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FONC News



Spring issue (March - May 2012) - 60p - Free to Members



Tombs over brick graves along the Main Avenue - Photo by John Bryan

~ INSIDE ~

Members' information - p.2	Dr Pickstock and the Baby Farmer - p.8	Letters to the Editor - p.14
Not just for the Rich and Famous - p.3	Changes to FONC's Website - p.11	Recent Events - p.15
In Memoriam - p.5	How to avoid the cost of a First Class Stamp - p.12	Galloway Graves 3 - p.16
Advance Notice of FONC's AGM 2012 - p.7	Death by Design - p.13	Cemetery News 5 - p.17
		Diary Dates - p.19

*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. **Please contact 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**

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.

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 during the months of December, January and February when we only attend for the 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 contact fonc@btconnect.com. Occasional talks, walks, presentations, and all forthcoming events are announced in *FONC News*.

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**.

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

Contributors to this issue: Stella Bond, John Bryan, Peter Gibson, Jeff Hart, R G S Hunter and Simon Mercer. All other text is by the editor.

The editor, subeditor, and FONC's committee do not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by contributors.

Not Just for the Rich & Famous

by Peter Gibson

As well as becoming the chosen resting place for the wealthy classes of London and beyond with their enormously impressive monuments, Nunhead Cemetery also holds the remains of a few, shall we say 'infamous' rather than famous characters.

Hidden away in the undergrowth, in the main avenue, close to the tombs of the 'minted', lies the more humble grave of James Townsend Saward (1798-1875) aka 'Jim the Penman'. James is buried in the family plot purchased by his brother Robert when the churchyard at St Mary Rotherhithe was closed for burials. Those of you who are familiar with Victorian crime have probably heard of 'Jim the Penman'. Try looking up the phrase on the internet and you will soon discover that he was one of the most notorious criminals of the 19th century.



Grave of James Townsend Saward
Photo: Peter Gibson

Saward (as we shall call him from now on) was from a moderately wealthy family who lived in Princes Street in Rotherhithe. His father, also James Saward, was a successful lawyer and his mother Eliza Townsend from the family of a gentleman. As youngsters, Saward and his brothers went to good schools and eventually all began to train in the legal profession. Unfortunately, their father died in 1822 before Saward had properly completed his training, although, like his brothers, he remained in the trade, finally being called to the bar as a barrister in 1840. Saward used his

continued on next page

occupation mainly as a cover for his criminal activity rather than as a means of making money.

In 1857, having worked in the legal profession for some 35 years, he was struck off. This was because he had been arrested, tried and sentenced to 14 years transportation for his role as the mastermind behind a massive forged cheque operation, and for the part he played in laundering the money from the *Great Bullion Robbery*. Depending on which way you look at it, Saward was lucky enough to escape transportation, instead spending the majority of the next 14 years in Dartmoor Prison. As time went on his health gradually deteriorated until he was released in 1871. Finally he was able to marry his common-law wife, Maria, whose estranged husband died in 1873. Two years later, at the age of 76, Saward himself died.

Most people, unaware of the transmutation of his sentence, assumed that he went to Australia, never to return. There are many entirely fictitious accounts of meetings with him in Tasmania and other places in the newspapers of the time. There was even an enormously popular stage play entitled *Jim the Penman* based on his exploits

(though considerably embellished) released in the 1880s that went from London to New York and beyond. Two early films followed the play and his story also later featured in a radio series. It is even thought that the character 'Compeyson' in Charles Dickens' book *Great Expectations* may have been based on Saward. To find his grave now is difficult. The inscription on the headstone has worn away. It is only possible to identify the site now from writing on the surround hidden below the soil surface, but I know he's there! *Grave number 1526 square 124.* ■

Many thanks to my relative Jennifer Carnell for the discovery of Saward's final resting place. She has written and published an entire book on Saward entitled *James Townsend Saward – Criminal Barrister* which is available direct from her website: www.sensationpress.com or from leading bookshops or online distributors. *Peter Gibson is a member of FONC and a great-great-great-grandson of James Townsend Saward.*

