

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, London, SE15

FONC News



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The Slope: one of the locations in Nunhead Cemetery where 'Melody' was filmed in 1970. Read the full story on page 10. Photo: Michael Viner.

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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 c/o 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 phone the chairman c/o 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

The seasons greetings to all our readers

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

Contributors: Michèle Louise Burford; Jeff Hart; Jolanta Jagiello; Cathy Mercer; Carole Tyrrell; Michael Viner. All other text unless otherwise credited is by the editor.

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

FONC's CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Thursday 17th December 2015

Old Nun's Head, Nunhead Green, London SE15 3QQ

starting at 7. 30pm

'REMEMBERED'

The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

An illustrated presentation by Jolante Jagiello

Seasonal food will be available

Donations to offset cost will be much appreciated

Members and their friends are welcome

NUNHEAD CEMETERY NEWS No 20

by Jeff Hart — FONC Co-ordinator

Beech of promise

We reported in the last issue that one of the majestic beech trees adjacent to The Beeches path towards the top of West Hill came crashing down in high winds in July. Since then, Southwark Council's tree team have logged up the fallen beech but not in the comprehensive and tidy way that we had hoped. Indeed, a couple of splintered branches were also left snagged at the top of a large ash tree behind the site of the fallen beech. However, this was to be rectified when a diseased adjacent beech was also to be felled as it posed an imminent danger of collapse. This work was delayed on several

continued on next page

occasions as work on other sites took priority. However, FONC attended a site meeting on the 16th September which discussed with Southwark officers and the head of the tree team the implications of the proposed felling. We emphasised the need for care as the trunk was now overlapping the finely carved flat top Hardwidge vault. It was agreed that the felled sections of tree would be brought down and placed in front of the line of memorials along The Beeches path, allowing easy access for FONC as we had agreement from Southwark to bring plant in to plank up the felled timber for future use. Felling was due to take place on the 17th September but was again delayed to the following day when work had to be completed by 2.30pm to avoid disturbing a planned funeral.

The result has been disastrous. The tree felling team seem to have ignored the agreed felling plan and the very large trunk sections have just been felled in situ behind the front line of vaults, damaging several minor memorials and saplings in the process and making the timber sections completely



*The broken Hardwidge ledger stone.
John Hardwidge was needle-maker to Queen
Charlotte, wife of George III*

inaccessible. Worse still it appears that a section of trunk was allowed to fall on to the top of the Hardwidge vault which has smashed the ledger stone into several sections and compromised its fine inscriptions. Horrified with the outcome, FONC immediately sought an explanation from Southwark. The response – ‘It’s covered by the Council’s insurance!’ We are still following this up at the time of writing and will report further in the next issue.

At the same time, long awaited repair work to the John Wilson vault on the West Hill has begun but it already appears that the contractors are not storing the dismantled sections of the memorial in the way that Southwark have specified. Southwark officers are investigating at the time of writing.

Seeds of hope

Quadron's cemetery team have now prepared the ground prior to turfing and seeding the area around the back of the Anglican chapel to reinstate the grass that was churned up last year when a cherry-picker was used to examine the fabric of the chapel. This means that the new path leading to the crypt entrance is temporarily closed over the winter to allow the new grass to establish itself. We hope visitors, and their dogs, will respect this area closure.

Runny honey

For several seasons now we have sold Nunhead Cemetery honey over the September Open House weekend. The honey comes from the hives kept by FONC member Mike Elliott in the grounds of the ruined East Lodge. This year we had 55 jars of honey which sold out by the end of September. Unfortunately, we do not know whether we will be able to sell honey next year. This is because Mike has now had to move the hives out of the East Lodge grounds because we are now only able to access the area by prior arrangement with Southwark Council to enable the long awaited surveying work of the East Lodge to take place. Since there is no staff cover from Southwark at weekends this effectively precludes volunteers operating. There is no date set for this work yet and given the long delays already experienced, it is unlikely our bees will be returned for a crop to be harvested next season.

Quadron team changes

Andy Robinson, the head of the Quadron team based at Nunhead, has been seconded on promotion to another post dealing with Quadron's corporate volunteer programme. Andy has led several such projects at the cemetery and we understand he will return to Nunhead after 12 months. Let's hope that he can bring more corporate volunteers to Nunhead! His deputy, Paul Simms, will now lead the team at the cemetery on temporary promotion. Keith Milton, who is a real enthusiast for the cemetery, joined the team temporarily but has now been reassigned. We await his replacement. We are confident that they will all continue to do a fine job at the cemetery.

