other 'in a mildly confidential way' although they disagreed over music and painting and on one occasion he wrote her an essay nine foolscap pages long, 'proposing the entire establishment of my own opinions and the total discomfiture and overthrow of hers, according to my usual manner of paying court to my mistresses.' Much to his surprise, Charlotte thought he did her a great honour and 'carried away the essay as if it had been a school prize.' The essay was entitled *On the Relative Dignity of the Studies of Painting and Music and the Advantages to be derived from their Pursuit*. In it he contends that painting is the superior of these two recreations.

Ruskin recalls that 'if my father and mother had chosen to keep her (Charlotte) a month longer, we should have fallen quite melodiously and quietly in love; and they might have given me an excellently pleasant little wife, and set me up, geology and all, in the coal business, without any resistance or farther trouble on my part.'

At the week's end, when Charlotte's father was ready, Ruskin walked with her to Camberwell Green where they sorrowfully said goodbye at the corner of the New Road 'and that possibility of meek happiness vanished for ever.' Ruskin freely admits that his parents would not have approved of her as his future wife as he acknowledges, 'Charlotte was not the kind of person they were proposed for me.'

Ruskin tells us that a 'little while afterwards, her father "negotiated" a marriage for her with a well-to-do Newcastle trader, whom she took because she was bid.' This is almost correct; Charlotte was indeed married, aged 19,

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in Croes-y-Mab, Wrexham, on 29th March 1839 to Thomas Pope, a bachelor and coal merchant from Shooter's Hill, near Blackheath, and also of Doncaster. In 1841 Charlotte and her husband were living alone at Russell Street, Bermondsey - they had no servants.

Ruskin claims that her husband 'treated her pretty much as one of his coal sacks and in a year or two she died.' The first part of this statement is borne out by the fact that on 23rd September 1844, at Union Hall Police Court, Thomas Pope applied for a warrant against his father-in-law, William Carisbrook Withers, a gentleman residing at Blackheath, for having used threats of a violent nature towards him causing him to believe his life was threatened. Mr Withers had called at the complainant's house with a pistol, and as he had done so on previous occasions, uttered threats that he would shoot him. When asked why he was armed with a pistol, he said that 'he carried it to shoot any man who insulted his daughters' and afterwards admitted that he intended to be revenged upon Pope. It also transpired that William Carisbrook Withers had lately become security for the complainant to a large amount.

Thomas Pope continued to have financial difficulties and in December 1845 transferred the whole of his North Country Coal Company's wharves, business and premises to the Thornley Coal Company. And in February 1846 he sold thirty strong cart horses, waggons, carts, harness, 200 coal sacks, utensils in trade, and miscellaneous effects. Also, at this time Charlotte's father was listed in partnership with the Stockton & Durham County Banking Company - but the bank failed later that year when 25% of the paid-up capital had been lost.

In April 1846 Thomas Pope of Kidbrooke, Kent (now a gentleman) registered a new patent for 'improvements in apparatus for moving railway carriages on to railways, and in machinery for lifting and moving heavy bodies.' By August 1847, however, he was bankrupt.

We can only imagine how poor Charlotte was surviving having married someone so reckless. It is probable that she was aware of Ruskin's growing popularity and success, as he had already published *Modern Painters* volumes I and II by 1846 - both highly acclaimed books. By February 1848 her husband had changed his business to that of cow keeper and milkman in Kidbrooke. In September 1848, a notice headed 'Mr Thomas Pope's Bankruptcy' appeared in the *West Kent Guardian* announcing that particulars and plans



The Pope family vault in Nunhead Cemetery. *Photo by Michèle Louise Burford*

are available on application of the valuable freehold and leasehold property, situate at Blackheath and Deptford.

Charlotte did not die as Ruskin had stated within a year or two of marriage, but she did die incredibly young at the age of 28, and within ten years of her marriage to Pope, in October 1848. Earlier that same year John Ruskin had eventually married, at the age of 29, Euphemia Chalmers Gray, which marriage ended in an annulment in 1854. Ruskin never remarried despite proposing on a further two occasions and was unlucky in love his entire life.