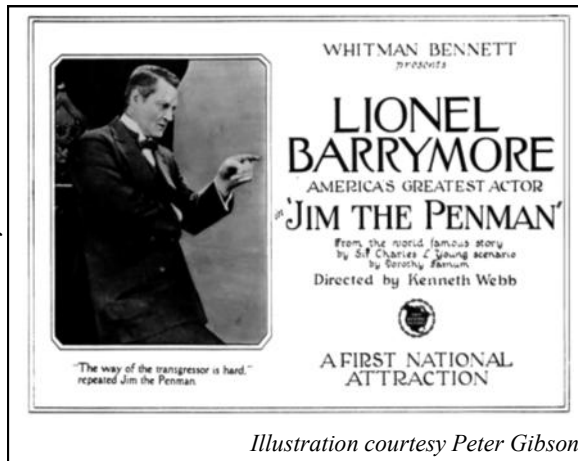


Illustration courtesy Peter Gibson



Having celebrated our 30th anniversary at the end of last year, the chairman felt it would be appropriate to remember all those past members who contributed to the success of FONC over the years, many of whom were long time and active members, and who are sadly no longer with us. Regrettably, only the names of those members whose deaths were notified to the editor and announced in our early newsletters and *FONC News* are listed below.

Eric Blackwell, early member and former organist at St Matthew's Church, Denmark Hill, died 1982; Mrs Louise Martin of Dulwich, died February 1985; **Mrs E Pierce** of Brockley, died November 1985; **Mr Wilkins** of Howbury Road, Nunhead, died 1987; **Paul Goodey**, drowned while on a skiing holiday in the French Alps in 1987, aged 31; **Mrs Pat Mannix** of the West Lodge, Nunhead Cemetery, died April 1989, aged 50; **Eric E F Smith** FSA, an early member, local historian and antiquarian of Clapham, died 1990, aged 83; **Mrs A Bartliff** of Landells Road, East Dulwich, died 1991; **John Cottle**, retired teacher of Dulwich College, and FONC volunteer, died 9th April 1992, aged 67; **Mrs Kath Macfarlane** of Rye Hill Park, Peckham Rye, died 1993; **Mrs Josephine Birchenough**, ARHistS, genealogist of Dartford, died 4th March 1994; **Ronnie Reed** of Dulwich Village, died 1995; **Ernest Johnson** of Ivydale Road, Nunhead, died 1995; **John Burles**, stalwart of the Sunday publications stall in the cemetery, died November 1995; **John Clough**, long time supporter of FONC and Open Day volunteer, 27th December 1995; **Mr C F Cooke** of Walworth, an early member of FONC, died 1996; **Ernest Jackson** of Lee, died January 1997, aged 91; **Bob Jones** of Haywards Heath, died April 1997; **Wally Macfarlane**, early member and author of FONC's first publication *The Scottish Martyrs*, died Febru-

continued on next page

ary 1997, aged 86; **Squadron Leader Bill Cardew** of Crofton Park, died April 1997; **Mrs Martha Cole** of Bexley, Kent, died 1998, aged 90; **Bon Dale** of Peckham Rye, an early member of FONC, died 1999; **Mr W F Mayo** of Nunhead, died 1999; **Brian E Kell** of Shirley, Croydon, died 2000; **Pamela Western** of Nunhead, an early member of FONC, died 2000; **Violet Tucker** of East Dulwich, died 2000; **Eric Stevenson** of Billericay, Essex, an early member of FONC, died 2000; **Mrs Eleanor Quick** of Peckham Rye, died December 2000; **John Victor Adams** of Bermondsey, died 29th April 2001, aged 78; **Peter Morris** of Peckham Rye, died 19th August 2001, aged 65; **Mrs Diana Ladas** of Peckham Rye, an early supporter of FONC and committee member, died 8th October 2001, aged 88; **Caroline Adams** of East Dulwich, died June 2001; **Ruth Day** of East Dulwich, died March 2002; **Ron Taylor** of Peckham, a member and former park keeper in Southwark and Lambeth, died April 2002; **Donovan Freshwater** of Dulwich Village, died January 2003; **Mrs Sue Nicol**, wife of Keith Nicol who was former minutes secretary to FONC, died March 2003; **Philip Spooner** of East Dulwich, died 15th July 2003; **Dr Frank Rackow** of London W4, an early member, died October 2003; **Mrs W K L J Ransom** of Aldershot, Hants, died 15th December 2003; **Lesley Skinner** of Peckham, died 19th January 2004; **Ted Robbins** of Rye Hill Park, Peckham Rye, an early member, died 2004, aged 78; **Les Gaywood** of Bellingham, a regular helper at our jumble sales, died 12th January 2005, aged 80; **Richard Costello** of Forest Hill, a direct descendant of Nunhead Notable Captain Costello, Peninsular and Waterloo hero, died June 2004; **Mrs Gladys Gaywood**, widow of Les Gaywood, who was a regular helper at our jumble sales, died 19th July 2005; **Malcolm Rees**, an active FONC member, died 2006, aged 58; **Miss Adele Stewart** of Edinburgh, workday volunteer (when in London) and generous donor to FONC's funds, died 11th October 2006; **Mr SE Cracknell** of Stockwell, who joined FONC at our very first Open Day in 1986, died 2006; **Mr D Manson** of Banstead, Surrey, died 5th December 2006; **Revd Ronnie Hambleton** of Hereford, a member since 1986; died 28th May 2007, aged 79; **Mrs Elsie Cook**, secretary of Nunhead Community Centre, died 4th November 2007, aged 73; **Theon Wilkinson** MBE, founder and secretary of the British Association of Cemeteries in South Asia, died 26th November 2007, aged 83; **Jeremy Daniel** of Polegate, East Sussex, a member for 22 years, died 2008; **Mrs Valerie Murphy** of Beckenham, Kent, a member for 10 years, died 30th January 2008, aged 62; **Mr V E Hamer** of Uxbridge, a member since 1984, died 2008; **Mrs Glenys Taylor**, New Zealand member, author of 22 articles for *FONC News* about cemeteries in New Zealand, died May 2008, aged 66; **Mr E F J Eustace** of Camberley, Surrey, a member for