Not so mobile

The mobile telephone transmitter post outside the cemetery wall on the east side of Linden Grove has recently been replaced with a new larger space-age shaped post which grates with the visual aspect of the boundary walls as it has been left as an unpainted galvanised steel finish. At the least we are seeking agreement from the owners, Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd, to paint the post a suitable colour to help it blend in rather more than it does at present.

FONC VISIT TO AMERSHAM 4th JULY 2015

(Part 1) *report by Carole Tyrrell*

We could see St Mary's Church below the hill as we skirted the outside of the huge field of barley. Red kites wheeled above our heads and a skylark sang to accompany us. Butterflies, tortoiseshells, meadow browns and gate keeper, led our way to Amersham on a hot July day. On the way we passed St Mary's Graveyard in old Amersham where the last woman to be hanged in England, Ruth Ellis, is rumoured to lie buried in an unmarked grave.

St Mary's is the church that featured in the movie 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' and we briefly explored its surrounding churchyard and interesting monuments. There has been a church on the same site since 1140 with many historical features such as the medieval font and a 17th century Flemish stained glass window.

Our guide had the memorable name of Howard Hughes and he led us through the chancel with its large memorials. One was to a 14-year-old boy, Henry Curwen Workington, who died in Amersham in 1636 and another featured two life-sized sculptures of a married couple who didn't look very happy. There was also a wall memorial with a bust of man which, within the frame, made him look as if he was in a Punch and Judy tent.

But the Drake Chapel, once a vestry, was our destination. It was an unexpected jewel. The room is light and airy and lined with fascinating and poignant memorials. It's normally closed, but Howard opened it especially for us, and for a lover of symbols, like myself, it was a wonderful feast. The Drake family had South London connections due to the land they owned, and several of our local road names bear witness such as Drakefell and Shardeloes. In the 18th century they added Tyrwhitt in order to inherit lands.

The Drake Chapel was converted into a monument room in 1728 with the interment of Montague Garrard Drake as there was insufficient space to accommodate him and his memorial. Montague was laid to rest in the vaults below and Peter Scheemakers carved his lavish and flamboyant memorial erected at the then huge cost of 500 guineas. The tomb features a life-size reclining statue of himself, we presumed, with two winged cherubs.

Elizabeth, his son's wife's monument, faced him; she died aged 32 in 1757. In a carved panel she is praying with her six surviving children with two other deceased children who may be represented by a weeping cherub beneath. Another epitaph to a young wife said simply that she had left behind two infant daughters and 'Her circle of life tho' small was complete.'

It seemed appropriate that in this Waterloo bi-centennial year that there was a Waterloo veteran, William Tyrwhitt-Drake, who was also commemorated. Howard kindly showed us an unusual monumental brass to John Drake, a child, who died aged four in 1623, with a moving epitaph:

Had he liv'd to be a man
This inch had grown but to a span
Now is he past all fear of pain
It were fine to with him here again
View but the way by which we all come
Thought by he's best that's first home.

Howard had been inspired to read our symbols guide on the FONC website and pointed out downturned torches and also the pelican and her babies. She strikes her breast with her beak to allow the young to feed on her blood to prevent starvation and this is a symbol of Jesus giving his life to his followers. On the 16-year-old Elizabeth Drake's memorial is a hen and her chicks which was a more unusual one. There was also a magnificently



*Drake chapel — weeping cherub
Photo: Carole Tyrrell*

carved weeping willow, a dove with an olive branch and poppies. On William Drake's memorial was an exquisitely carved mourning woman with the signature John Bacon Jnr.

The memorials took us through the centuries from the 18th to the 20th and they became smaller and plainer. The Drakes and Drake-Tyrwhitts could afford the best sculptors. Interments in the room continued until the death of Thomas Tyrwhitt-Drake. In 1811 the room was enlarged and doubled in size. Interments in the vault continued until the early 20th century.

Several of the FONC party climbed the narrow and dark stairs to the top of the church tower to admire the views of the surrounding countryside before we thanked Howard and continued on our visit.

to be continued

And now for something completely different! *writes Cathy Mercer*

Are you looking for somewhere unusual to meet up for lunch? Do you want somewhere that's local? Somewhere that's light on the wallet?

