

New Series No 36 (Issue No 112)

ISSN 1478-0631

# FONC News



Summer issue (June - August 2011) - 60p - Free to Members



*The grave of Charles Rolls (artist) see page 12 Photo: Ron Woollacott*

## ~ INSIDE ~

Members' Information p.2	A Visit to San Michele p.9	FONC News by email p.17
Cemetery News p.3	Charles Rolls, artist p.12	Hand deliver FONC News in the Dulwich area p.18
Wilton's Music Hall p.5	Crows attack rare bird p.13	Notice of FONC's AGM 2011 p.18
Recording Monumental Inscriptions p.7	The Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh (final part) p.14	Diary Dates p.19
Forgotten Heroes buried at Nunhead p.8	Book Review - <i>The Magnificent Seven</i> p.16	Contacts see back cover

*The Quarterly Journal of the  
Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, Nunhead, London, SE15*

## MEMBERS' INFORMATION

**Subscription and supporter information:** Membership of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery costs £2 pa (overseas members pay £10 to cover the cost of sending four copies of *FONC News* abroad each year) renewable on the 1st April each year. We ask members to pay their subscription on this date to avoid sending out individual reminders throughout the year. Donations are always welcome. *New members receive an initial membership card.* **UK taxpayers are encouraged to sign a Gift Aid declaration.** Please advise FONC if you change your address or, for Gift Aid, you no longer pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to the tax FONC reclaims on your donations. Data is held by FONC to help us to send members their copy of *FONC News* and also for the purpose of reclaiming tax.  
**Contact [membership@fonc.org.uk](mailto:membership@fonc.org.uk)**

**Information** about FONC and Nunhead Cemetery can be found on our excellent website produced and managed by webmaster Simon Quill at: **[www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)**

**Cemetery Opening Times:** 8.30am to 4.00pm daily. The cemetery stays open later during the spring and summer months. ***All times are subject to change.*** The cemetery may be closed without notice for safety reasons, for example the danger of injury to visitors during windy and stormy weather. Please contact the cemetery staff on **020 7732 9535** for latest information.

**Publications and Enquiry Desk:** A wide range of books and leaflets about Nunhead Cemetery are available and on sale at FONC's Portakabin every Sunday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm (except December, January and February when we are only there for guided tours) weather and volunteers permitting.

**FONC Meetings and Events:** Committee meetings take place on the *3rd Thursday of each month (except August when there is no meeting).* *Committee meetings are open to ordinary members who may attend in a non-voting capacity.* If you would like to attend a meeting please email [fonc@btconnect.com](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com) for details. Occasional talks, walks, presentations, and all forthcoming events are announced in *FONC News*.

**Nunhead Cemetery Gardeners:** The gardeners may be contacted on **020 7732 9535**. Their Portakabin is located just inside the gates at the Limesford Road entrance.

**Editor:** Ron Woollacott **Subeditor:** Gwyneth Stokes

**Contributors to this issue:** Edward Barclay; Paul Dyer; Jeff Hart; Cathy Mercer; Simon Mercer; Carole Tyrrell; All other text is by the editor. *The editor, subeditor, and FONC's committee do not necessarily agree with the views expressed by contributors.*

## ~ Cemetery News ~

**by Jeff Hart (FONC Co-ordinator)**

*For some time the Co-ordinator has thought that a number of items affecting the cemetery have not warranted an article in the Journal in their own right but which members will no doubt be interested to hear about. This is the second of what is intended to be a regular round-up of mini-news items!*

### **Road works ahead**

The broad avenue that is Linden Grove runs the length of the northern boundary of Nunhead Cemetery. When the cemetery was first laid out this was simply named 'Cemetery Road'. In days gone by it formed a fine approach to Bunning's imposing entrance gates. Since the development of mass car ownership, however, the road has become a major route between Brockley and Peckham and, given its width, is sometimes used almost as a race track. Various traffic calming measures have been tried by Southwark Council to address this growing problem over the years, with little success. Now a new comprehensive scheme of measures has been installed. New pedestrian crossings have been laid out at various intervals, two of which are situated some 200 metres either side of the cemetery entrance gates, the road has been narrowed to a single lane at several points requiring oncoming traffic to slow and give way to the nearer of the vehicles. The most substantial installation, however, is located just to the east of the cemetery gates in the cemetery bay. It comprises a wide island spanning the bay and the road from pavement to pavement, bordered by standard kerbing, through which two separated single width vehicle passages run. It is also delineated by numerous large black painted metal bollards to prevent vehicles simply driving over the 'islands'. This is both difficult to describe and to imagine! Unfortunately the finishes used are standard road materials which means that there is

*continued overleaf*

now a large area of black asphalt adjacent to the cemetery gates that would have looked so much better if York stone paving had been used. The effect is also to reduce available parking space which will be most noticeable on FONC's annual Open Day. There is no denying that traffic has been slowed as a result of this work but it cannot be described as aesthetically pleasing.