20 years, died 2009; **Stan Stevens** of Brockley, a member for many years and regular workday volunteer, died 20th January 2009; **Alan Bavin**, for many years an active volunteer and fund raiser for FONC, died 31st July 2009, aged 86; **Mrs Jennie Morgan**, a member since 1988, died December 2009, aged 100; **Carl Marshall** of Southwark, died 2009; **Miss M E Howard** of Epsom, Surrey, a member of since 1991, died 6th January 2010; **Mrs Sybil Vearonelly**, a long time member and mother-in-law of FONC's chairman, died 25th February 2010, aged 97; **Mrs Mary Lewis** of New Cross, a valued member for 26 years, died 4th August 2010; **Roy Frederick Jones** of Hayling Island, a member since 1997, died 2010; **Harold Finch** of New Cross, a member since 1987 and contributor to *FONC News*, died Easter Sunday 2010; **Mrs Hilda Finch**, widow of Harold Finch, died December 2010; **Mrs Mary Bavin**, widow of Alan Bavin who, with her husband and family, ran the popular 'Contrary Mary' plants sales stall at our Open Days, who died April 2011; **John Spencer Deeks**, a member since 1988, died 26th June 2011; **Mrs Dorothy (Dot) Winters**, a member and former Mayor of Southwark, died 6th October 2011, aged 76; **Arthur Vearonelly**, a keen supporter and step-father-in-law of FONC's chairman who died 20th December 2011, just four days before his 91st birthday. ■

~ R I P ~

JEAN PATEMAN MBE

It is with great regret that we have been informed of the death of Mrs Jean Pateman, a founder and former Chairman of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery, who died on 11th February 2012.

**ADVANCE NOTICE OF
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012**

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery will take place on Thursday 21st June 2011 starting at 7.00pm in the Function Room (upstairs), 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 be submitted no later than 31st May 2011. All nominations and motions should be sent to FONC's Vice-Chairman c/o fonc@btconnect.com.

DR PICKSTOCK AND 'THE BABY FARMER'

or the true and dreadful tale of Margaret Waters (Part 1)

by Ron Woollacott

In Nunhead Cemetery, several yards in from the first row of graves on the east side of the main avenue, and now lost in the undergrowth, is the grave of Dr George Newport Pickstock MD, MRCP, MRCS, physician and surgeon. He was born in Belize, British Honduras, on 29th January 1829, the son of Thomas Phillip Pickstock, merchant, and educated at St Andrews University and Guy's Hospital, London. In 1860 he was living at Trinity Square, Southwark, and by 1867 he was residing in Peckham where he remained for the rest of his life.

Dr Pickstock had been practising medicine in Peckham for a relatively short time when he was first called to a house in Bournemouth Road. He had no reason to suspect the woman whose children he attended was a baby farmer under various aliases, including Willis and Blackburn, and her own name of Margaret Waters. We shall hear more of Dr Pickstock and his relationship with Waters in due course.