That's just what I was looking for when I took some German 'Friends' round Nunhead Cemetery, and then found that the ever-reliable Old Nun's Head did not do lunchtime food. The sun was shining and, almost next door, on Nunhead Green on the corner with Gordon Road, the Salvation Army was advertising coffee and lunch 10am—2pm.

Where else could you get lunch for three people for £5.50 in total including mugs of tea?

We took chairs out into the courtyard so as to make the best of the sunshine and bit into our bacon rolls. They were out of baked beans but the egg and cheese roll kept one Friend happy and the other Friend took a liking for shortcake biscuits, though she found the Bakewell tart a tad too sweet. And everyone was so friendly and welcoming and no one tried to convert us.

The Salvation Army café is open Tuesdays only for now, 10am—2pm, but they're hoping to open also on other days, depending on demand and volunteer availability.

Well worth supporting and watch this space!

HOW WE NEARLY MET *OUR* WATERLOO! *by Jeff Hart*

S In *FONC News* No 128 I wrote about the forthcoming bicentennial of the battle of Waterloo, our search for the last resting place of Waterloo veteran Edward Costello, and a planned FONC Waterloo anniversary event to take place on the 20th June. The latter was mooted at a FONC committee meeting the previous year and we became rather carried away with the idea of a big exhibition in the Anglican chapel, the participation of military units involved in the battle, re-enactment groups and dedicating a new memorial on Costello's grave. Yes, we were really carried away with the possibilities!

Unfortunately, the stark realities of delivering such ideas soon hit home. We found that we simply did not have the resources to follow-up on some of our ideas. Other organisations already had their own plans, re-enactment groups decamped to Waterloo itself, exhibition material proved expensive to

obtain and, try as we might, we simply could not exactly locate Costello's grave. However, all of this did not become apparent until quite late in the day and by then we had already advertised an anniversary event. FONC prides itself on delivering what we promise and so some quick thinking and considerable last minute effort had to be made.

We had a little exhibition material that could be displayed in the chapel but nothing that could explain the context of the Napoleonic Wars leading up to the battle, the course of the battle itself and the part played in it by the eight veterans of the campaign who are interred at Nunhead Cemetery. One committee member suggested a PowerPoint presentation which I agreed to put together. I was also happy to lead a walk around the cemetery to visit the graves of our Waterloo veterans to follow the presentation. Sounded easy, but still problems had to be overcome. As the event was scheduled for 2.00pm how and where could we show slides in the cemetery in broad daylight? I tried creating a shaded area in the chapel, but that didn't work. I tried using the FONC Portakabin. A sheet provided a fine screen and the Portakabin could be darkened but we couldn't squeeze more than 10 people inside! Then someone suggested using the crypt under the chapel. Screening off the loculi and setting out chairs and tables appropriately gave us a workable if somewhat chilly auditorium.

With FONC Chairman Ron Woollacott's help, I was able to locate two more of the veteran's memorials that were accessible and so a worthwhile walk was planned. Thus on Saturday, 20th June some 30 hardy souls assembled in the chapel to view the exhibition material and then trooped down to the crypt for what turned out to be a rather longer presentation than I had planned, before completing a circuit of the cemetery to visit the memorials, or in some cases the vicinity of the burial places, of our eight Waterloo veterans. At each stop I was able to show additional pictorial material obtained through the internet to add to the stories of each individual. At the end of the event I think it is safe to say that everyone had their money's worth from yet another 'without charge' FONC event.

It might seem that it took a great deal of effort for a relatively few attendees on the day. However, it has helped improve the military connection tours that I occasionally lead around the cemetery (another 30 or so people attended the last such walk on the 11th October) and I am also planning to use the material gathered together to turn into a new FONC publication about our Waterloo veterans in time for sale at the 2016 Open Day thus generating funds for some years to come. ■

‘MELODY’: Nunhead Cemetery’s Great Contribution to Film—by *Michael Viner*

I was interested to read in *FONC News*, Summer 2015, about a feature film being filmed in Nunhead; this isn’t the first: one of cinema’s finest and most touching depictions of young love ‘Melody’, released in 1971, was partly filmed at Nunhead Cemetery in the summer of 1970, and was largely responsible for forging my initial interest in, and love for the cemetery. The film, also known as ‘SWALK’, starring Mark Lester of ‘Oliver’ fame and a superb, delightful Tracy Hyde, in her film debut, as the innocent young school-age lovers, was not a success at the time (except oddly, in Japan where it was a huge hit) but has become a much-loved film for many in the years since, through showings on TV and releases on video and DVD and has enjoyed a measure of long overdue critical success.