### ***'Forgotten' war graves***

Many FONC members, and certainly recent visitors to Nunhead Cemetery, will probably be unaware that there are a large number of British First World War servicemen buried together in a number of graves in square 89, along the East Path that runs parallel to the Ivydale Road boundary. The plot was once graced by a fine memorial and 'Cross of Sacrifice' subsequently removed as a result of vandalism in the 1970s (see articles by Edward Barclay and Ron Woollacott in *FONC News* No 109 which also features a delightful photograph of a young lad posing in front of the 'Cross of Sacrifice').

The plot has recently been cleared of sycamore, ash and undergrowth, by FONC volunteers to reveal the remains of the original boundary kerbstones and foundations. Why, when the servicemen themselves are commemorated on the 'new' memorial by the Limesford Road entrance? Well, because the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) has agreed in principle to reinstate a suitable memorial to mark the grave in situ. A site meeting was held between FONC and CWGC representatives on the 5th March 2011 to discuss details of the proposals, so presuming that funding is agreed (of which we are very hopeful), look out for a future article in *FONC News* giving further details.

### ***Shovel that gravel!***

For more than a year now the remains of a very large pile of pea gravel adjacent to the Anglican chapel has been waiting forlornly for Southwark Council to spread it over bare patches of the gravelled paths. It covers the end of a large private vault and has gradually spread like a melting snowman. FONC volunteers have walked past the pile on the other side of the path trying desperately to look the other way. But on March Workday our resolve finally broke. Wheelbarrows were brought out of store and shovels issued to enable 'willing' volunteers to start spreading. With one afternoon's work nearly half the pile has disappeared. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the rest of the pile will also have found a use on other paths and volunteers can take a well-earned rest on their shovel handles!

# Wilton's Music Hall

*by Cathy Mercer*

Wilton's is the oldest surviving music hall in the world. Opened in 1859, Wilton's has a dramatic history but has survived fire and conversion into a Methodist Mission, as well as the Blitz and slum clearance.

Wilton's belongs to the first generation of music halls which were extensions of pubs and served food. Its hall now seats 300 people but originally up to 1,500 would squeeze in to enjoy a night of variety. The hall is high, with a beautiful papier mâché and plaster balcony running round. The balcony is supported by very striking large 'barley twist' columns made of cast iron. The stage was high enough for the audience to see over the top hats fashionable at the time. Originally a 'sun burner' lamp, a giant chandelier with 27,000 pieces of glass, hung from the ceiling.

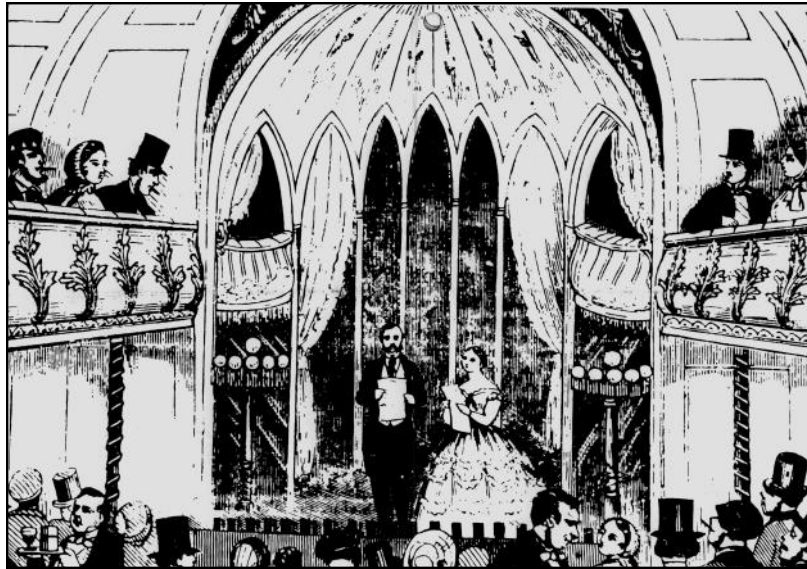
In its day the hall was brightly painted and decorated with gilt but, squeezed in behind a pub, it has always been an expensive building to maintain, with large gaps that let in water. A major fire in 1877 also did serious damage.