Margaret Waters

Margaret Waters was a widow. She claimed her husband had died in 1864 leaving her £300 with which she acquired a house in Addington Square, Camberwell, and purchased some sewing machines with the intention of making collars and other items of clothing to sell. She wasn't a successful businesswoman, however, and within a year she had lost her money. On leaving Camberwell she moved into a house in Bournemouth Road, Peckham, and began taking in unwanted babies, usually illegitimate, and charging around £5. Having borrowed cash from an unscrupulous moneylender who threatened her for not paying him back, she moved to Brixton, where she and her younger married sister, Sarah Ellis, placed advertisements in newspapers offering to 'adopt' unwanted children for money. The cash they received, usually a single payment, was woefully inadequate and far from enough to enable them to properly feed and clothe the poor children left in their charge.

Margaret Waters and Baby Cowen

Waters came to the attention of the authorities after 'adopting' a newborn baby in the spring of 1870. The baby in question was John Walter Cowen, the illegitimate son of 17-year-old Jeanette Tassie Cowen. Jeanette's father, Robert Tassie Cowen, decided to have the child adopted as soon as he discovered his daughter was pregnant and answered an advertisement in *Lloyd's Weekly News* which read as follows:

Adoption - A respectable couple desire the entire charge of a child to bring up as their own. They are in a position to offer every comfort. Premium required £4. Letter only. Mrs Willis, PO, Southampton Street, Camberwell.

Having contacted Mrs Willis *aka* Margaret Waters, Cowen arranged to meet with her and she told him that she and her husband, a representative of a shipping firm, had been married for 13 years and, as they had no children of their own, were anxious to adopt. Cowen said his daughter had been 'outraged' and the child was illegitimate. Waters said it made no difference to her or her husband. She lived nearby, she said, but was not willing to give her address because she was afraid he might want the baby back. Three days after the baby was born, Cowen, accompanied by his landlady, Mrs Guerra, met Waters at Walworth Road Railway Station on the evening of the 7th June 1870, and the baby was handed to her. A few days later Waters went to Cowen's home, No 1 Langholme Villas, Loughborough Road, North Brixton, and told him that she and her husband were delighted with the 'beautiful baby boy'. Cowen offered her two sovereigns which she refused at first. He insisted she take the money and buy some new clothes for the baby, and told her he'd give her another £2 when he saw the child. She refused to give her address, but said she often passed his house and would bring the child next time.

Waters and her sister are arrested for neglecting children in their care

Cowen next saw Waters at her home, No 4 Frederick Terrace, Gordon Grove, Loughborough Junction, on Saturday, 11th June 1870, in the presence of Police Sergeant Richard Relf and Dr George Puckle, Medical Officer for Health of Lambeth. Waters was holding Baby Cowen in her arms. The child looked dirty, emaciated and weak. There were around ten children in Waters' house, several were babies - the oldest about three years old - most were pale and sickly. Sarah Ellis, Waters' sister, was holding a baby in her

continued on next page

arms which she claimed was her own.

All the children, most of whom were in a delicate and dreadful state, were removed from the house and taken to Lambeth Workhouse where the four youngest died within a matter of weeks. Waters was arrested and taken into custody for not providing proper food and endangering the life of Baby Cowen. Ellis was arrested for colluding with her sister and for neglecting the children in their care. Waters protested that her sister was innocent and she alone was the sinner and must suffer the consequences.

Baby Cowen was placed in the care of a wet nurse but died on the 24th June 1870, aged just six weeks, and as a consequence Waters and Ellis were both charged with 'wilful murder'.

to be continued

Thank you to Susan McQuail

Susan has been a keen supporter from the start of FONC. She remembers the first volunteer work day in the cemetery and told us about it at the 'Witness Seminar' organised by Chris Knowles (*FONC News* Issue No 102). Susan volunteered to organise the distribution of FONC's newsletter. There is now a network of hand delivery lists in the Nunhead area, each with their own volunteer distributor.

Four times a year, for 30 years, Susan has organised and delivered over 300 newsletters to the 21 hand deliverers - all on her bicycle. Susan has now decided to resign and we are very grateful for her help. Fortunately she will continue to support FONC and will distribute newsletters in Dulwich.

