

FONC News



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Tim Stevenson gets ready to take visitors on a tour of Nunhead Cemetery during Open Day

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Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC), 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 the **Membership Secretary, c/o membership@fonc.org.uk**

Further 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 first and last Sunday in the month from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. *If you would like more Sundays can you spare the occasional one to help?* Contact Gwyneth Stokes email gwyneth1@btinternet.com

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 the chairman on fonc@btconnect.com for details. 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**.

The cemetery's address is: Linden Grove, Nunhead, London, SE15 3LP

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

FONC'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **Thursday 18th June 2015 at 7pm**

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery will take place on Thursday 18th June 2015 starting at 7.00pm in the function room of the Old Nun's Head, Nunhead Green, London, SE15 3QQ. Nominations for election to the General Committee and officer posts are welcome and should be sent to FONC's vice-chairman, Carol Stevenson, fonc@btconnect.com. Nominations may also be made at the AGM on the night. Motions, however, should have been submitted no later than 18th May 2015 as announced in the last issue of *FONC News*.

The business part of the meeting will be followed by a Powerpoint presentation by Emma Sparre-Slater on the History of Chappell's (funeral directors) established in 1840 in which year Nunhead Cemetery also opened for business.

NUNHEAD CEMETERY NEWS—18 *by Jeff Hart—FONC Coordinator*

Opening up the West Hill

We have reported previously that the natural bays that descend down the West Hill from the Welsh Path to the site of the Dissenters' chapel have been expanded by FONC volunteers. Building on that work Southwark's contractors based in the cemetery, Andy and Paul of Quadron, have cut back further to create new walking routes on the hill and to expose the first line of monuments that border the area. Some visitors have expressed concern that this area is becoming a little too manicured but we feel that this will soon

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‘naturalise’ back to a less gardened appearance. Importantly, by offering alternative walking routes in this area we hope to take the pressure off the one path that has been used relentlessly during the winter which has left an unattractive and slippery muddy track in its place. Quadron intend to follow FONC’s past lead with laying binding material under the path which will consolidate the surface and make it harder wearing. The latest such material is being purchased in test quantities to see how well this works before committing to further expenditure in future. This spring and summer should also see a whole variety of wildlife enjoying the newly open glade areas. Hopefully butterflies will benefit from the increased sunny spots and bats will find the area a happy hunting ground at dusk.

Further crypt works carried out

In the last issue we reported on the cleaning of the crypt under the Anglican chapel. A loose concrete lump covering what turned out to be an original drain in the crypt floor has now been removed and replaced by a new drain cover. Southwark’s first offering was a standard kerbside gully but FONC proposed a more suitable pedestrian friendly cover which has now been installed. FONC volunteers have also been keeping the drainage sump outside the crypt doors clear of mud to prevent further ingress of water under the crypt doors and we have also put marine ply panels over some of the loculi in the crypt where deteriorating coffins were increasingly open to view. When one of the special bulbs for the crypt lighting went recently Southwark replaced this and also provided FONC with spares so we can replace immediately in future.

A few steps downward

With all this work being carried out on the crypt the grassy slope leading to the doors has taken a real pounding and had become dangerously slippery. However, with Southwark’s agreement, FONC volunteers created a set of wide steps in a single day’s work to provide safe access from the top of the slope in future. This was also carried out at short notice in time to enable the April crypt tour to go ahead as planned. Voluntary work co-ordinator Tim Stevenson planned and supervised the work and arranged for delivery of materials to the cemetery beforehand. Southwark agreed to pay for the materials and also supplied the 2 tonnes of foundation material that was needed. We subsequently agreed with Southwark that what was needed was a clear pathway leading from the front of the chapel to the new crypt steps in order to encourage visitors to follow a safe route rather than cut across slippery slopes. Quadron have now carried out that work. The new path is edged with

timber felled in the West Hill works and is underpinned by rubber matting material which FONC provided. Whilst all this work looked a little ‘raw’ at first, this too is already beginning to naturalise. When Southwark carry out the promised re-turfing of the area after our Open Day this should really enhance the look of the area as well as providing safe access to the crypt.