Splendidly and evocatively filmed on location largely at Lambeth—mostly Kennington—there are also segments in two cemeteries—Brompton and Nunhead. Confusingly the two are sometimes segued together, but FONC members will easily recognise the difference—Nunhead is the more hilly and overgrown cemetery—the Brompton shots are very short, introductory ones with the railings, high street (Brompton Road) and traffic in the background.

After a couple of brief scenes in the wooded areas, the main Nunhead sequence occurs halfway through the film when Daniel (Mark Lester) and Melody (Tracy Hyde) rejoicing in their new found love, go for their first outing together—a picnic and walk in the summer sunshine at the cemetery in one of the central, and most beautiful scenes in the whole film—which was filmed in July 1970. We see them running through a sadly unidentifiable section of the woodland before the next shot, walking up The Slope just west of the chapel in a majestic, panoramic shot taken from a crane probably 30 or 40 feet high. From there the camera pans around, wonderfully capturing many Victorian monuments, such as that of the ball-pointed obelisk of George and Caroline Spurrett and the tall pink granite tomb of Rachel Sutton amongst many others, including some now missing, damaged by hidden trees, the comparative lack of which is truly amazing!

In 1970 the cemetery was still so ‘open’; in fact the film’s two lovers then walk clear through the obelisks on The Slope through the grass (grass!) towards the area around the South Gate Path—now an impossibility due to the impenetrable jungle of trees, toppled graves and undergrowth. They then



*The tomb of Agnes Cockrill and family
A still from the film, showing Tracy Hyde and Mark Lester walking by this spot
was used in the publicity for 'Melody' in 1971*

reappear by the Cockrill family monument just east of the chapel (almost back where they started!) before walking to the top part of the South Gate Path area to sit and have a picnic and talk about life, love and death, and the future.

I can now happily confirm the exact location where they sat, after many hours searching over the years. In June 2015 in preparation for this article, I decided to make one last determined effort to find it, once and for all. In the scene, Melody sits by a smallish grave on which can be seen the names 'Frederick Thurrell' and 'Doris Muriel'. A bit to go on, for sure, but still something of a 'needle in a haystack' - however, to my amazement and sheer delight, towards the end of the afternoon, close to giving up, I found it! It is in the now wooded section a short way down and to the right of South Gate Path (coming from the Scout monument). The grave is that of Frederick Thurrell Beard (died 1917), his daughter Doris Muriel 'Dobbie' (died 1918, aged 22), wife Alice (died 1946), and grandmother Maria Bennett. Daniel (Mark Lester) in the film sits by the neighbouring grave of Alexandra Sarah Dean (born 1873 died 1917—same as Mr Beard).

The change from when the two young lovers sat there having their picnic

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45 years ago is truly astonishing; the open ground now shaded by woodland, the long summer grass replaced by a jumble of trees, bramble, ivy, uncleared autumn leaves (years' worth), fallen tree branches and fallen monuments; a most unlikely and uncomfortable site for a picnic today. It was such a thrill to find the site though, and the two graves can also be reached by the unnamed old (original?) narrow path past South Gate Path—I'll always think of it as 'Melody Path' from now on.

The film's juxtaposition of the young, in the precious spring of life, amidst those who have departed life, and it's themes of love, youth and eventual ageing are given an even greater poignancy by the time and changes that have elapsed since filming.

There is still one location in 'Melody' that is and may remain elusive; a group of girls from Melody's school, including Melody, unfold a poster from a pop music magazine on the low, flat scroll tomb of Elizabeth Harriet Berryman (died 1884), Edward Berryman and 'Dear Little Willie' (Berryman) 'Jesus Called a Little Child' born 1896 died 1901. The tomb, deep in the woodland, may now have subsided below ground. Anyone know anything about it?

