

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, London, SE15

FONC News



No 133—Autumn issue (Sept ~ Nov 2016)—ISSN 1478-0631



*A stretch of anti-slip matting winds through Nunhead's conservation area
(Photo: Andy Robinson) see page 13*

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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 managed by 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.* See notice at entrance. The cemetery may be closed without notice for safety reasons, for example during very 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 by 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 all the views expressed by contributors.

LONDON OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND IN NUNHEAD CEMETERY

***SATURDAY 17th and SUNDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2016
1.00pm to 5.00pm on both days***

We have taken part in this London wide event for many years. The chapel and crypt will be open to visitors and we shall need volunteers to act as stewards and to assist with enquiries and the sale of publications, etc. If you can help us on either one or both days please contact an officer or committee member whose details will be found on the back page of this journal. Unlike the Open Day this is a very low key but enjoyable event. Thank you.

Chairman's Report 2015-16

Our membership seems to remain at much the same level, with little variation, each year. I don't think that should concern us however, allowing for those members who move away and the few that lose interest, and others who sadly pass away. We lost three keen supporters last year: Mrs Elsie Harvey who died at the great age of 103, and was the last surviving daughter of James Clements, last secretary of the London Cemetery Company, the founders of Highgate and Nunhead cemeteries; Roy Lynch, a member for almost 32 years; and George West-Robinson, a member for over 30 years. I cannot recall meeting either one of them, though I very much wish I had.

Sometimes visitors to the cemetery appear to be under the impression that FONC volunteers are employed by Southwark Council, so I always make a point when addressing groups of visitors to the cemetery that the council

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own the site and we are but enthusiastic unpaid volunteers. Of course, members do not need reminding that we are a completely voluntary organisation, and unlike many registered charities, including some Friends groups that employ paid staff, our officers and committee members, and indeed all our volunteers, work tirelessly without any monetary reward or financial gain whatsoever and have been doing so for almost 35 years.

Another busy year has passed by and the coming year is likely to be just as busy, so we shall require even more volunteers to undertake voluntary work within the cemetery; to record monumental inscriptions; assist with the Sunday publications and enquiry desk; and help with our annual Open Day in May and the annual London Open House Weekend in September.

All FONC's officers and committee members deserve our grateful thanks for their valued work over the last 12 months, namely Ann Coley, Malcolm Collins, Jane Hart, Jeff Hart (co-ordinator), Jolanta Jagiello (arts curator), Jeremy Partington, Fran Rawcliffe, Carol Stevenson (vice-chairman), Gwyneth Stokes, Carole Tyrrell (minutes secretary), and Maureen Woollacott. Many thanks also to Cathy Mercer and husband Simon Mercer for their sterling work as hon treasurer and hon membership secretary respectively, and our auditor George Young. Tim Stevenson deserves our thanks for organising our popular Open Day. Thanks also to Paul Dyer, monumental recording co-ordinator, webmaster Simon Quill, and tour guides Chris Knowles, John Turpin, and new tour guide Keith Turpin.

As the editor of *FONC News* I should like to thank Gwyneth Stokes, sub-editor, for her excellent proofreading; Pat Manning and Peter Blount, postal co-ordinators; Nicola Dunn and her team of *FONC News* deliverers; and Linda Martin for transporting me to and from Catford Print as and when required. Mark Plummer and his team at Catford Print, Kim, Marina and Neville, are always most helpful and obliging so our thanks also goes to them. Indeed, thanks to all our contributors.

Finally our thanks to all those many anonymous members who bake and donate cakes for sale at our Open Day in May, and the many gardeners who grow and donate lovely plants for sale on Contrary Mary's plant stall for which all the proceeds are used to help with our work in the cemetery, it is very much appreciated, and we really must say thanks to each and every one of our members throughout the UK and abroad for their continued loyalty and support, without whom our organisation would cease to function.

Ron Woollacott

NUNHEAD CEMETERY NEWS No 23

by Jeff Hart (FONC Co-ordinator)

Trestle wars - sorry stores!