A room with a view

Since 2006 on a few occasions each year we have been able to offer visitors the chance to ascend the Anglican chapel spiral staircase to admire the views from the top of the building and to learn more about its construction and use. Combined with visits to the crypt this has become one of our best loved attractions and we have been able to increase the number of advertised visits over the last couple of years. FONC has constructed the viewing platforms that enable visitors to admire the views of the London skyline, with the Post Office tower, London Eye and other notable buildings easily recognised. A panoramic view of the layout of the cemetery can also be appreciated. However, over recent months Southwark Council seem to have embarked on a real health and safety campaign in respect of the cemetery and the work FONC undertakes. As a result, a ban has been placed on further access to the viewing platforms for the time being. Southwark’s Health and Safety Inspector declared the platforms safe for use and properly maintained but recommended that a few of the wood panels under the footing (placed to prevent any damage to the surfacing) needed replacing soon as they were starting to rot. Within 2 days, FONC had replaced all of the panels with new treated timber. We have also provided Southwark with copies of the H & S notices and visitor briefing that we give before ascending the stairs, and we have also provided a draft evacuation plan in the event of any incident to visitors whilst ascending or at the top of the chapel. We hope that these will be approved in time for us to offer visits again at this years’ Open Day in May.

Ivydale Road clearance completed

Southwark have now completed clearance of a metre-wide access path along the entire length of the Ivydale Road boundary walls. This was in part a response to complaints from property owners of encroaching vegetation but also to enable access to inspect the condition of the boundary walls and carry out repairs as necessary. However, this has also revealed the huge quantity of rubbish that has accumulated against the walls over the years. It

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is hard not to think that this has been a convenient way for householders to dispose of problematic material. Unfortunately this has also included asbestos which is, of course, a regulated hazardous material which needs specialist, and expensive, contractors to remove. When the first clearance took place it also revealed that this area had been used for hundreds of common grave interments many of which were marked by 12" high common grave headstones. Dating from between 1910 and 1920 many such headstones had been displaced over the years, by settlement or in some cases bomb blast during the Second World War, and were disappearing into the surrounding soil. FONC volunteers began a programme of digging the headstones out to save them from disappearing altogether. As we could not be sure where they came from, we decided to level the ground and line the headstones against the boundary walls and, thanks to monument recording coordinator Paul Dyer, to take a photographic record of the headstones thus revealed. However, once asbestos was found, Southwark have now placed a ban on further FONC work in this area. In the meantime we have urged Southwark to leaflet each householder along Ivydale Road to point out their responsibilities not to dispose of materials over their back garden walls.

Lights, camera..... action!

For three days in March visitors to the cemetery were confronted with notices informing them that filming was taking place in the cemetery. But this was no student filming, rather a big budget feature film crew complete with mega-trucks, catering and stars' caravans. Visitors were asked not to be alarmed by smoke effects and to avoid areas of filming. We wonder what Nunhead's wildlife made of it all?! The crew went to great lengths not to leave a mark on the cemetery, and this generated much needed funding for Southwark. Wouldn't it be a boon if the money thus generated by this and other recent filming activities at the cemetery could be devoted to the benefit of the site in future and not just 'lost' in the general budget? As for the big-budget film, when can we see it? We don't know, we haven't been told what it is or who is in it. Keep a sharp look out for the new releases later in the year!

BROOKWOOD CEMETERY OPEN DAY SUNDAY 5th JULY 2015

An afternoon when visitors can explore the cemetery with the aid of maps. Members of the Brookwood Cemetery Society will be on hand to highlight the history and notable monuments etc. www.tbcs.org.uk

Future Event:

An invitation from Cathy Mercer to visit Old Amersham and the Drake Chapel on Saturday 4th July 2015

What's the connection between South East London and Old Amersham? The tempting answer might be the Metropolitan Line and yes, that makes it a very easy place to get to. The more sophisticated answer is that it was the Drake family from Amersham, descendants of the famous Sir Francis Drake, who developed much of the area near to Nunhead in Brockley and that's why there are streets named Drake and Shardeloes, the latter after the country seat of the Drake Family.

Old Amersham is a charming village, with beautiful old houses, pubs, antique shops, an old market hall, a splendid medieval church and a pretty little brook, the Misbourne, running just behind the ancient high street.