The pub itself served meals, as well as drinks. It is still beautifully fitted out in mahogany which gave it its name: the Mahogany Bar. When the Methodists took over Wilton's in the 1880s, this became known as the Mahogany Bar Mission.

At its peak, Wilton's offered variety shows featuring music, acrobatics, trapeze and sketches. Stars who performed here include Champagne Charlie, a big rival of the Great Vance, buried at Nunhead Cemetery. Champagne Charlie's real name was George Leybourne. He started out as a factory boy in Birmingham and rose to fame on the back of the champagne, which he drank while singing on stage dressed as a 'swell'. At his height Charlie was performing in six halls a night but he died at the age of just 42, exhausted but very wealthy, with a house in Belgravia. Charlie was sponsored by Moët and Chandon, and Vance in turn performed a song called Cliquot.

Wilton's only lasted 22 years as a music hall. It was soon overtaken by larger purpose-built variety theatres, such as the Hackney Empire. It was a Methodist Mission 1888-1956. The Methodists served over 2,000 meals a day here during the first ever dockers' strike in 1889. It was used as a safe house during the 1936 Battle of Cable Street and during the War was a shelter for families bombed out of their homes.

*continued overleaf*



*Wilton's Music Hall*  
*Illustration of the opening night in 1859 from 'Peeping Tom magazine'.*

In 1956 Wilton's became a rag sorting depot and was set for demolition. However, a team of campaigners, led by Sir John Betjeman, saved it. The London County Council (LCC) bought it and it was then cared for by the London Music Hall Protection Society and subsequently Broomhill Opera until 2004, when the Wilton Music Hall Trust took it on.

The Trust raises money through films and weddings, as well as performances. Fiona Shaw delivered a one-woman production of T S Eliot's 'The Wasteland' here and it's much used for films. 'Sherlock Holmes II', due for release later this year, was filmed here.

Wilton's is now a shabby but very atmospheric and still glamorous relic in the heart of the East End. Regular shows are performed there, as well as film shows. It is a Grade II\* listed building and in 2007 the World Monuments Fund put it on its list of the world's 100 most endangered sites.

The best way to find out more about Wilton's is to go on one of their fund raising tours. These take place on Mondays @ 3pm and 6pm, last an hour and cost £6.00. They are both informative and entertaining, whether you're interested in architecture or history or just like good stories. [www.wiltons.org.uk](http://www.wiltons.org.uk)

To find out more about music hall, read Rex Batten's book *Nunhead and*

*the Music Hall*, price £4.50 plus £1.00 p&p available from FONC Publications email [publications@fonc.org.uk](mailto:publications@fonc.org.uk) The book can also be purchased from FONC's bookstall in the cemetery on most Sundays. ■

## **MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS**

***WANT TO HELP NUNHEAD CEMETERY PRESERVE  
ITS HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS?***

***EVER WONDERED WHAT STORIES LIE  
BEHIND THE GRAVESTONES?***

***WANTED TO GET INVOLVED BUT  
DIDN'T KNOW HOW?***

Then this voluntary work is for you. There is no need to bring anything along except yourself. We need volunteers to help record the monuments in the cemetery.

What's involved? You can simply copy the inscriptions from the gravestones on to paper (supplied) or you may want to cut back some undergrowth to reveal a gravestone that has been hidden for decades or do both! – the choice is yours.

Expert advice will be on hand plus free refreshments. Spend an hour or two or all day - it's entirely up to you. We meet at FONC's Portakabin near the Linden Grove entrance. For the next dates and for further details please contact:

**Paul Dyer on 020 8461 1079 (evenings only).**

### ***~ Rest in Peace ~***

***Mrs Mary Bavin (FONC's Flower Lady) sadly passed away in April 2011. She and her husband Alan, who died in 2009, ran the ever popular plants and flowers sales stall, together with their family and friends, at our annual Open Days in May.***

## FORGOTTEN HEROES BURIED IN NUNHEAD (ALL SAINTS) CEMETERY

*by Edward Barclay*

I would like to give an update on my personal quest to have proper memorials erected on square 89 where 267 British servicemen are buried. At a recent meeting with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission they put forward ideas to plant trees on, and to erect a wall in front of, the war graves plot. To me this does not begin to meet what I think these men deserve. In my research I have discovered that soldiers from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were also buried in square 89. These men, however, were exhumed and reburied in special plots with headstones. More than 70 of our British soldiers and some civilians were exhumed and reburied so that this could happen. This to me is unacceptable that other nations have honoured their men in this way and we have chosen not to do so. Whilst they are at last considering doing something, I think the least they could do is to replace the Cross of Sacrifice that they removed from the plot.