We are pleased to announce that member Nicola Dunn has stepped in to help co-ordinate the hand delivery lists and we wish her well in this new role. ■

Simon Mercer

Dr JOHN COLLINGS Dip Arch, MA, Ph.D, FRSA

Our congratulations to John Collings on gaining his Ph.D. John became a member of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery soon after we were formed in 1982, and has served on the General Committee for many years. He has spent much time and energy over several years drawing up plans for the restoration of the East Lodge, as well as being involved with voluntary work in the cemetery. Well done John! ■

Improvements at FONC's website

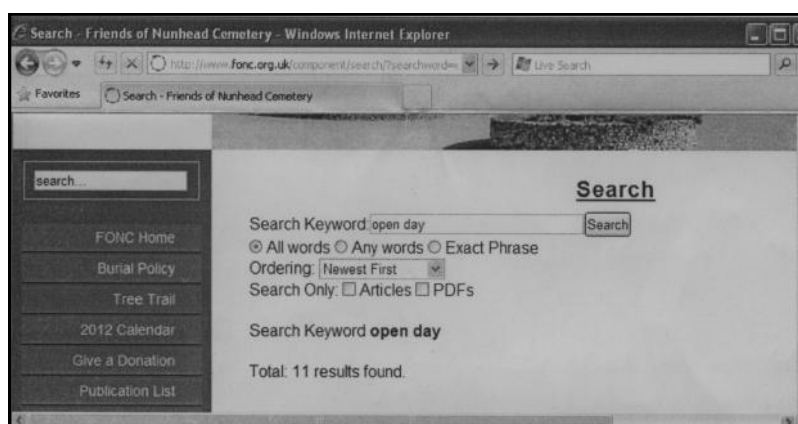
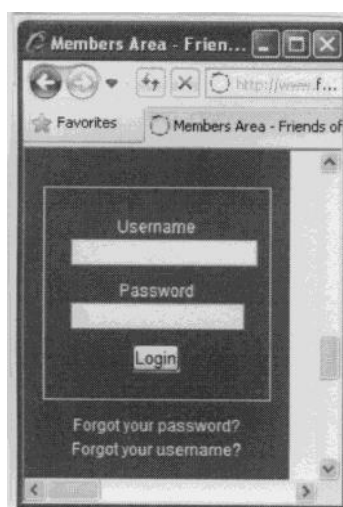
by Simon Mercer

In Issue No 112 we wrote about how to request a copy of *FONC News* by email. See <http://www.fonc.org.uk> and click on 'Members Area'.

Simon Quill, FONC's webmaster, has moved the website to a new hosting company. The web address remains the same but there are changes. You can now log-in to the website to view the members' area using a form in the green panel on the left of the home page. Below the last menu button you will see boxes for entering your username and password.

When you are logged in to the website this will show in the same area of the green panel. *This is a reminder to log-out!*

There's a new 'search' box at the top of the green panel. If you are logged in to the members' area you can type, for example, 'open day' and see the result of a search of the content of the *FONC News* pdfs:



If you are not logged in the search results will display the results for the website (but not the pdf content).

How to avoid the cost of a first class stamp *by Simon Mercer*

Please note that all subscriptions are due to be paid by 1st April 2012

The annual subscription for UK members is currently £2 (and £10 for overseas). Donations are most welcome. If you received a reminder with this issue of *FONC News* please send your payment – if there is no form this will be because you have already renewed or have sent a standing order. Thank you for your continued support.

With the increasing charges for postage we wish to explore ways to reduce the cost of your membership. Here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Sign up to a standing order – this year we’re offering to delay collecting standing order payments until 1st August*. If your membership is due for renewal please look for the form that arrived with this newsletter which includes a standing order instruction. Please complete this form and send it to FONC using a 2nd class stamp! (** forms should be posted to FONC as soon as possible and no later than by 30 June*).
- ◆ If you are visiting the cemetery when the enquiry desk is open* please bring along the renewal form included with this newsletter and avoid the cost of a stamp! (** see Diary Dates for details*)
- ◆ Use PayPal (or eg. VISA and MasterCard if you don’t have a PayPal account). Visit our website and click ‘Give a Donation’. When making this transaction you will be able to send an email to FONC – please include the message ‘FONC membership 2012 for member *your name, your postcode and your membership number*’. We will then be able to link the money received to your record and make the renewal!
- ◆ It is still possible to renew by sending a cheque or postal order through the post. We’re happy to wait for a 2nd class stamp to make the delivery. And if like me you find that the corner shop only sells first class stamps then it is worthwhile making a trip to the post office. Remember to buy the stamps before April which is when Royal Mail makes their annual price increase!