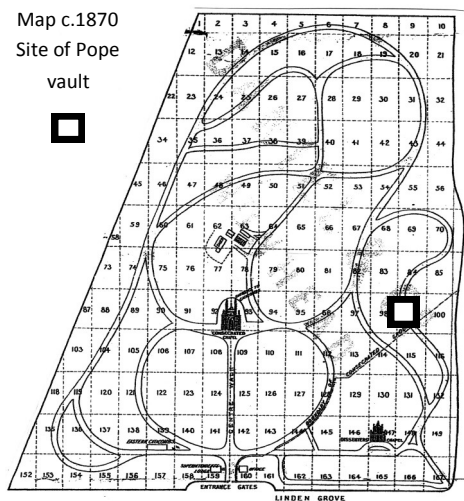
Charlotte was laid to rest at Nunhead Cemetery in the reopened Pope family vault in October 1848 (Grave No 359 of Square 99).

Less than a year later, Thomas Pope sold off his extensive waterside premises at Augustus Wharf, Regent's Park, which included dwelling houses and a wheelwrights shop.

Surprisingly, by 1851 Thomas Pope is again living in Camberwell at 5 Grove Place and is again a coal factor, employing one female servant. He

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Map c.1870
Site of Pope
vault



appears to have built the business up again, much too late for Charlotte, and marries Isabella Parsons at Brighton in the summer of 1853. He is now living in Bletchingley, Surrey. In 1861 he is still known as a coal factor and living with his second wife and their three children, plus four servants.

Charlotte's father, William Carisbrook Withers, died on 10th September 1863 at Rue de Pot d'etain, Boulogne-Sur-Mer, France. He left around £100 to his daughter Sophia Nightingale.

Thomas Pope died at his home, Harewoods, Bletchingley on 13th August 1867, his four children were all under the age of six at his death. His effects of around £5,000 were left to his widow, Isabella. He was laid to rest in the Pope family vault at Nunhead where Charlotte had been laid to rest in 1848. The memorial is an obelisk over a vault.

Over a century later, in March 1983, my father, Ron Woollacott, was busy recording memorial inscriptions in Nunhead Cemetery when he noticed the rear of the Pope family vault had been broken into and a lid had been prised from one of the coffins, exposing a perfectly preserved, exceptionally large gentleman's body fully dressed in a suit - but the most remarkable thing he noticed was the size of the coffin which was twice the width of the average coffin. It is most likely that the body thus revealed was that of Thomas Pope as he was the last person to be deposited in the vault. ■

Note

1) Umquwhile: Scottish adjective meaning former or late.

Sources

Birth, Marriage and Death records

British Newspaper Archive

Censuses 1841, 1851, 1861

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References and Further Reading

Ye Parish of Camerwell by William Harnett Blanch, 1876

Praeterita by John Ruskin, 1886

The Life & Work of John Ruskin by W G Collingwood, 1893

Ruskin, the Great Victorian by Derrick Leon, 1948

Michèle Louise Burford is an enthusiastic Ruskinian and her original articles have been published in the *Friends of Ruskin's Brantwood* newsletter.

Book Review by Jeff Hart

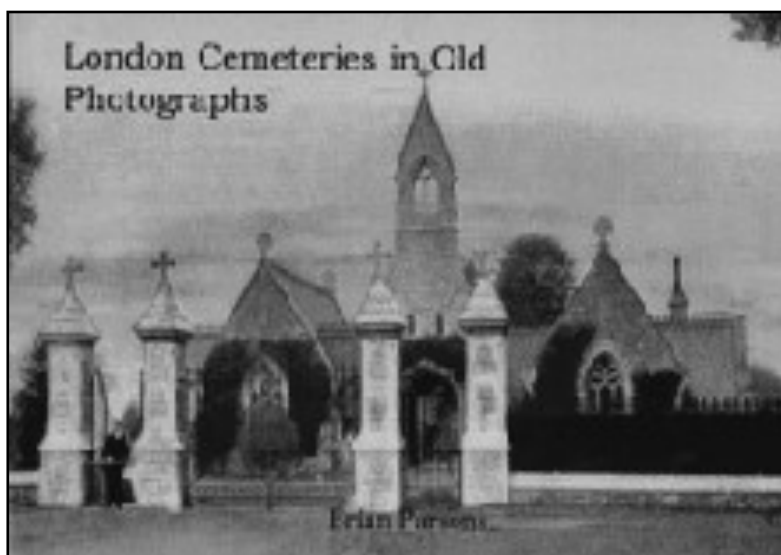
London Cemeteries in Old Photographs **by Brian Parsons**

(94 pages and numerous illustrations - £12 including UK postage)

In the same year that the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery was formed, 1981, Hugh Meller's *London Cemeteries – an Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer* was first published. It acted as an inspiration to many whose nascent interest in Britain's gradually declining Victorian cemeteries nationwide was being awakened. Since then, the book has regularly been updated, more latterly with the assistance of Dr Brian Parsons, initially a funeral director and now a consultant, researcher and lecturer on most aspects of funeral direction and the history of the British cemetery movement. Indeed, Brian was guest speaker at the 2017 FONC AGM. The sixth edition of the Gazetteer is due for publication in November 2021.