We are very pleased to announce a visit to Old Amersham, open to all FONC members and their friends and family. There are direct services on the Metropolitan Line and Chiltern Trains from Marylebone. Please check www.tfl.gov.uk for details. The two hour tour will meet in front of Amersham station and it's a pretty walk of about 30 minutes to Old Amersham, through woods and along cornfields. Alternatively, it's a short taxi ride to Old Amersham from the cab rank at the station.

There will be time to enjoy Old Amersham, visit the town museum and enjoy lunch or a drink before a visit to the church and Drake Chapel. People may also wish to visit the nearby Protestant Martyrs' Monument afterwards on the way back to the station.

St Mary's Church contains the Drake Chapel, a private chapel full of splendid 18th and 19th century monuments to the descendants of the Drake family. *see* www.stmaryschurchamersham.com The church is usually open but the Drake Chapel will be opened especially for FONC.

To book a place and find out time and place to meet please contact Cathy Mercer email treasurer@fonc.org.uk There is no charge for the visit, though a collection will be made for St Mary's Church. Please note also that numbers are strictly limited, so book early!

ANZAC in Spirit: Diggers in Gallipoli

A public art exhibition was held in Nunhead Cemetery during May commemorating the 100th anniversary of ANZAC Landings curated by Jolanta Jagiello



ANZAC DAY is a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand observed on 25th April each year. Anzac Day was originally to honour the members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) who fought at Gallipoli during the First World War. The public art exhibition in the Stearns Mausoleum was open all weekends in May and was a contemporary response to the Gallipoli Campaign in which the ANZACs fought against the Ottoman Empire on the Gallipoli Peninsula on the coast of Turkey.

The campaign led by General Sir Ian Hamilton, commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) was to launch a naval attack followed by an amphibious landing on the peninsula with the eventual aim of capturing the Ottoman capital of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul). The origin of the term digger for Australian troops was in a footnote to a letter sent by General Sir Ian Hamilton to General William Birchwood (ANZAC) on the day of the landings 'P S. You have got through the difficult business, now you have only to dig, dig, dig, until you are safe'.

The focus of the exhibition was on the ANZAC Landings from seven destroyers on 25th April 1915, the seven battles in August 1915, and the evacuations in December 1915, due to the incompetence of seven of the generals managing the August Offensives. Charles Bean, the official Australian war correspondent, in his diaries, although aware of the poor training, inflexible command and poor leadership, dwells on the mateship, endurance, reckless courage, and humour of the ANZACs, which emerged as the Australian national characteristics we know today. This was explored through the artworks of Nicky Scott-Francis, Sara Scott, Jill Rock, and Elizabeta Chojak-Mysko, Monica Wheeler, Louise Kosinska and Jolanta Jagiello. The exhibition was curated by Jolanta Jagiello and funded by Southwark Council Neighbourhood Fund. ■

Mary Seton Watts (1849 -1938) *by Rebecca Higgins*

Mary Seton is better known as the wife of A G Watts, the popular and prolific Victorian painter, but she was a talented artist in her own right and best known for her ceramics. Mary spent part of her childhood on the shores of Loch Ness, in what is still a very picturesque spot, Aldourie Castle. Her married life was spent in Compton, Surrey, and she was to leave funerary gems in both these parts of the UK.

The Arts and Crafts movement was in full flow at this time and Mary embraced its ethos, becoming involved with the Home Arts and Industries Association before setting up community potteries in Compton and near her childhood home, in the village of Dore. Both were managed at various times by the Scottish sculptor Louis Deuchars, and all who were interested were encouraged to participate, learn and create, and became part of Mary's Potters Arts Guild. The large garden pots produced at this time became sought after and sold through Liberty, and the pottery continued to produce decorative wares into the early 1950s.

The lasting legacy at Compton though is the beautiful mortuary chapel, created for the local community by the community and Mary. Stunning both inside and out, this is a riot of Celtic, Egyptian and art nouveau designs, heavily symbolic with religious and universal themes. Over seventy local villagers participated in Mary's 'Terra Cotta Home Arts' classes, to produce

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the tiles to Mary's design for the chapel exterior, and then went on to help with the gesso decorations inside. Opened in 1898 and still in use, it sits on a hillside surrounded by many Arts and Crafts style tombs, including Mary's final resting place alongside her husband.