By judicious weeding out of unwanted items and clever planning to make maximum use of space available, all of FONC's new trestle tables are now safely stored in the freight container adjacent to the East Lodge (*see Cemetery News No 22*). This means that their temporary storage in Southwark's freight containers at the Limesford Road entrance was, fortunately, very short-lived. Some of the old wooden trestles have been retained for use on FONC's Open Day plant stall; others have been found new homes with other groups whilst the remaining, fairly poor condition trestles have been scrapped after years of great service.

Jam tomorrow?

At the time of writing (*end of July*) Southwark Council officers assure us that the revised planning application for proposed works around the Scots Martyrs memorial is to be re-submitted 'next week'. This follows extensive investigation of the effect on the possible flow of water around the memorial following heavy rain and the revision of surfacing cambers. The results of these investigations, prompted by concerns from the occupant of the West Lodge, have not been shared with FONC and nor, it would seem, with the operations team of the Cemeteries Department responsible for the day to day running of the cemetery. Similarly, long awaited repairs to the Hardwidge vault, damaged by Southwark's tree team more than a year ago, are scheduled to start 'in the week commencing 8th August'. A tender has also been let to carry out a re-build of the Pope family vault on West Hill, but Southwark are awaiting the works method statement before contractors can begin on site.

But another log-jam is freed!

At last there is some progress to report in respect of the ruined East Lodge. 'Conservation' scaffolders have finally been identified that were prepared to tender for the work of erecting new scaffolding around the building, albeit for a price in excess of Southwark's original budget. This will enable the conservation architects that tendered for the work of producing the feasibility study on the future of the East Lodge to gain access safely to begin the

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measured survey of the building. Having waited nearly a year to begin, understandably they wished to revise their tender bid but we understand that this remains within the allocated budget for the work and that their appointment will be confirmed shortly. Scaffolding work on site began on the 11th July and at the time of writing is now nearly complete. It was agreed with Southwark Council that information explaining to the public what the purpose of the works were and a photographic record of the work's progress would be kept but this appears not to have happened. *Joking remarks by the scaffolding team to passers-by that the building was to be demolished to provide a car park have not been appreciated by many.*

Down the pan?

As a further indication of the risk aversion, horror of potential liability claims and over-rigorous (in FONC's view) interpretation of health and safety guidance, Southwark Council have instituted new measures at the FONC Portakabins to protect volunteers and the general public from the risk of contracting legionella. According to consultants appointed by Southwark to review all of their buildings, standing water in the bowls of WCs present the potential to develop the legionella bacteria if not flushed on a weekly basis. The Health and Safety Executive's guidance on legionella describes the conditions needed for the bacteria to develop that includes the need for the water temperature to be between 20–45°C. Any FONC volunteer attending the Portakabins will know that a temperature of 20°C would represent luxury and, of course, we have yet to have a recorded instance of legionella in the 30 years we have been using the Portakabins. However, we are now dutifully completing the weekly flushing record as requested by Southwark Council.

Boundary wall investigations

Southwark have appointed engineers AECOM to carry out an initial condition survey of the Limesford Road and Brockley Footpath boundary walls as part of the general health and safety review of Southwark's three cemeteries. FONC has met with the AECOM team on site and look forward to seeing the results and being consulted on any works deemed necessary as a result of the survey.

The wider community

FONC representatives have recently attended a meeting of Community Southwark, the independent body established to promote and help communi-

ty groups in the borough, to celebrate groups' successes over the last year. This provides a great networking opportunity with other groups and also allows us to access a great deal of professional support to help us improve the way that we run our own charity and carry out the work that we do. We have also recently attended a preliminary meeting to discuss the formation of an independent (of Southwark Council) Southwark Green Space Forum. Seventeen Southwark Greenspace Friends and User Groups attended, together with the Chair of the National Federation of Parks & Greenspaces, and unanimously voted to create the Forum which will hold its first meeting in September.

We will report further in the next issue.

FONC's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

The Annual General Meeting was held in function room of The Pyrotechnists Arms, Nunhead Green, on the evening of Thursday 16th June 2016. The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the arrangement of the evening's business. After the opening remarks and apologies for absence, the minutes of the 2015 AGM were read and adopted.

The annual report was presented by Jeff Hart, FONC co-ordinator, who drew the attention of members to various items contained within the report as follows:

Membership: Our membership secretary Simon Mercer and treasurer Cathy Mercer continue to provide a highly efficient service in maintaining our membership and finances. Our membership fell to 822 compared with 846 last year.