The Commission has also agreed to try and clear the way and maintain the 76 named graves that I have located in the Cemetery. Their policy is that this should be done where possible and is at least a step in the right direction. I have now spent a day with Jeff Cavell from the CWGC and together we have found 32 of these graves. The list of these graves will now be considered for clearance for access by the Commission. This may mean that some names will be removed from the main memorial as there will then be graves that people can visit. The British Legion are also not happy with what the Commission have planned and are supporting my request that more should be done. I have also written to the Canadian and Australian Embassies asking them why several of their soldiers were left in square 89 when Englishmen were buried in square 52. I must end by saying that this is a personal quest of mine and has nothing to do with that which FONC may decide to support. ■

*FONC News* is published four times a year during the first week in March, June, September, and December. We are always pleased to receive your letters, articles and news items for publication in future issues.





## **A Visit to San Michele** **the true 'Isle of the Dead'** *by Carole Tyrrell*

**T**he hurly burly of San Marco was far behind me as I stood on the Fondamente Nuovo quayside waiting for the boat. The crowds had given way to deserted streets under the glaring sun and De Chirico images seemed to be around every corner. I could already see San Michele's high walls and tall cypress trees across the water. I wasn't sure if they were to keep the living out or the dead in.

As the waterbus neared the island, the gleaming white walls of San Isola came into view, almost as if it was floating on the water. An elderly lady fellow passenger enquired as to my reason for being the only person disembarking at the cimitero stop. The crowded waterbus quickly sped away to Murano, the glassmakers' island. Then I entered the place where the dead rule, where silence is absolute and there is a strong sense of 'enter if you dare'. The atmosphere of San Michele, the true 'Isle of the Dead', surrounded me.

San Michele is the closest island to Venice and was once a fishing port. Its creation was, like London's 'magnificent seven' Victorian cemeteries, a response to the overcrowded city graveyards which had resulted in Napoleon issuing a decree. Due to lack of space most burials are disinterred after 12 years and taken to the ossuary island of Sant'Angelo. However, its most famous residents, Stravinsky, Ezra Pound, Diaghilev and Joseph Brodsky all most definitely rest in peace. Venice has two cemeteries: San Michele which is predominantly for Catholics and Protestants and a Jewish one on the Lido.

Coducci designed its grand Renaissance church, San Michele Isola, which was the first one built in Venice and commissioned by Franciscan

*continued overleaf*

monks in 1469. The monastery on the island, established in the 10th century was extremely successful and wealthy. The cloister and funerary chapel still remain and more recently political prisoners were housed in the now former monastery.

It seemed as if every inch of space in the cemetery had been utilised. There were wall graves, conventional graves and huge columbariums with their contents placed in large drawers stacked on top of each other. The effect was rather like a succession of filing cabinets.

It was difficult to navigate my way around as there didn't seem to be any site plans or maps visible. I wandered into the main part and was surprised by how the monuments and mausolea stretched into the distance. The tall cypresses provided the only shade and I was virtually alone throughout my visit as there were few other visitors. Poppies brightly studded the grassy gaps between graves. On All Souls' Day, chrysanthemums, the Italian flowers of the dead, are everywhere on the island. Diaghilev and Stravinsky lie in the Greek and Russian Orthodox sections respectively and Ezra Pound is in the Evangelic or Protestant part. Jan Morris, the travel writer, has written of being enchanted by the island's 'seductive isolation' and it was almost absolutely silent there. In fact the only sounds were the water lapping the steps of a three window doorway and a fight between what sounded like a cat and a seagull on the other side of one dividing wall. I could understand the claim that tourists commit suicide in Venice just so that they can be buried on San Michele. An Englishman from Staffordshire is said to have 'left us in peace Feb 2 1920'.

In many ways it is very like a British Victorian cemetery with its carvings and statues of mourning women and sorrowing angels. One wall grave has putti, or cherubs, holding flowers as decoration. One seemed to be screwing his eyes up against the sun even though his luxuriantly carved locks cast a shadow. A mourning woman in beautifully carved robes, her hands clasped around her face as if she had toothache, stood by a grille as if waiting to be admitted to a seedy nightclub. In the columbarium, Elisa Marcossanti's drawer was decorated by putti



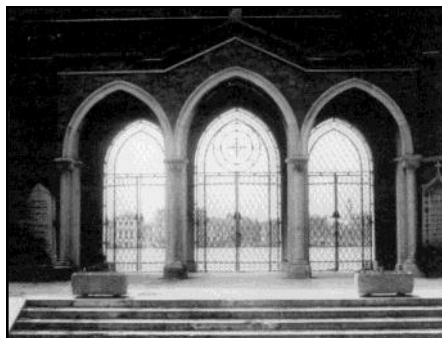
whose oddly awkward legs ensured they fitted into the space. Venice has always been celebrated for its mosaics and the Mazzega memorial boasts a particularly lovely example. There didn't seem to be the same quality to more contemporary examples which looked amateurish in comparison. A huge statue of a woman in a hooded robe stood in the centre of one section and looked as if she was clutching her stomach in pain.