The Dores Pottery was not so successful and closed after a few years; Aldourie Castle remains, although no longer in the family's hands. Today it



Watts Cemetery Chapel—Interior. Photo: Rebecca Higgins

hosts weddings and corporate events but Mary's presence remains, hidden in the grounds. The family graveyard is still owned and maintained by the family. This beautiful, tiny cemetery is hidden in a grove of ancient rhododendrons. Many of the grand monuments are empty and immortalise family members lost in foreign campaigns. The burial ground is complete with a lychgate and enclosed within this is a beautiful triptych, which opens out to reveal a memorial for a young family member. Created by Mary and cast in bronze, a replica can be seen at the Watts gallery in Compton.

An accomplished artist, illustrator and ceramicist, Mary appears to have become one of the invisible female artists of her time. Hopefully this is soon to be remedied. The Watts Gallery Trust hope to acquire and restore the Watts family home, Limnerslease, at Compton, and dedicate it to the work

of Mary and her ideas. In this way, it will complement and sit alongside the gallery that exhibits the many works of Mr Watts, the artist she devoted her life to. ■



Watts Cemetery Chapel - Compton. Photo: Rebecca Higgins



Aldourie Family Cemetery. Photo: Rebecca Higgins

The Making of Mary Seton Watts by Mary McMahon, 2013 (ISBN 9780956102263)
Compton Pottery by Hilary Calvert, 2006 (ISBN 0954823036)
www.wattsgallery.org.uk

WATERLOO - WELLINGTON'S VICTORY NOT THE STATION!

by Jeff Hart

When I was at school, in what was still then the county of Middlesex, almost all of my male school friends could tell you that the Duke of Wellington defeated the Emperor Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo. Thus ended the Napoleonic wars with the Emperor subsequently banished to the island of Saint Helena. A good number of my friends could also tell you that the battle was fought in 1815 and some could even manage to cite the 18th of June as the exact date of the battle in which over 141,000 French, British, Hanoverian, Prussians and other assorted Germans, together with Belgians and Dutch fought each other in often desperate circumstances.

I have always been fascinated by the twenty years of the Napoleonic Wars and much has been written about every aspect of its culmination near a small insignificant Belgian village. As we near the 200th anniversary of this extraordinary event even more will be published and controversy will continue to rage over the salient points of the battle and the preceding campaign. For the purposes of this little article the most important aspect is that we Brits well and truly thrashed Boney and the French (OK, we had some help from the Prussians and others) and have been able to taunt them with it ever since; we found a new name for boots and we found a name for bridges and railway stations!

More seriously, there will be many national and local commemorations of one of the most significant events in British history and Nunhead will be playing its small part too. Why? Well, not just to tease any unfortunate French visitors who happen to be passing but because at least eight veterans of the 23,000 British troops present at the battle or those who fought in the campaign are buried at Nunhead and the part they played in the victory is worthy of commemoration. At the time of writing we plan a small scale event for the afternoon of Saturday, 20th June starting at 2:00pm. It will include exhibition material about the battle, a brief presentation and a walk to those accessible memorials of 'our' veterans and a description of the part they played. Of course everyone is welcome to attend this free event and to bring along any relevant material they may have. Look out for notices in the cemetery for further details.

Nunhead cemetery historian and FONC Chairman has identified our Waterloo veterans (I won't reveal them all now) and some appear in our series

of ‘Nunhead Notables’ publications. There may even be a future article in *FONC News* if I can find the time. However, as an appetiser I will just mention a particular hero of mine—Sergeant Edward Costello. Costello was an Irishman from Mount Mellick who joined the Dublin Militia in 1806 and then served as a private in the 95th, later the Rifle Brigade. You may be familiar with the regiment if you watched or read the ‘Sharpe’ series. He fought with great bravery throughout Wellington’s Peninsular campaign and was part of the ‘forlorn hope’ at the sieges of Rodrigo and Badajos. To survive one storming party was an achievement, to survive two is remarkable. By the time of Waterloo he had reached the rank of Sergeant. Present at Quatre Bras, the action that immediately preceded Waterloo, his trigger finger was shot off by a French musket ball and he was thus on the road to hospital in Brussels when the major battle was fought. In subsequent years he was a Captain in the British Legion which fought in Spain’s Carlist Wars of the late 1830s. In 1838 he was appointed a Yeoman Warder of the Tower of London from where in 1841 he published his celebrated ‘Adventures of a Soldier’, one of the few memoirs of a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars written by other than an officer.