Affiliations: We are affiliated to the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) through whom we obtain public liability insurance cover for all our activities both within the cemetery and at other events we attend off-site. We are also affiliated to The Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE) and the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF). FONC committee members Gwyneth Stokes and Carol Stevenson are secretary and treasurer of the federation respectively.

Meetings: FONC's General Committee held ten meetings and the Voluntary Work Sub-committee met quarterly during the year. The committee continued to meet at the Old Nun's Head thanks to the generosity of the pub manager but, because of re-decorating, we moved to the nearby Pyrotechnists Arms in March where we were made most welcome.

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FONC's Enquiry and Publication Desk and Website: Our website www.fonc.org.uk provides information about the cemetery and FONC and is an essential link with the wider world. We are very grateful for the continued hard work of web-master Simon Quill to keep the content up-to-date and vibrant looking. The publications and enquiry desk (PED) is a vital on-site link between FONC and visitors dealing with general enquiries, advertising forthcoming events and raising funds through publication sales. Gwyneth Stokes organises the PED with a dedicated band of volunteers that tries to cover our tour days and special events. We have lost a few stalwarts this year and whilst we have some new recruits, more volunteers would be welcome.

Open Day and Open House: The 32nd annual Open Day in May 2016 was well attended as ever, and received universally rave reviews with near record financial receipts. Tim and Carol Stevenson plan the Open Day throughout the year and found more new attractions. The London Open House weekend was held in September 2015 and attracted a good number of visitors.

Publicity and Media Coverage: FONC and the cemetery continue to receive wide media coverage on various aspects of our work from the *New York Times*, British broadsheets, *Peckham Peculiar* and Nunhead American Radio.

Members' Journal: No fewer than 132 issues of the FONC newsletter/journal have been published since the appearance of the first issue back in 1981. Originally a four page newsletter, since the autumn of 2002 it has been a multi-page quarterly journal comprising 16 to 24 pages. It is your journal and articles etc are always welcome.

Publications: Our extensive range of publications remain consistent sellers and reprints of popular titles such as *Nunhead Notables* volume 3 have been made. Re-searching our Waterloo veterans will lead to a new publication next year.

Grave Search Enquiries and Inscription Recording: Nunhead's burial records may now be searched on line at www.deceasedonline.com. A fee is payable to find a grave number etc. We are no longer able to carry out searches on behalf of members and the general public. We continue to receive enquiries by post and email and give advice if at all possible. A small band of volunteers under the guidance of Paul Dyer continue to transcribe the monumental inscriptions in the cemetery, a number of which are on our website www.fonc.org.uk Progress is slow.

Cemetery Presentations and Other Events etc: The monthly general interest guided tours remain popular and well attended, and our quarterly woodland tree trail tours are increasingly well attended. We persevere with specialist tours, which included a new 'plants' walk led by botanist Roy Vickery. We also provide tours for

for special interest groups including the East Surrey Family History Society and London Explorers Group. A Waterloo 200th anniversary event was held in June. We assisted the London Wildlife Trust in leading a bat walk on the 20th June attended by 170 people.

The co-ordinator has been in more demand to give PowerPoint presentations about Nunhead Cemetery and 'Around the World in 80 Cemeteries' which raise funds for FONC. Southwark Pensioners Local History Group, Lewisham Townswomen's Guild, Honor Oak WI, Lewisham Local History Society and Peckham Library have all hosted. Peckham/Nunhead Free Film Festival also returned to the cemetery for a well-attended event. Large scale filming projects in the cemetery for which Southwark receive fees based on size, nature and duration of filming, continue together with student filming but unfortunately the revenue raised is not dedicated to expenditure in the cemetery.

Art and Education Projects: The September Open House Weekend and Nunhead Arts Trail 2015 featured the 'Memorable Memorials' exhibition based on photographs taken by Jeff and Jane Hart during their travels to three of the greatest cemeteries in South America: La Recoleta Cemetery, Buenos Aires; Cemiterio Sao Joao Batista, Rio de Janeiro; and Cristobol Colon, Havana. Other art exhibitions curated by Jolanta Jagiello were in connection with commemorating the First World War.