However, San Michele doesn't feel crowded despite the tightly packed memorials and monuments. As I searched for the famous incumbents I came across a plain little mausoleum with its own set of steps leading up to its open door. I ventured inside and found an ornate painted table with candles, a crucifix, small statue of St Anthony and cards and envelopes. There was no indication as to whom it commemorated, no family name, so, as I felt I was intruding I crept away. As I wandered on, a sculpture of a couple kissing mystified me: was it 'Death and the Maiden' or the departed saying goodbye to a sorrowing mourner? Certainly the figure of Death looked female.....

I would not say that the statues and memorials are grotesque as one writer stated. Some of the larger statues were very plain. A huge statue of Gabriel, looking like a piece of municipal sculpture, dominated one section as he held his trumpet in one hand and looked hopefully skyward. He looked as if he had been bought 'off the peg' and I preferred the more architecturally interesting riot of angels, Franciscan friars, angels, and weeping women. As I explored further I came across a stack of numbered concrete posts and photographs which I assumed came from disinterred burials. There is so much to see in San Michele and I was aware that I only saw a fraction of it due to lack of time. I never found any of the cemetery's celebrities as it was easier to let my feet and camera wander where they wanted to. The cloister eluded me - but on a return visit?

On the journey back to the mainland I saw a modern sculpture in the waters of the lagoon. It seemed to portray St Peter on a boat afloat on the waves. From the quayside San Michele vanished behind its anonymous walls again and you could easily pass it by with no idea of its purpose. I hope to go back one day and wander once more amongst the silent mourning women, to look out through the triptych window onto the ceaselessly flowing water and hear nothing but the waves. ■

*Photos by Carole Tyrrell*



~ *BURIED AT NUNHEAD, No 16* ~  
**CHARLES ROLLS (1799-1885)**  
**Artist and Historical Engraver**  
*by Ron Woollacott*

**A**long the Dissenters' Road, facing the site of the Nonconformist chapel, stands an impressive polished granite 'broken' column over a vault commemorating several members of the Rolls family. I must have walked past the vault many hundreds of times over the years, and I wrote about one of its occupants, Charles Rolls, historical engraver, in *Nunhead Notables* way back in 1984. One can imagine my surprise when my daughter Michèle, whilst researching her husband Robert's ancestry, discovered that Robert was distantly related to the artist, on his mother's side.

Charles Rolls was born in Bermondsey on 2nd June 1799, the fourth son William Rolls (c.1772-1845) and his wife Mary Bryer (c.1774-1840). His father was a floor cloth manufacturer who resided at Marlborough Place, Old Kent Road. Charles was baptised at St George's Church, Camberwell, on 13th January 1827, somewhat surprisingly, at the age of 27, along with nine other siblings all at the same time. The church had been built just three years earlier on land given by John Rolls.

Charles was twice married. He married firstly, Esther Stokes, a 30-year-old widow, at St George's Church, Camberwell, on 17th September, 1829, and they had at least three children together between 1831 and 1838. Esther died on 29th March 1838 and was laid to rest in the Rolls family vault in the crypt of St George's Church, Camberwell. He married secondly, Antoinette Adelaide, the second daughter of Charles and Sarah Elizabeth Griffiths Moreton, at St Paul's Church, Deptford, on 15th November 1845, and they had four children together between 1846 and 1850.

The burial vault at Nunhead was purchased by Charles Rolls for his eldest son, Charles Edward, who died in November 1864. He was then living in Peckham where he had resided since 1845, firstly at 5 South Street Terrace, Rye Lane, and latterly at 30 Rye Lane. It is not known why he chose a vault in the unconsecrated section at Nunhead, in a prime position directly opposite the Nonconformist chapel, when the family were so closely associated with the Anglican Church of St George in Camberwell.

Charles was an accomplished engraver and artist, he engraved the plates for the Finden brothers' *Royal Gallery of British Art* 1838-1840, and painted several still life subjects which he exhibited at the British Institution in 1855

and 1857. Sadly, little else is known about his life's work. He died at his residence, Oakdene, Anerley Park, Sydenham, on 19th November 1885, leaving just £179. Antoinette died at Croydon on 26th August 1895, and was laid to rest with her husband in the family vault at Nunhead.