On his death in 1869, Costello was buried in a private grave in Square 124 at Nunhead Cemetery but it appears that no stone was erected to commemorate the life and adventures of this remarkable man. The site of the burial is in a part of the cemetery that is almost impenetrable now but under the direction of Ron Woollacott and Malcolm Collins, Tim Stevenson and I have been making efforts over the last couple of months to pinpoint Costello’s last resting place. Wouldn’t it be wonderful in this 200th anniversary year if we could erect a suitable memorial to commemorate one of the most interesting men in Wellington’s army? Watch this space!

LONDON OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND IN NUNHEAD CEMETERY

19th and 20th September 2015—1.00pm to 5.00pm on both days

The chapel and crypt will be open to visitors and we shall require volunteers to act as stewards and assist with enquiries and the sale of publications etc. If you can help on either one or both days please contact an officer or committee member. Contact details will be found on the back page of this issue.

Sergeant-Major John Dickson (1789-1880)

Last survivor of the famous charge of the Scots Greys at the Battle of Waterloo

by Ron Woollacott

On the 18th June 1815, in the rain-soaked Belgian countryside south of Brussels, John Dickson rode in the famous charge of the 2nd or Royal North British Regiment of Dragoons—popularly known as the Scots Greys—at the Battle of Waterloo, and lived to tell the tale. A corporal in Captain Robert Vernor's 'F' Troop bearing the number 57, he rode in the second rank. Riding with him were a rough rider called Armour, Corporal Samuel Tar, Sergeant Charles Ewart and Francis Kinchant, a cornet.

John Dickson was born at Paisley in 1789. He was described as a typical Scottish yeoman. He enlisted in the Scots Greys at Glasgow when he was 18, and remained in the service until 1834. On retiring from the Greys he joined the Fife Light Horse, settled at Crail, a village in Fifeshire, and became an innkeeper. Waterloo Day was an important day in the village of Crail 'kept ripe in the memory by the flags flying and the procession of schoolchildren, decked in summer attire, and gay with flowers, to do honour to "mine host" whose deeds of valour were on every tongue.' On the evening of Waterloo Day in 1855, villagers and visitors alike crowded into the little inn to hear the inn-keeper's personal account of the famous battle.

With his clay pipe in his hand, Dickson began his story by saying that as a young lad and being a good Scotsman, he joined the Greys 'the oldest regiment of Dragoons in the British army.' He continued: 'When news came that Napoleon Bonaparte had landed in France, we were sent across to Belgium post-haste, and there had a long rest, waiting for the next move. I remember how the trumpets roused us at 4 o'clock on the morning of Friday 16th June 1815, and how quickly we assembled and fell in! Three days of biscuits were served out to us, and after long marches—for we did 50 miles that day before we reached Quatre Bras—we joined the rest of the brigade under Sir William Ponsonby. On the day before the great fight—that was Saturday, for you know the battle was fought on the Sunday morning, the 18th June—we were marched from Quatre Bras along the road towards Brussels. We thought our Iron Duke was taking us there, but no. In a drenching rain we were told to halt and lie down in a hollow.'

On the morning of the battle Corporal Dickson ate his ration of 'Stirabout' - oatmeal and water - and was sent forward to watch the enemy.