DEATH BY DESIGN* *by Stella Bond*

That title of a booklet by Ronnie Scott about Glasgow Necropolis (that I read before going there) says it all.

Against the smoothly-mown emerald grass the hefty dark stone memorials stand out starkly, every one different, seeming to be teetering on the edges of the steeply sloping hilltop where low is cheap and high is expensive, the mountainous territory is surmounted by the tallest, most costly memorials of all.

At the very pinnacle a towering column with a gigantic figure of John Knox (16th century Scottish reformer) on top, equalling in its combined height the spire of the nearby cathedral across the valley; plus a colossal octagonal mausoleum ten metres in diameter, matching the column in height though lower down the slope, but with its elaborate sandstone carving crumbling away.

Every kind of stone, style, dimension and symbol is represented here in its spectacular fashion on the highest point in Glasgow, demonstrating its (past) wealth and success, at first in private ownerships now immensely well cared for by the City council, to their great credit. Mowing those sharp slopes cannot be easy.

A feature of memorial inscriptions that is unusual here, if not unique, is that many (most) begin 'Erected by....' and the name in large letters is that of the donors, followed in much smaller letters by those family members interred there, some spanning many years. This is the same as mentioned by R G S Hunter at Galloway - a Scottish custom, perhaps.

A lot of burials of necessity have taken place on the steeply sloping sides of the hills. Given the difficulties of excavating the grave space that must have been encountered, I did wonder whether 'six foot under' had been interpreted as 'six-foot-IN' - did the interments take place by insertion from the side?

Not being very good at heights, I was glad to follow the winding paths down from the highest to the lower slopes, where the memorials were sparser, plainer, and less well cared for. A slab among the grass listed the children of 'East Park Cottage Home' who had died between the years 1875 and 1884: 13 mostly girls aged between three and 13 years and all remembered together. Not a bad haul, considering child death rates in those years, especially in institutions. ■ * *Death by Design - The True Story of Glasgow Necropolis* by Ronnie Scott. Publisher: Black & White Publishing 2005 ISBN 1 84502 047 2

NB: The Necropolis has an active Friends group, see www.glasgow-necropolis.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FIRST WORLD WAR SOLDIERS - *Eddie Barclay writes:*

I have recently spent a day at Nunhead Cemetery with two members of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission locating named graves that I have found on the cemetery records. I am pleased to say that we have located 16 of those graves in very difficult areas which leaves another 23 of the 76 I discovered to be located on site. I understand that we will try to do this some time in February. I will of course keep FONC's committee informed of any results. I should also like any relative of soldiers buried in Nunhead Cemetery who died during the First World War to contact me regarding the dedication and renovation of the plot in square 89, and maintenance of existing war graves in the cemetery. This will enable me to make sure that anyone who wishes to attend or receive more information may do so. You may contact me by email at serchog@hotmail.com or phone me on 013 0387 2753.

JERSEY MOTH - *Stephen P Smith writes:*

I was interested in the article with photographs of the Jersey Tiger Moth (*FONC News* No 114, Winter 2011). I was taken by surprise to see one fly past me and settle on the hedge round the Sainsbury's car park in Balham on 16th August.

I sometimes carry my camera with me when out shopping as it puts the date on the picture, so is helpful 'proof' when I write to Wandsworth Council about various issues.

Unfortunately the moth had disappeared before I had time to look again, whether into the hedge or on to Nunhead, I do not know. It has certainly been interesting to show to neighbours and friends.

WELSH INSCRIPTIONS - *Deborah Jones writes:*

Further to the article in *FONC News* No 114, I asked a Welsh colleague to translate the inscriptions detailed on page five. I can take no credit for what follows. The inscriptions read:

In memory of Thomas Williams, died 20 August, 1904 aged 49; Thomas Henry Williams, who died 21 April 1889 age 7 months ('mis' not 'mus'); Jane Williams, died 17 March 1889, aged 2.

[John Davies] 'His end was peace' ('tangnefedd' rather than 'tangnefed').