In 1993 the crypt of St George's Church, Camberwell, was cleared of all human remains and 130 lead coffins were brought to Nunhead Cemetery and interred in a mass grave behind the Anglican chapel. Among those reburied were William and Mary Bryer Rolls, the parents of Charles Rolls, together with his first wife Esther, who died in 1840, and their daughter Esther, who died in 1847, aged 9. *Grave No 8341 Square 165 ■ Many thanks to my daughter Michèle Louise Burford for her assistance in writing this article.*

**Sources:** Nunhead Burial Records; British Census 1841- 1881; St George's Church, Camberwell, baptism and marriage registers; *List of Exhumations from the Crypt of St George's Church, Camberwell*, 1993; *Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, 1894; Frederick Boase, *Modern English Biography*; E Benezit, *Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs*, 1949; Ron Woollacott, *Nunhead Notables*, 1984.

### **Two important books on Victorian Cemeteries available from Professor Curl**

Professor James Stevens Curl has a limited number of copies of the paperback edition of his *Victorian Celebration of Death* (2004 edition), together with copies of the monograph on *Kensal Green Cemetery* in a limited numbered edition (2001, hardback), both of which are now out of print. Details of which can be found on his website [www.jamesstevenscurl.com](http://www.jamesstevenscurl.com) His beautifully illustrated *Spas, Wells, & Pleasure Gardens* is now available - see review in *FONC News* No 109 Autumn 2010.

### **CROWS ATTACK RARE BIRD IN NUNHEAD CEMETERY**

In its midweek edition, Tuesday 22nd March 2010, the *South London Press* carried a story by Lindsay Burns about a red kite that had been attacked by a murder of crows and brought to the ground. The distressed bird could hardly stand after it had been attacked by around 40 crows in Nunhead Cemetery. By all accounts the bird was miles from its usual breeding grounds in Surrey. The male kite was rescued by resident Jeremy Moy who took it to the Riverside Animal Rescue Centre in Wallington, where it was kept for a number of days to recover before being released on a hill at Reigate in Surrey.

## AT THE GRANGE - A RANGE OF FAME

### The Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh (Part 3)

*by RGS Hunter*

**B**efore looking at the cases of two people who had fame thrust upon them a brief glance at the mysterious monument to William Stuart (d.1888). Here we see a partly opened door carved in stone under an overhanging palm tree heavy with nuts, possibly of someone who had experienced a rather warmer climate than that of Edinburgh, and dreamed of returning to a more exotic location. Alas, I have not yet solved this mystery.

Opposite the monument to the nuns of the Ursuline Order of St Margaret's Convent lies the unfortunate Elizabeth Cullen Chantrelle, nee Dyer (1851-1878), victim of one of the most heart-breaking murders ever to occur in Edinburgh. In death her name is not recorded, but she is buried in the Dyer family plot. At the age of 15 her father (a commercial traveller) sent her to Newington Academy in Armiston Place, where she met a Frenchman, Eugene Marie Chantrelle, a teacher aged 43. Born in Nantes, Chantrelle was the son of a ship owner. He had studied medicine for a short time but, during the Revolution of 1848 his family was bankrupted. After a period in America

he moved to Edinburgh where he rapidly gained a reputation as a skilful teacher of French and Latin; obviously not his only talent as a romance developed with his young pupil and Elizabeth became pregnant. Against his will, Chantrelle was forced to marry her and two months after her marriage, at the age of 16, the first of her four children were born.

By now Chantrelle had tired of his young wife and treated her abomina-



*Mystery monument at the Grange.  
Photo by RGS Hunter*

bly - swore at her, beat her and threatened her with a pistol. He had affairs with other women and boasted to his wife of his conquests. Sometimes he locked her out of their house in George Street at night. Many times Elizabeth had to barricade herself in her mother's home and had to call the police for protection. After her fourth child Elizabeth consulted a lawyer about a divorce, only her love for her children made her stay with Chantrelle, but there was no relief from his threatening behaviour.

Chantrelle's free-spending life led him into debt. In October 1877 he took out a life insurance for £1,000 on his wife's life, a sum payable only in the event of her accidental death. He decided the only remedy he had was to murder his wife, and made up an opium mixture to poison her. On 2nd January 1878 the maid heard a 'moaning like a cat's' coming from Mrs Chantrelle's room. Elizabeth was taken to the Royal Infirmary where she died. Chantrelle tried to claim that his wife had died accidentally because of a gas leak, but eminent witnesses asserted that Chantrelle had deliberately fractured the gas pipe to draw attention from the opium which had been found in her vomit.