Religious Services: We were unable to find a cleric to conduct our important ecumenical All Souls Service in the Anglican Chapel. Our Remembrance Day Service was well attended and was enhanced by the CWGC Living Memory Project exhibition mounted by Jolanta Jagiello.

Management of Cemetery by Southwark Council: Whilst our relationship with the staff of Quadron, who hold the contract for the cemetery grounds maintenance, remains good that contract is up for review shortly and we expect funding to be cut back. Our concern that Southwark Council has not respected the need for consultation with FONC or considered our views appropriately on key issues has grown to the extent that we met with Nunhead Ward councillors in April to express our concerns. This was in the light of one officer describing FONC's approach as 'obstructive'! Progress on any issue is painfully slow.

Cemetery Improvements: There has been absolutely no progress from the Council on developing FONCs proposals for the installation of new path name signposts part funded by FONC.

East Lodge: We reported in some detail in the last Annual Report and in FONC News the efforts we were making to bring about the restoration of the East Lodge.

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Under duress from English Heritage (now Historic England) we had been told that it was Southwark Council's intention to carry out site works to enable access to the building (this was done in the middle of January 2015) to assess the condition of the supporting scaffolding, which was deemed to be dangerous, and subsequently to allow surveyors access to draw up an options appraisal for the future of the lodge. Progress has been painfully slow. The Southwark lead project officer has now changed for the third time and the monthly meetings were latterly held in abeyance because there was no progress to discuss. FONC is very frustrated by this lack of progress. *Editor's note: see page 5 for update.*

HON TREASURER'S AND AUDITOR'S REPORTS

Cathy Mercer, our treasurer, was unable to attend the meeting; she had prepared the accounts however and printed copies were available to all those members present. After answering questions from the floor the chairman moved the adoption of the report which was seconded. The chairman said Cathy did a marvellous job in looking after our finances and proposed a vote of thanks for which there was an immediate round of applause. The accounts are audited by George Young who was present at the meeting. The chairman invited members for their comments. He thanked George and proposed a vote of thanks which also received an immediate round of applause. George was invited to continue as our auditor for another year to which he very kindly agreed.

Copies of the full Annual Report and Financial Report may be viewed in the members section on our website www.fonc.org.uk Members who would like to receive a hard copy should contact: Jeff Hart OBE, FONC Co-ordinator, c/o fonc@btconnect.com

ANNUAL VOLUNTARY WORK GROUP REPORT for the period 1st June 2015 to 31st May 2016 by Carol Stevenson, Vice-chairman FONC

A stormy year has seen our volunteers working extra hard on clearing fallen trees. The most spectacular of these was at the Beeches area, where one of the magnificent old beeches came down, and then another was very badly felled by Southwark Council's Tree Team. We also coppiced half of the hazel trees in the Hazel Glade (the other half will be done next year). Coppicing involves cutting the tree back to close to ground level, so that it throws up lots of new shoots. Hazel trees respond very well to this treatment

and it has the effect of increasing the variety of ground level flowers and other plants. We used the cut material to repair some of our woven fences which help protect some areas from trampling by dogs and their walkers. We have also repaired the pond fence and some of the steps we have put in across the cemetery.

A wet summer was welcomed by the plant life which gave us plenty of weeding to do, and we also continued our programme of reducing the bramble growth in the glade above the wetlands pond. Ivy removal from the Cemetery railings has continued. One aspect of weeding has been a victim of interference from Southwark, which is the very successful programme of Japanese knotweed control by pulling it up whenever it shows. Despite the cemetery's status as a local nature reserve, staff would prefer to use poison.

Looking to the future, we have planted a lot of spring and summer flowers – from Star of Bethlehem and celandine to lily of the valley and cowslips. We have also added more British ferns to the fernery.

We have managed to do some monument repairs (George Balls, Blackburn) and grave clearing, as well as maintenance on the chapel/crypt and our Portakabin.

A source of frustration this year has been certain members of Southwark Council who have banned us from working in (or even going to) certain areas. We have had to stop our programme of keeping growth away from the Ivydale Road boundary; can no longer take visitors to the Coach porch viewing point; have not been able to pump water away from the East Lodge; and have now been totally banned from the East Lodge grounds. The latter came after we had been promised alternative access and had spent an entire work-day clearing the grounds – and then had to use another removing all our stored tools and materials.