[Letitia] This inscription should read: 'Am Hynny Byddwch Chwithau Barod: Canys Yn Yr Awr Ni Thybioch y daw Mab y dyn'. This is Matthew 24:24: 'Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' (This follows the gravestone's capitalisation).

In dear memory of John Jones (dairyman) of 3 Old Kent Road, London, died 2 December 1932, aged 58 (literally 58 years old).

In loving memory of John Davies, Lower Park Road, Peckham. Born 23 September 1833, died 12 March 1904.

RECENT EVENTS

THE ANNUAL ECUMENICAL ALL SOULS SERVICE was held in the chapel on Sunday 6th November 2011 by the Revd Alan and Mrs Bond.

THE ANNUAL WREATH LAYING CEREMONY FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY was held on Sunday 13th November 2011 and was well attended. FONC made a donation to the Royal British Legion for supplying the wreaths.

A party of enthusiastic staff from the **DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT** took part in a volunteer work day on Friday 2nd December 2011 supervised by Jeremy Partington and Malcolm Collins.

FONC'S CHRISTMAS SOCIAL & 30th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

in December was attended by over 35 guests who enjoyed seasonal refreshments and two short films by Ron Woollacott, one of which featured Nunhead Cemetery through the seasons, filmed in 1981 in 8mm cine film and since transferred to DVD. A raffle and donations raised £132 which helped offset the cost of refreshments etc. The highlight of the evening was a splendid 'birthday' cake baked by Jeremy Partington and decorated by Carol Stevenson.



NUNHEAD CEMETERY OPEN DAY SATURDAY 19th MAY 2012

We shall need lots of volunteers to help us in setting up trestle tables and to generally assist in the cemetery from 8.30am onwards and help us tidy up after the event. We also appreciate donations of homemade cakes etc which are always much appreciated by visitors. If you can help in any way please contact openday@fonc.org.uk.

GLIMPSES OF GALLOWAY GRAVES (part three) *by R G S Hunter*

We continue our visit to the Dumfries and Galloway region of southwest Scotland and look at another interesting graveyard with our Scottish guide Bob Hunter.

KIRKPATRICK -IRONGRAY

Irongray is a small parish about eight kilometres from Dumfries, famed in Covenanting history for its minister, John Welch or Welsh, a great-grandson of John Knox, the reformer, and grandson of John Welch of Ayr, an prominent anti-Episcopalian. John Welch of Irongray was outed in 1662 and became involved with the Pentland Rising of 1666, encouraging the rebels at Dalmellington and at Rullion Green with calls such as ‘See the Lord of Hosts fighting for us!’ He became a leading field preacher, organising Conventicles in the area. This is still remembered by similar gatherings to this day. The martyred Covenanters I was looking for, Edward Gordon and Alexander M’Cubine executed in 1685, are buried at Hallhill, about a kilometre from the church. Within the churchyard are other items of interest like the figures on the stones for Bessie Edgar (1707) and James Anderson (1733), I was taken aback to find a tombstone with my name on it, then was reassured to note that Robert Hunter had been a farmer at Braco, so not me!

Nearby is a memorial topped with an obelisk commemorating Captain Finnan who ‘fought in the late war of Great Britain with Revolutionary France, the hoary veteran hastened among the earliest of his countrymen to ARMS and headed a company of Royal Dumfries Volunteers during this awful struggle’, further we are reminded that ‘his piety was sincere, his instructions were rational and useful, his Elocution was dignified and impressive. In private life he was eminent for Prudence without making any sacrifice of Integrity. He blended gravity with Politeness and was both respected and loved.’

Readers of Walter Scott’s *The Heart of Midlothian* will remember the case of



*Obelisk over grave of Captain Finnan
Photo by R G S Hunter*

Effie Deans who was wrongly convicted of the alleged murder of her baby son. Her sister Jeannie Deans walked, on bare feet, to London where she obtained an audience with Queen Caroline, her plea for mercy was heeded and Effie was pardoned. This case had some factual foundation as remembered by the tomb of Helen Walker (died 1791) who was the prototype used by Scott for Jeannie Deans. Sir Walter Scott himself had written the inscription and, I understand, had paid for this unusual table monument.

to be continued

CEMETERY NEWS 5 - by Jeff Hart

Path edge clearance

Over the past few months FONC workday volunteers have been concentrating on cutting back the bramble, ivy and saplings that encroach over the edges of the Loop Path and Windsor Walk. By cutting everything (except the occasional more interesting tree specimen) to behind the first line of graves not only are the many interesting monuments revealed but we enhance the impression of care for the cemetery whilst maintaining the distinct path edges. This work is now also being undertaken by the cemetery staff in other parts of the cemetery.