He could see the French army about a mile away. There were great columns of infantry, and 'squadron after squadron' of Cuirassiers, Dragoons and Lancers. With fixed bayonets the Gordon Highlanders cried out as they ran forward and fired a volley at the French. Dickson continued his story: 'Our colonel, Inglis Hamilton, shouted out "Now then, Scots, charge!" and waving his sword in the air, he rode straight at the hedges in front, which he took in grand style. At once a great cheer rose from our ranks, and we too waved our swords and followed him. I dug my spurs into my brave old Rattler, and we were off like the wind. Just then I saw Major Hankin fall wounded..... all of us were greatly excited, and began crying, "Hurrah, Ninety-Second, Scotland forever!" as we crossed the road..... Our colonel went on before us, past our guns and down the slope, and we followed..... Before me rode young Armour, our rough rider from Mauchline (a near relative of Jean Armour, Robert Burns' wife) and Sergeant Ewart on the right, at the end of the line, beside our cornet, Kinchant. I rode in the second rank. As we tightened our grip to descend among the corn, we could make out the feather bonnets of the Highlanders, and heard one of the officers crying out for them to wheel back by sections. A moment more and we were among them, poor fellows, some of them had not time to get clear of us and were knocked down. I remember one lad crying out, "Eh! But I didna think ye wad ha'e hurt me sae." They were all Gordons, and as we passed through them they shouted, "Go at them, the Greys! Scotland forever!" My blood thrilled at this and I clutched my sabre tighter. Many of the Highlanders grasped our stirrups, and in the fiercest excitement dashed with us into the fight.....I stuck close by Armour; Ewart was now in front.'

During the charge Kinchant was shot and killed by a French officer he had spared, and Lieutenant Thomas Trotter was also killed. Sergeant Charles Ewart was surrounded by several French infantrymen and was slashing his sabre right and left, while Armour and Dickson pursued the Frenchmen who were trying to escape with one of their standards. Sergeant Ewart cut down three of them, and Corporal Dickson was just in time to stop a bayonet lunge aimed at the sergeant's neck. The inn-keeper paused for a moment, then continued with his story: 'Almost single-handed, Ewart had captured the Imperial Eagle of the 45th Invincibles, which had led them to victory at Austerlitz and Jena.... We were saluted with a sharp fire of musketry, and found ourselves beset by thousands of Frenchmen.'

Colonel Inglis Hamilton rode up and ordered the Greys to charge the French guns. Dickson continued: 'It was the last we saw of our colonel, poor

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fellow. His arms were cut off.’ He then explained to his fascinated audience how they had ‘sabred’ the gunners and he was forced to dismount when Rattler, his horse, was badly wounded. He caught hold of a French officer’s horse, mounted her and rode on. The brave Greys charged the masses of French infantry and set off straight for the Lancers. They had no chance, he said, and saw their leading man, Corporal Sam Tar, go down ‘amid the flash of steel’. Having lost his new mount Dickson and the others began to make their way on foot for the edge of a ploughed field, when he saw a sight he would never forget: ‘There lay brave old Ponsonby, the General of our Union Brigade, beside his little bay, both dead. His long fur-lined coat had blown aside, and at his hand I noticed a miniature of a lady and his watch; beyond him, our Brigadier-Major Reignolds of the Greys. They had both been pierced by lances a few moments before we came up. Near them was lying a lieutenant of ours, Carruthers of Annandale. My heart was filled with sorrow at this, but I dared not remain for a moment. It was just then I caught sight of a squadron of British Dragoons making straight for us. The Frenchmen at that instant seemed to give way, and in a minute we were safeWonderful to relate Rattler had joined the retreating Greys, and was standing in line riderless when I returned. You can imagine my joy at seeing her, as she nervously rubbed shoulders with her neighbours.’

Dickson, who was promoted to the rank of troop sergeant-major after the battle, concluded his story by saying: ‘How I escaped is a miracle, for I was through the thick of it all, and received only two slight wounds, one from a bayonet and the other from a lance, and the white plume of my bearskin was shot away.’