As something of a side project, Dr Parsons has now privately published *London Cemeteries in Old Photographs* a pictorial volume comprising illustrations that could not be included in the Gazetteer due to lack of space. This in no way diminishes the value of this publication which includes detailed commentary in addition to a wide range of both black-and-white and colour large scale illustrations of some 70 or so London cemeteries. Nunhead is, of course, represented but many rare postcards, photographs and sketches reveal some fascinating details of many lesser-known London burial grounds. This is much more than just a coffee table book although it would certainly provide an entertaining stimulus for the casual reader too.

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The book is very reasonably priced at £12 including UK postage but it is only available through Brian Parsons' website (www.brianparsons.org.uk) where details of many other of Brian's cemetery related publications can also be found.

Book Review by Ron Woollacott

The Buried and The Lost - A Novel by Audrina Paisley

(Paperback - 462 pages - £10.14 - Available from Amazon Bookstore)

Among the presents I received on Father's Day was this novel by Audrina Paisley. I'm not too keen on novels, preferring biography and history to fiction, but my eldest daughter Michèle thought I might be interested in this particular novel because it is partly set in Nunhead Cemetery. I had the opportunity to read the book from cover to cover recently having spent a week in hospital. The story is set in a gloomy Victorian London, and the plot is quite dark and sinister throughout, and takes the reader from Nunhead Cemetery to the awful slums of Southwark where three youngsters live alone. Rather than give too much of the story away, I think the blurb on the back cover will suffice in giving readers a good idea of its contents:

THE BURIED AND THE LOST - LONDON, 1869

The Life of a Scotland Yard Inspector comes with the small print of late nights, early mornings, too much booze and not nearly enough money. Benjamin Michaelson has never known any other.

But when he is called to investigate a multiple murder at Nunhead Cemetery, three young urchins found shivering at the scene are summarily thrust into Michaelson's life.

As the suspect continues to elude him, and his past and present inexorably collide, Michaelson is forced to examine his career and his life...and whether a hypnotic young girl from the cemetery has a place in either.

In Search of the North West Passage 'The Nunhead Cemetery Connection' an update

In the article featured in the last issue of *FONC News* we stated that Mrs Charlotte Nares, who died in the ill-fated collision between the paddle steamer *Princess Alice* and the *Bywell Castle* in 1878, was the daughter-in-law of Admiral Sir George Strong Nares. This information was taken from early newspaper reports at the time and is incorrect. She was in fact, the wife of George Nares, a nephew of Admiral Nares, who was on board the steamer when it capsized and survived the disaster.

Warrant Officer John Gregory, Chief Engineer of HMS *Erebus*, who was one of 129 men who lost their lives in the disastrous Franklin expedition to the Arctic in 1845, and who is commemorated on a family gravestone in Nunhead Cemetery, has been identified by researchers who matched his DNA with that of a living descendant from South Africa. They have even reconstructed a likeness from his skull. His remains were excavated on King William Island.

RW & MLB

FONC AGM 2021 took place on the 17th June was a virtual meeting by Zoom and the minutes of the meeting will be found in the members' section on our website www.fonc.org.uk

A Garden in Nunhead - A Few Nature Notes

by Ron Woollacott - Photos by Linda Martin

With the pandemic continuing and some restrictions still in place, the garden was the only place we could escape to. May was rather cold and wet and as a consequence we were unable to spend as much time out there as we should have liked.

I mentioned in the last article that the knot of toads had left the pond by the 31st March, but much to our pleasure and surprise, a few weeks later we heard the courting croaks of another three pairs that had returned to the pond, adding even more strings of spawn to that which was already there. Within weeks the pond was brim-full of tadpoles, and during the first weeks of July dozens of miniscule, but perfectly formed toadlets, no bigger than houseflies, were climbing out of the water and sometimes hopping back, thus denying some birds a veritable feast.