The filming of 'Melody' made the front page of the *South East London and Kentish Mercury*, 16th July 1970, not altogether happily. 'Protests As Film Men Take Over Cemetery' ran the headline, referring to complaints from relatives of the deceased that they were only allowed to visit graves on Saturdays, and the film company and crew were given free rein in the cemetery 'to use it as much as they like'. A spokesman for the film company,



Melody, played by Tracy Hyde, sat beside this headstone in the film 'Melody'

Photos: Michael Viner

Euston Films, said they had no wish to hinder or disrespect visitors but they had paid good money for the use of the cemetery' and hoped the money would help 'improve amenities' at the cemetery. On a lighter note the piece had a very nice photo to illustrate the story—Tracy Hyde giving a birthday kiss to Mark Lester on Saturday 11th July 1970 (his 12th birthday) among the gravestones, with a large birthday cake perched on a nearby tomb.

'Melody' which co-starred the late Jack Wild and was directed by Waris Hussein, was the first film credit for respectively, writer Alan (now Sir Alan) Parker and David (now Lord) Putnam, two future giants of the film industry, but it is easily their best work, in my view, and easily in my 'Top 20' films of all time; beautiful and profoundly moving, if too heart-breaking to watch at times (and perhaps too sentimental for some tastes), it's an enchanting film with personal meaning for many of us who were children in the early 1970s, and with universal meaning for everyone who has ever been young and in love.

The film, which can be found on DVD with just a little searching on the internet, is also a short but valuable historical record of our loved Nunhead Cemetery at the time of its late 1960s/early 1970s abandonment (although it looks wonderful in the film!) Enhanced and preserved on film in the artistic achievement that is 'Melody', it is another relatively little known part of the cemetery's history and heritage. ■

HEDGES IN SUBURBIA

by Cathy Mercer

Hedges are a hallmark of the English countryside. They grace fields and provide homes for wildlife—that's why farmers get grants for them. They're also a mainstay of pretty cottage gardens in villages and go with the hollyhocks and rambling roses.

But what about hedges in urban settings? What do they add to urban life? Hedges certainly add a splash of colour and break up the harsh bricks and concrete of the city. They're a typical feature of suburban life and are very common in Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war suburbs.

They also offer homes to wildlife in the city, just as much as in the country, especially if they are a bit unkempt. In many ways hedges are a hallmark of the garden city suburb and it's interesting to note that every house in the best known of these, Hampstead Garden Suburb, has a neatly clipped hedge

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to go with the manicured lawn and colourful flowerbed. In fact, the traditional privet of the urban hedge is a native British shrub and so particularly supportive of native wildlife.

However, hedges are quite high maintenance, even with electrical hedge-cutters, especially as you still need to sweep up and dispose of the clippings, even if the cutting is easy. This is no doubt one of the reasons that lots of homes rip out hedges and the disappearance of the urban hedge seems to go hand-in-hand with the arrival of the concreted-over front garden: less maintenance but no greenery. But hedges are also healthy: studies at



Lancaster University were used in the BBC TV medical series *Trust me, I'm a doctor* to show that a birch hedge along the front of a house on a busy street could reduce traffic fumes in the home behind by over 50%. Birch is particularly effective in reducing fumes but privet is also effective.

So next time it is hedge-cutting time, just think that it's not only the exercise involved in sweeping and cutting that's good for you: hedges are also cleaning up the air in your environment, offering a welcoming environment to local wildlife and brightening up your garden and your neighbourhood. ■

Photos: Cathy Mercer

Remarkable Women buried in Nunhead Cemetery

by Ron Woollacott and Michèle Louise Burford

(1) ELIZABETH PEACOCK (Part 2)

Self-proclaimed successor to Joanna Southcott

The Walworth Southcottians met for worship at the Royal Manger, the Peacock's home in Walworth, Southwark, which also served as a coop-erage. In a pamphlet published in 1853 Mrs Peacock wrote: 'I myself had the command from the Lord to raise a standard in the year 1838, and to gather the names of the lame and the blind, and sign petitioners for the second coming of Christ and the devil to be destroyed.'

A visitor to the Royal Manger said the place was a perfect nuisance on Sunday evenings and resembled a penny gaff (music-hall) or Punch and Judy show. He said that when he entered the Royal Manger Mrs Peacock's husband was dressed in a 'fantastical manner' and carrying a large sword. He heard him utter a prayer after which a big drum was beaten. Those present started singing and Mrs Peacock 'the Joanna' began preaching and said she had been to France where there was a war famine, and people had to go to the town hall for their bread. She had been to the town hall and was given a loaf, and on taking it home found a nest of young rats in it, to which revelation the congregation gasped in amazement.