Elizabeth Chantrelle was buried in her white wedding dress, her husband feigning a passionate grief tried to throw himself into the grave. Eugene Chantrelle was found guilty of murder and hanged on Friday 31st May 1878. Large crowds turned up at Calton Hill but were disappointed not to witness the execution which was announced to them by the raising of a black flag.

The other notorious event is remembered by the grave of Mary Jane Pritchard, nee Taylor, and her mother and father. Ironically, this grave lies just over the wall from Lovers' Lane which borders the Grange Cemetery. Mother of five children, Mary Jane was the victim of Dr Edward Pritchard 'The Poisoner', aka 'The Human Crocodile'. Using tartarised antimony Pritchard poisoned firstly his mother-in-law, and then his 38-year-old wife Mary Jane in Glasgow. When his mother-in-law died in Edinburgh Dr Pritchard made a special journey from Glasgow in a callous display of supposed grief. Later, as his wife lay in her coffin at her parents' home No 1 Lauder Road, he made another display of false grief by bending over pretending to kiss his dead wife.

The police eventually became suspicious, exhumed the body of his mother-in-law and found it to be full of antimony. Dr Pritchard was tried and found guilty of murder at the High Court in Edinburgh. On 28th July 1895 he was hanged in Glasgow's Jail square, the last public execution in the City of Glasgow. ■

*Book Review*

**THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN**  
**London's First Landscaped Cemeteries**  
**by John Turpin and Derrick Knight**

Nunhead is just one of seven magnificent cemeteries that were laid out in a ring around central London between 1833 and 1841. All seven were commercial cemeteries developed by enterprising businessmen as an alternative to London's overcrowded, and often offensive, parish churchyards and Dissenters' burial grounds.

The first of the 'Magnificent Seven' was opened at Kensal Green in 1833, and this was followed by the South Metropolitan Cemetery at Norwood in 1837, Highgate in 1839, and Brompton, Abney Park and Nunhead, all three of which were established in 1840, followed by Tower Hamlets in 1841.

In their introduction the authors state that the aims of the book are two-fold: first to convey through pictures the natural and sculptural beauty of the London Seven - certainly greener and romantically decayed over the years; secondly, to gather together and describe some of the host of Victorian (and later) men and women, who left lasting or fleeting impressions in their time. There is a brief history of each cemetery accompanied by a selection of over 190 black and white photographs.

Derrick Knight has been recording London scenes since the 1970s and has a particular affinity with Kensal Green Cemetery. John Turpin has been exploring and photographing the 'Magnificent Seven'



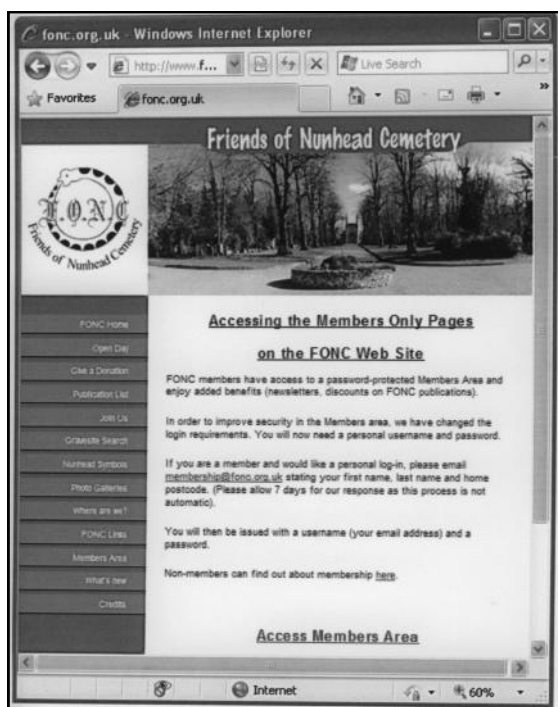
over the same period. A former vice-chairman of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, John continues to be involved in conservation work and is a tour guide at Nunhead Cemetery. *RW*

**Paperback ISBN 978-1-4456-0038-3 Amberley Publishing 160pp £14.99**



## FONC News by email, *by Simon Mercer*

This year I've worked with Simon Quill, FONC's webmaster, on an idea agreed by the Committee, that some members might like to receive their copy of *FONC News* by email. We can now launch this new service and we have placed copies of our most recent journals in a new 'Members Area' on our website [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk):



To access this members' area you will need a username and password. The easiest way to request this from FONC is to visit the members' area web page and click on the link [membership@fonc.org.uk](mailto:membership@fonc.org.uk). This will start a new email where you can add your first name, last name and home postcode and then send it to FONC.