John Dickson had left Crail by 1861, and was living with his wife, Mary Mann, and one of their six children at West Derby, Liverpool, as an outdoor Chelsea Pensioner. His last address was 6 Philbrick Terrace, Nunhead Lane, near Peckham Rye, where he was living with his wife, son William, a bank clerk, and daughter Jessie. He died at Philbrick Terrace on the 16th July 1880, at the great age of 90, and was buried at Nunhead Cemetery in the private grave of his in-laws, Thomas and Anna Mann. ■

Grave number 2571, square 124. Sources: Nunhead Burial Records; Scotland Census 1841 and 1851; England Census 1861—1881; Charles Dalton, *The Waterloo Roll Call*, (2nd Edition) 1904, pp. 253, 255; Edward Bruce Low, *With Napoleon at Waterloo*, 1911, pp.138-148; *Glasgow Herald*, 25th July 1987; Ron Woollacott, *More Nunhead Notables*, 1995, p.27; Robert Kershaw, *24 Hours at Waterloo 18 June 1815*, 2014, pp. 56, 109, 164, 175-6, 181-4, 191-4.

Mrs Helen Bovey of Slough

We were saddened to learn of the death of Mrs Helen Bovey. Denis, her husband, said she passed away on 23rd March 2015. Helen had been a member of FONC for nearly 15 years having joined in November 2000, and regularly travelled down from Slough to assist Maureen and the other lady volunteers on the refreshment stall at our annual Open Day in May. Helen will be sadly missed by everyone who knew her.

Michael Buckley of Forest Hill

Until his retirement a few years ago Michael worked in the office at Camberwell New Cemetery. I knew him very well having first met him in the 1970s when I was carrying out research into the history of Nunhead Cemetery. Michael could appear a little abrupt and officious at times, probably owing to his deafness, but in fact he couldn't have been a more helpful and obliging gentleman. It is sad to relate that following an altercation whilst shopping at Marks and Spencer in Bromley on 22nd December 2012, he was knocked to the ground by a woman with a shopping trolley, sustaining a broken hip and wrist. He had surgery but his condition deteriorated owing to complications, and he died on 5th March 2013, aged 60. A woman is currently on trial accused of manslaughter.

Buried at Nunhead (21) part two

GEORGE WALTER THORNBURY (1828-1876)

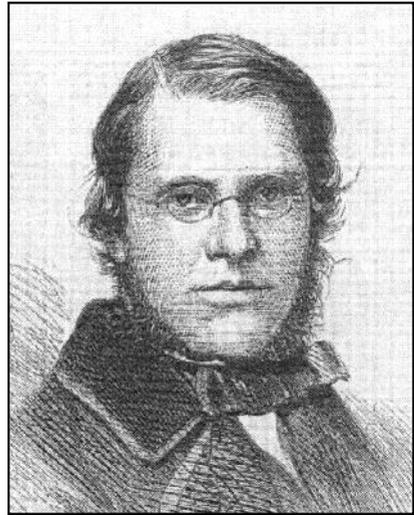
Author and Journalist by Ron Woollacott

George Walter Thornbury published over 20 works between 1851 and 1874, mostly under the name Walter Thornbury, including his controversial life of J M W Turner and three novels, but perhaps his best known work is the first two volumes of *Old and New London*. The six-volume work was completed by Edward Walford (1823-1897). In 1871 Thornbury was living with his father and father's sister, Mary, the widow of the Reverend Barton Bouchier, at Coldharbour Road, Dorking, Surrey. His father died at Dorking on 14th April 1873, aged 77, at which time Thornbury was living at 13 Abingdon Villas, Kensington. He married Harriett, the daughter of William Furnedge of Bloomsbury at St Andrew's Church, Holborn, on 7th October 1873, and their first child, George Herbert, was baptised at St Philip's, Kensington, on 14th October 1874. Earlier that year Thornbury had started suffering from 'pressure on the brain' followed by lethargy and depression, and was unable

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to write. After spending some time recovering at the seaside he returned to London after the birth of his first son 'feeling quite convalescent, vigorous and cheerful'. His second child, Edward Spencer *aka* Edmund, was born at Hampstead in the autumn of 1875, and also that autumn Thornbury's mother, Jennet, passed away aged 68.

Thornbury was living at 44 South Hill Park, Hampstead Heath, when on the 29th May 1876 he entered Camberwell House Lunatic Asylum as a private patient. He died less than two weeks later on 11th June, aged 47. The cause of death was given as exhaustion from acute mania. He was buried at Nunhead Cemetery on Tuesday, 13th June. Sadly, his death occurred before the birth of his third child, another son, George Walter, who was born on 26th August 1876. Thornbury's effects at death were valued at under £200, worth about £16,800 in today's money.