THE DECLINE OF THE WALWORTH SOUTHCOTTIANS

In 1864, on the 50th anniversary of her succession, and at the great age of 92, Mrs Peacock issued a proclamation to all believers in the divine mission of Joanna Southcott urging them to attend their parish churches. In December that year she published the first and only issue of *The Morning Star: Herald of the Coming Kingdom*, a periodical devoted to Joanna Southcott.

By the end of the 1860s the 'great gatherings' of the Walworth Southcottians were no longer; their numbers were small and their resources limited. Mrs Peacock placed an advertisement in *The Globe* newspaper in September 1867 inviting people to attend a public meeting at the Royal Manger, 3 Gloucester Place, Westmoreland Road, Walworth, every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock and every Sunday evening at six. The Peacocks eventually moved from Gloucester Place and set up the Royal Manger in nearby Trafalgar Road. With them were Mary Anne, Elizabeth Peacock's elderly daughter by her first husband, and Mary's husband, James Gibbons, a cooper.

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SHOCKING EVENTS AT THE ROYAL MANGER

On Thursday, 23rd October 1873, Mr Peacock, who had been suffering from delusions, grabbed an axe and attacked Mary Ann, his step-daughter, thinking she was the devil in disguise, before slitting his own throat. He was attended by a doctor but died the following day. An observer described the scene after the tragedy: ‘The Royal Manger has a policeman at its door, and in the Royal Manger, in the centre of a medley of tubs and appurtenances of a cooper’s trade, there is a coffin holding the body of a poor suicide. The priestess of the Royal Manger (Mrs Peacock), a wrinkled crone, sits in an inner room, waiting for a vision which, she mournfully tells you, never comes now; and she is waited on by a grey-haired daughter, whose battered face and blackened eyes are evidence of the violence used upon her by the suicide before he took his own life. A bent and white-haired man sits by the priestess reading the “Sealed Prophecies” of Joanna. On the table lies “The Indictment of Satan”, with its four hundred and fifty-odd thousand signatures.’ An inquest was held at the Lord Nelson Tavern in Walworth at which the jury returned a verdict of temporary insanity.

THE DESTITUTE CENTENARIAN

Just over a year later, in November 1874, at Lambeth Police Court, the relieving officer of Newington applied for relief on behalf of Mrs Peacock. He said she was the leader of the followers of Joanna Southcott and was in excellent health, but had been left destitute following her husband’s suicide. She had not received any parish relief, and he thought that by an appeal to the public a small fund might be set up to prevent her from going into the workhouse. He said the vicar of St Stephen’s, Walworth, had agreed to receive the subscriptions. The magistrate thought the ‘old lady’ would have been better off in the workhouse, but if a subscription was set up he would add to the list. It is not known if Mrs Peacock received any help; she passed away still awaiting the second coming, on the 10th March 1875, at the great age of 103, and was laid to rest in Nunhead Cemetery on the 18th. ■

Grave No 13220, Square 13 (common unmarked grave). **Sources:** Burial records; Parish records of St Peter’s Church, Walworth, 1826 and 1853; Census returns 1851 and 1871; *Exeter Flying Post*, 20th January 1853; *Morning Chronicle*, 19th October 1857; *Morning Post*, 29th October 1873; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13th November 1874; Charles Maurice Davies, *Unorthodox London, or Phases of Religious Life in the Metropolis*, 2nd edition, 1876, pp.159-170; Benjamin Vincent (ed.), *Haydn’s Dictionary of Dates*, 17th edition, 1881, p.731; Frederic Boase, *Modern English Biography*, Vol II, 1897; Ron Woollacott, *More Nunhead Notables*, 1995, p.58.

LONDON OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND

We have taken part in Open House Weekend for several years, but unlike our very popular Open Day in May, Open House is a low key event without the involvement of other groups and voluntary organisations.

This year's Open House was held on the weekend of the 19th and 20th September from 1.00pm to 5.00pm on both days, and visitors were able to enjoy general tours of the cemetery and visit the Anglican chapel as well as enter the crypt. Regrettably, this year we were unable to take visitors to the top of the viewing tower until certain matters have been resolved with Southwark Council. Nevertheless, the weekend was just as successful as ever with many appreciative visitors. An added attraction this year was provided by performances of local choirs in the chapel.