When you have received your username and password, you should click on the link '[Access Members Area](#)'. This is where you can log-in. Inside the members' area you will see links to download the latest newsletters.

Members who have registered in this way will receive another email as soon as the next edition of *FONC News* is available on our website

## **HAND DELIVER *FONC News***

Thank you to long-term supporter Hilary Rosser who has hand-delivered *FONC News* to members in Dulwich Village and Herne Hill for many years.

We are now looking for two volunteers to take over the delivery of these two rounds:

- 1) *Dulwich Village* bounded by Croxted Road, East Dulwich Grove, Lordship Lane and Dulwich Common.
- 2) *Herne Hill* including Denmark Hill, Dog Kennel Hill, Half Moon Lane and Herne Hill. Hand delivery involves putting a copy of *FONC News* and sometimes a membership subscription reminder through the letter boxes of members on the round. This saves FONC the cost of standard postage (36 Pence) and reduces our use of envelopes. *FONC News* is delivered four times a year.

If you would like to volunteer to take over one of these rounds, please email [fonc@btconnect.com](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com).

### **THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FRIENDS OF NUNHEAD CEMETERY 16th June 2011**

The AGM of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery will take place on Thursday 16th June 2011 starting at 7.00pm in the Function Room (upstairs) at the Old Nun's Head pub, Nunhead Green, LONDON SE15 3QQ

Nominations for election to the General Committee may be received up to the elections themselves on the night. Motions, however, should have been submitted no later than 31st May 2011 to FONC's Vice-Chairman, Carol Stevenson, as announced in the last issue of *FONC News*. The AGM will be followed by:

**An illustrated presentation by JOHN TURPIN  
about his new book**

**► *THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN* ◀**

**LONDON'S FIRST LANDSCAPED CEMETERIES**

*Light refreshments (eats) will be available. Donations appreciated.*

## ~ DIARY DATES ~

### ► FONC'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

*Thursday 16th June 2011 starting at 7.00pm.* Meet in the Function Room (upstairs) at the Old Nun's Head pub, Nunhead Green, London, SE15 3QQ (see notice opposite).

### ► OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND IN NUNHEAD CEMETERY

*Saturday and Sunday 17th and 18th September 2011 from 1.00pm to 5pm on both days.* A special feature will be 'Woodland Wonders' a public exhibition of sculptural installations in the Anglican chapel made from recycled wood in Nunhead Cemetery. We shall require volunteers to act as stewards etc. The more volunteers present on the day, so much the better. If you would like to help us please contact an officer or committee member.

### ► VOLUNTARY WORKDAYS

*Voluntary workdays take place on the first Sunday in the month from 10am to 4.30pm.* New volunteers are always most welcome. Meet at the FONC Portakabin, to the right of 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.

### ► MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION RECORDING

Transcribing the inscriptions in Nunhead Cemetery is an important and on-going task. Volunteers meet at the FONC Portakabin near the Linden Grove entrance. *For dates and more information please email [fonc@btconnect.com](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com).*

### ► GUIDED TOURS OF NUNHEAD CEMETERY

*General tours of the cemetery take place on the last Sunday in every month at 2.15pm.* Meet at the flint circle just inside the main gates. There is no need to book, just turn up on the day. Tours usually take approximately two hours. Publications will be on sale, weather and volunteers permitting.

---

### BROMPTON CEMETERY OPEN DAY

*Sunday 17th July 2011 from 11.00am to 5.00pm.* Activities will include guided tours of the cemetery and of the catacombs, and various exhibitions and displays. Free entry, but donations requested for tours and refreshments. Entrances in Fulham Road and Old Brompton Road, London SW10. For further information please visit [www.brompton-cemetery.org](http://www.brompton-cemetery.org)

## ~ CONTACTS ~

fonc@btconnect.com  
publications@fonc.org.uk  
membership@fonc.org.uk

Nunhead Cemetery Gardeners  
020 7732 9535

Please send all letters, news items and feature articles for publication to:  
fonc@btconnect.com

**COPY DATE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: 21st July 2011**  
(Copy received after this date may be used in a future issue)

---

### **Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)**

Established 1981– *Registered charity number 296413*

**www.fonc.org.uk**

A founder member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF) and  
member of the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE)

Recipient of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Birthday Award for  
Environmental Improvements (National Commendation) 1998

**FONC News** is printed by Catford Print Centre, London, SE6 2PN and published by  
the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, c/o fonc@btconnect.com

*Copyright © FONC and Contributors 2011*