As well as the usual feathered friends that grace our garden, it was good



to see sparrows have returned after an absence of several years. Maureen and Linda always ensure there is plenty of bird food available, and the greedy starling is the most frequent visitor.

A brief spell of very hot weather in late July brought a rare visitor to the garden in the shape of a beautiful Red Admiral butterfly on three consecutive days. Apart from this welcome specimen, we have seen fewer butterflies this year, other than the cabbage white.

Possibly due to the cooler weather in June, damsel flies were also few and far between.

Climbing hydrangea July 2021

Perhaps due to the erratic weather conditions there were no dragonflies this year.

The magnificent fifteen foot climbing hydrangea was swarming with all kinds of bees in July - that was indeed good to see - and the buzz good to hear! After temperatures of up to 30 degrees Celsius during one week in July, in the following week the daytime temperature shown on the garden thermometer dropped to 15 degrees and for several days the heavens opened with thunder, heavy downpours, hail, and very windy conditions, thus spoiling so many delicate plants.

To finish on a happier note, however, our friendly robin flew down to greet us whenever we entered the garden to await his daily treat of suet pellets - often flying away with as many as three in its beak. ■



Friends of Nunhead Cemetery 1981-2021
~ 40th Anniversary Year ~ part three
More Milestones selected by Ron Woollacott

APRIL 1992: NEW SCOUTS MEMORIAL DEDICATED

On Sunday 26th April about 150 persons attended the dedication of the brand new Scouts memorial. The original, commemorating nine Walworth Scouts who drowned at Leysdown in 1912, had been vandalised and the ruins removed many years ago. The new memorial in the shape of an open book was donated by Francis Chappell and Kellaways.

The Salvation Army provided the music, and the ecumenical service was introduced by Father Robert Browne of St Antony with Silas, and intercessions were led by Father Geoff Cridland of St Thomas the Apostle. Gerry Bowden, former MP for Dulwich, read from St Mark's Gospel. Father Tony Davies of St John's Walworth, spoke the words of dedication, and a young bugler from Dulwich College played the Last Post. The event, organised by FONC, coincided with the publication of Rex Batten's book *The Leysdown Tragedy*.

SEPTEMBER 1993: SCOTTISH MARTYRS EVENT

On 5th September members of all political persuasion gathered beneath the monument commemorating the Scottish Martyrs; five men who were tried at Edinburgh

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in 1793 and sentenced to transportation for advocating with 'fearless energy' the principle of Parliamentary Reform. The Mayor of Southwark, Cllr Cecille Lothian JP (Labour), with representatives of other local political parties and Friends of Nunhead Cemetery were led into the cemetery by the stirring sound of bagpipes. An address was given to the assembled crowd by the late Wally Macfarlane, the author of the FONC publication *The Scottish Martyrs*. The speakers included Cllr Frank Pember-ton (LibDem) and Cllr David Bradbury (Cons), and Eric Paine of the Thomas Paine Society. During the event Craig Crosbie played a lament for the Martyrs.

MAY 1994: EAST LODGE AGREEMENT SIGNED

After more than a year of legal negotiations we were finally in a position to start the real work in restoring the ruined East Lodge, and to mark this notable event, the Leader of Southwark Council, Cllr Jeremy Fraser, attended our annual Open Day to hand over the agreement to FONC chairman Ron Woollacott. Lambeth College's involvement in the project was crucial as they would provide the skilled labour. Sadly after stabilising and shoring up the structure, Lambeth College reluctantly withdrew and the project progressed no further.

APRIL 1999: 'OUT AND ABOUT' WITH THE BBC AND FONC

On the evening of 29th April several active Friends of Nunhead Cemetery were featured on BBC 2's South East's outdoor activities programme 'Out and About', The programme was introduced by the delightful presenter Diane Louise Jordan.

NOVEMBER 1995: SECRETARY OF STATE VISITS NUNHEAD

The Right Hon John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, paid a personal visit to Nunhead Cemetery on 10th November. Five members of FONC's General Committee were there to greet him and took the opportunity to show him the charms of the cemetery and to explain the work of FONC. This was a personal visit without the involvement of Southwark Council.

OCTOBER 1998: QUEEN MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY AWARD

FONC was the only London based voluntary group to receive the National Commendation Award for voluntary groups in the 1998 Queen Mother's Birthday Awards for Environmental Improvement. The award was presented in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra, the Hon Lady Ogilvy GCVO, at the awards luncheon held on 14th October at the Royal Lancaster Hotel, London W2. The chairman, Ron Woollacott and Maureen his wife, received the award on behalf of FONC.