George Walter Thornbury

NB. Harriett, Thornbury's widow, married Charles Judge at St Pancras in 1881. They set up home in Wimbledon and had six children together. The Thornburys second child, Edward Spencer *aka* Edmund, was an inmate at Brookwood Lunatic Asylum in 1911, and died in December 1950. ■

Grave No 13937, Square 59. Headstone (inscription faded). Sources: Nunhead Cemetery Burial Records; Memorial inscription; Marriage records of Christ Church, Southwark, 1827; Baptism records of St Andrew, Holborn, 1829; Marriage records of St Andrew, Holborn, 1873; Baptism records of St Philip, Kensington, 1874; Baptism records of St George, Bloomsbury, 1876; Census returns 1841-1911; UK Lunacy Patients Admission Registers, 1846-1912; *Illustrated London News*, 24th October 1874; Olphar Hamst (Ralph Thomas), *Handbook of Fictitious Names*, 1868, pp.152-156; J F Kirk, *Supplement to Alibone's Dictionary of Authors*, 1891; Frederic Boase, *Modern English Biography*, volume 3, 1901; E T Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (eds), *Library edition of the Works of John Ruskin*, volume 13, *Turner the Harbours of England and Catalogues and Notes*, 1904, p.554; Ron Woollacott, *Nunhead Notables*, 1984, p.40; *Dictionary of National Biography*; National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1858 to 1966. **Acknowledgement:** My thanks to Michèle Louise Burford for her assistance with this article.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FONC'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ► *Thursday 18th June 2015 starting at 7.00pm.* The AGM will take place in the function room (upstairs), Old Nun's Head, Nunhead Green. The business part of the meeting will be followed by a presentation on the History of Chappell's—Funeral Directors. *See page 3 for details.*

WOODLAND TRAIL TOURS OF THE CEMETERY ► *Sundays 14th June; 13th September; 13th December 2015.* Meet at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to the cemetery in Linden Grove at **2.15pm.**

WATERLOO ANNIVERSARY EVENT ► *Saturday 20th June 2015 starting at 2.00pm.* *See article by Jeff Hart on page 12.*

BAT SIGHTING WALK ► *Friday 26th June 2015.* Meet Daniel Greenwood outside the main gates in Linden Grove at **9.00pm.** Daniel is the Conservation Project Officer for the London Wildlife Trust. The walk will take about 90 minutes.

TOUR OF THE CHAPEL AND CRYPT ► The chapel and crypt will be open to visitors on *Sunday 12th July 2015* at 2.15pm.

MUSIC-HALL ARTISTES TOUR ► *Sunday 9th August 2015.* For this interesting walk around the cemetery join Jolanta Jagiello at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to the cemetery in Linden Grove at **2.15pm.**

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION RECORDING ► Transcribing the inscriptions in Nunhead Cemetery is an important and ongoing task. Volunteers meet at the FONC Portakabin near the Linden Grove entrance. For more information dates and times, please contact Paul Dyer (MI Co-ordinator) on fonc@btconnect.com. *Appropriate clothing is essential.*

VOLUNTARY WORKDAYS ► *These take place on the first Sunday in the month from 10am to 4.30pm.* New volunteers are always welcome. Meet at the FONC Portakabin (opposite the Scottish Martyrs' monument) near the main entrance in Linden Grove. Stay an hour or two or all day — it's entirely up to you. *Appropriate clothing including sturdy footwear is essential.*

GUIDED TOURS OF NUNHEAD CEMETERY ► *Conducted tours take place on the last Sunday in every month starting at 2.15pm.* Meet at the flint circle inside the main entrance in Linden Grove. There is no need to book— just turn up on the day. Tours take between one and a half to two hours. The publications and enquiry desk will be open, weather and volunteers permitting.

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Please send all letters, news items and feature articles for publication to:
The editor, *FONC News*, c/o fonc@btconnect.com

The deadline for the next issue is 21st July 2015
(Copy received after this date may be used in a future issue)

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)

Established 1981 – *Registered charity number 296413*

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