Flint circle planting

The flint circle summer bedding (reported in past issues) has been replaced by the Council over the winter with primulas and winter pansies to provide a welcome splash of colour at the Linden Grove entrance. One job that FONC volunteers have contributed is to water the plants when necessary and to replant the odd few that squirrels and foxes insist on redistributing.

Attacking the Knotweed

Japanese Knotweed is one of the most unwelcome and invasive non-native species we have in this country. Introduced as an ornamental by the great Victorian plant collectors, it has had a foothold in the cemetery for at least the last 40 years. FONC volunteers have successfully controlled the plant, which kills off competing species through sheer volume and speed of growth and spread, in the historic core areas of the cemetery by scrupulously pulling up as much of its rhizome roots as we possibly can. Even leaving a quarter of an inch of the root on the cemetery floor will leave a successful plant for

continued on next page

the next season. Now Southwark Council have attacked a large area of knotweed in the new burial area with chemical treatment in an attempt to eradicate it (Agent Orange used by the USA to defoliate parts of Vietnam has failed in the past!). This leaves the knotweed standing but turns it to an ugly brown forest which the Council have now cut. FONC's policy is not to use chemical treatments in the cemetery so we await with some anxiety the results of this experiment.

Anyone seen a paint tin?

Visitors to the cemetery will have noticed that paintwork on both the Linden Grove and Limesford Road gates is now flaking badly and Southwark Council want to repaint them. They were painted in 2000 as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund project with the colour being the best possible match to English Heritage's estimation of the original. FONC said at the time that we wanted either some spare tins of paint or the colour specification so that we could source more paint for future use but, along with other issues in the rush by Southwark Council to complete the work in time, this did not happen. A few old FONC hands seem to remember stashing away a couple of used cans for future reference. But we cannot remember where we put them. The search is now on!

Nunhead Cemetery skating rink

The extensive traffic control measures in Linden Grove, admired and despised in equal measure by FONC members, has produced a problem during extensive wet weather. Because of the camber of the road, water accumulates against the kerbing to the west of the entrance bay on Linden Grove, and with no nearby drain produces something of a pond. At its worst, visitors now have to cross the road to avoid wading through the rain water. During the recent freezing weather those with skates could enjoy a new sporting activity!

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN DEADLY SINS: ALL IS FORGIVEN!

A public art exhibition in the Mausoleum at Nunhead Cemetery curated by Jolanta Jagiello, open every weekend in May 2012 from 11.00am to 5.00pm, including 7th May Bank Holiday and Open Day Saturday 19th May. ***The seven deadly sins explored in their past, present and future manifestations by artists:*** Desiree Ickerodt, Deborah Mo, Jill Rock, Ara Moradian, Sara Scott, Elisabetta Chojak-Mysko and Jolanta Jagiello.

~ DIARY DATES ~

► SPECIAL TOUR: GRAVE SYMBOLS

Join Carole Tyrrell in exploring some of the interesting grave symbols in Nunhead Cemetery **Easter Sunday 8th April 2012**. Limited number of places available. **Please contact fonc@btconnect.com to book a place.**

► TREE TOURS IN NUNHEAD CEMETERY

Trees tours will take place in the cemetery on the following **Sundays** starting at 2.15pm from the flint circle inside the main entrance. **11th March 2012; 10th June 2012; 9th September 2012; 9th December 2012.**

► ANNUAL OPEN DAY (NUNHEAD CEMETERY) 2012

Saturday 19th May 2012 - 11am to 5pm. Please see notice on page 15.

► SPECIAL TOUR: MILITARY GRAVES

Join Jeff Hart on a tour of the cemetery looking at some of the graves of soldiers who fought in wars of the past. Meet at the flint circle near the main gates at **2.15pm on Sunday 14th October 2012.**

► 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. The next dates are **Sunday 15th April 2012 and Sunday 27th May 2012.** Please contact fonc@btconnect.com.

► GUIDED TOURS OF NUNHEAD CEMETERY

General guided 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 between 90 minutes and two hours. Information desk and publications on sale, weather and volunteers permitting.

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Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)

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www.fonc.org.uk

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