The publications and enquiry desk was on site on both days, and this year committee member Ann Coley and her husband were on hand to provide tea/coffee and biscuits which was much appreciated by visitors to the cemetery. Co-ordinator Jeff Hart reported that this year we had more volunteers than we had anticipated, which was indeed a great help. We took £212 and recruited 16 new members. ■

‘Memorable Memorials’ *report by Jolanta Jagiello*

The photographic exhibition of images of memorials from South America's greatest cemeteries printed on 15 tea-towels which fluttered on the stands in the restored Anglican chapel was a great success. Over 1,300 visitors attended during the first three weekends in September 2015, of which over half visited during Open House Weekend and Nunhead Art Trail.

Fourteen of the fifteen tea-towels printed with stunning photographs of the sculptural monuments in the three featured cemeteries taken by Jeff Hart on his travels were sold. The one remaining tea-towel will be raffled at the FONC Christmas Social on Thursday 17th December 2015 which starts at 7.30pm. So do come along and buy a raffle ticket! ■

Sub-editor's note on 'Melody'. Also in the raffle will be a DVD of 'Melody' - see Michael Viner's fascinating story on page 10. The background music includes early work by the Bee Gees. David Putnam having acquired the rights for several numbers then asked Alan Parker to script a suitable story.

FONC's TOUR PROGRAMME 2016

**All tours start from main entrance at 2.15 pm
(except Open Day and Open House Weekend or as indicated below)**

Sunday, 31st January—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 14th February—Military connections tour

Sunday, 28th February—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 6th March—Crypt and chapel tour

Sunday, 13th March—Woodland trail tour

Sunday, 27th March—General tour

Sunday, 10th April—Cemetery symbols tour

Sunday, 17th April—Plants walk

Sunday, 24th April—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 1st May—Crypt and chapel tour

Saturday, 21st May—11.00am to 5.00pm—Open Day

Sunday, 29th May—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 12th June—Woodland trail tour

Saturday, 18th June—Waterloo anniversary event

Friday evening, 24th June—9pm—Bat sighting walk

Sunday, 26th June—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 10th July—Crypt and chapel tour

Sunday, 17th July—Military connections tour

Sunday, 24th July—Plants walk

Sunday, 31st July—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 14th August—Music-Hall artistes tour

Sunday, 28th August—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 11th September—Woodland trail tour

Saturday & Sunday, 17th/18th Sept—1pm to 5pm—Open House

Sunday, 25th September—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 16th October—Military connections tour

Sunday, 30th October—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 13th November—Cemetery symbols

Sunday, 27th November—General tour of cemetery

Sunday, 11th December—Woodland trail tour

Wednesday, 28th December—General cemetery tour

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR OF THE CEMETERY ► *Sunday 13th December 2015 at 2.15pm.* Please meet at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to the cemetery in Linden Grove.

FONC'S CHRISTMAS SOCIAL ► *Thursday 17th December 2015 at 7.30 pm.* Upstairs in the function room at the Old Nun's Head pub, Nunhead Green, London, SE15 3QQ. 'Remembered' – The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, a presentation by Jolante Jagiello. Refreshments will be available (please see information panel on page 3). This is an opportunity to meet with other Friends and supporters. ***Please note the later start time 7.30pm.***

MILITARY CONNECTIONS TOUR ► *Sunday 14th February 2016 at 2.15pm.* Meet at the flint circle just inside the main entrance in Linden Grove for an interesting tour of Nunhead's military graves led by Jeff Hart.

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 and dates and times, please contact Paul Dyer (MI Coordinator) c/o fonc@btconnect.com. ***Appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear is essential.***

VOLUNTARY WORKDAYS ► *These take place on the first Sunday in the month from 10am to 4.30pm.* New volunteers are always welcome. Please 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 ► *These 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.

Please note that all tours and events are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Where possible up-to-date information concerning any changes will be published in FONC News and on the notice board in Nunhead Cemetery.

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

The deadline for the next issue is 20th January 2016
(Copy received after this date may be used in a future issue)

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)

Established 1981 – *Registered charity number 296413*

A founder member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF).
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Recipient of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Birthday Award
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www.fonc.org.uk

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