OPEN DAY *Saturday 4th September.* We shall need volunteers to assist in erecting canopies and setting up from 8.30 am onwards and for clearing away after the event finishes at 5.00 pm. The event is officially open to the public from 11.00 am to 5.00pm. We hope to see you there.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Book in advance or at the start of the tour

NUNHEAD CEMETERY OPEN DAY ► Saturday 4th September. Open to the public from 11.00am to 5.00pm. Also includes Saturday's **OPEN HOUSE**.

OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND ► Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th September.

LWT BAT WALK ► Thursday 9th September. For details see page 5.

FILM NIGHT ► Saturday 11th September. Arrive at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm showing. For details see page 5.

WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR ► Sunday 12th September at 2.00pm. Meet Tim Stevenson, your guide at the flint circle just inside the main gates in Linden Grove.

CEMETERY SYMBOLS TOUR ► Sunday 10th October at 2.00pm. Meet Keith Turpin, your guide at the flint circle just inside the main gates in Linden Grove.

NUNHEAD POETS TOUR ► Sunday 17th October at 2.00pm. Your guides are Tim Stevenson and Jeff Hart. The poet Chris McCabe may also attend.

ALL SOULS SERVICE ► Sunday 7th November at 2.00pm. An ecumenical service. Please assemble at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to the cemetery.

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ► Sunday 14th November at 10.45pm. Assemble at the Limesford Road entrance.

GREAT WAR WALK ► Sunday 14th November at 2.00pm. Your guides are Jeff Hart and Jeremy Partington. Meet at the flint circle just inside the main entrance in Linden Grove.

GENERAL GUIDED TOURS OF THE CEMETERY ► these take place on the last Sunday in every month starting at 2.00pm. Meet near the flint circle just inside the main entrance. Tours take about one and a half to two hours. The publications and information desk will be open, weather and volunteers permitting.

PRACTICAL WORKDAYS ► *these take place on the first Sunday in the month from 10.00 am to 4.30pm.* New volunteers are always welcome. Meet at the FONC portacabin near the Linden Grove entrance. Stay an hour or two or all day, it's entirely up to you. *Appropriate clothing including sturdy footwear is essential.*

MONUMENT INSCRIPTION RECORDING ► Transcribing the inscriptions in Nunhead Cemetery is an important and ongoing task. We meet at the FONC portacabin near the Linden Grove entrance. For further information and timings and how to volunteer please contact Garry Wiles at foncinscriptions@gmail.com or by mobile phone 077 999 71 597. *Appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear is essential.*

~ FONC TRUSTEES ~

Chairman: **Jeremy Partington**

Vice-chairman: **Carol Stevenson**

FONC Co-ordinator: **Jeff Hart OBE** - email: fonc@btconnect.com

Minutes secretary: **Jane Hart**, *Hon treasurer:* **Ann Coley**

Hon membership secretary: **Simon Mercer** - email: publications@fonc.org.uk

FONC News editor: **Ron Woollacott MBE, FRSA** - editorfonc@hotmail.com

Other trustees: **Malcolm Collins, Ish Lennox, Teresa Neary, Gwyneth Stokes, Alan Till, Keith Turpin, Garry Wiles, Maureen Woollacott**

Voluntary practical work co-ordinator: **Tim Stevenson OBE** - email:
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Volunteering co-ordinator: **Ish Lennox** - email: volunteering@fonc.org.uk

Monument inscription recording co-ordinator: **Garry Wiles** - email:
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FONC News Hand-delivery co-ordinator: **Nicola Dunn**

FONC News Postal co-ordinator: **Linda Martin**

Webmaster: **Simon Quill**

Please send all letters, news items and feature articles for publication to:

The editor, *FONC News*

email: editorfonc@hotmail.com

The deadline for letters and articles for the next issue is 18th October 2021

(Please note copy received after this date may be used in a subsequent issue)

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)



Friends of Nunhead Cemetery - Established 1981

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No 1178763

A member of the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE).

A founder member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF)

FONC is a recipient of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Birthday Award for Environmental Improvements (National Commendation) 1998

FONC's website address is: www.fonc.org.uk

Printed by Catford Print Centre, PO Box 563, LONDON SE6 4PY

and published by the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery,

email: editorfonc@hotmail.com

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