As usual, I must thank all our volunteers, old and new, who have turned out whatever the weather and have achieved so much. Our numbers of volunteers has fallen this year, but they have worked very hard. Please keep coming back, Nunhead Cemetery needs you!

Thank you too to the Quadron staff who work in the Cemetery all week and also to Candy and Mark from Southwark Council. New volunteers are always welcome, you only have to do as much as suits you. Meet us at the Portakabin on the first Sunday of every month, from 10.00am onwards. (Contact fonc@btconnect.com for more details.)

ELECTIONS

The chairman explained that under the terms of our constitution there were five officer posts to be filled and places for up to ten committee members. The following members were elected to serve for another year: Ron Woollacott, chairman; Carol Stevenson, vice-chairman; Jeff Hart, co-ordinator; Cathy Mercer, hon treasurer; Carole Tyrrell, minutes secretary. Committee members: Anne Coley; Jane Hart; Jolanta Jagiello; Simon Mercer (hon membership secretary); Jeremy Partington; Gwyneth Stokes; Maureen Woollacott. Malcolm Collins did not stand for re-election. The chairman thanked him for all his hard work during his time serving on the committee. Malcolm said he would continue to be involved with FONC's various other activities. As there were three committee places still to be filled the chairman invited nominations from the floor but no one came forward. As there were no further nominations the officers and committee members were elected unopposed.

PRESENTATION BY ROY VICKERY, BOTANIST

Following a break for light refreshments, the chairman introduced the botanist, Roy Vickery, our speaker for the evening, who reacquainted us with some of the cemetery plants to be found in Nunhead Cemetery including: stinging nettles; greater plantain; dock leaf; elder; mugwort; goose grass; dandelion; ash; and bramble. He told us about the forgotten uses of the various plants of which examples were passed around the room for closer inspection. There followed a question and answer session after which the chairman thanked Roy for an interesting and informative presentation.

At the completion of the evening's business and guest speaker's presentation, Jeff Hart informed the meeting that the chairman had recently become an octogenarian and that Maureen would be joining him in July. He then presented the couple with a beautifully iced fruit birthday cake especially baked and decorated for the occasion by Jeremy Partington and Carol Stevenson. The chairman and his wife who were both overwhelmed by the unexpected surprise, thanked Jeff, Jeremy and Carol, and all those members present for their kindness. ■

COUNCILLOR CHARLES SMITH, DEPUTY MAYOR OF SOUTHWARK, ATTENDED THE HEADSTONE DEDICATION SERVICE OF ENSIGN JOHN DAVIS, US NAVY, A VETERAN OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, AT NUNHEAD CEMETERY ON THE 23rd JULY 2016. A FULL REPORT OF THE EVENT WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *FONC News*.

NUNHEAD CEMETERY VOLUNTEER EVENT
Conservation Tasks – Friday 10th June 2016
Report and photographs by Andy Robinson of Quadrant

The Borough of Southwark (LBS) and the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery were delighted to welcome volunteers from The Copyright Licensing Agency, Publishers Licensing Society and Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society to Nunhead Cemetery on Friday 10th June 2016.

Organised through volunteering charity Timebank and supported by the London Borough of Southwark Ecology Officer and Quadron's development and contract teams, the group of 45 volunteers tackled conservation tasks including coppicing, dead-hedging, footpath construction and invasive species clearance.

Upon arrival, the group were given a welcome to the Cemetery by Timebank's Calley Clay, before FONC Co-ordinator, Jeff Hart, and LBS Ecology Officer, Jon Best, provided some background to the historical and nature conservation value of the site. Quadron's Development Manager, Andy Robinson, then gave an overview of the tasks for the day before the group split into four teams for a health and safety briefing on each of the tasks to be carried out. One team worked on installing some anti-slip matting on a popular footpath through the site, helping to prevent erosion and keep foot traffic on the desired footpath.



Teams tackling the bramble clearance... and the finished result

A second team worked to clear invasive bramble from the Lewisham View area of the cemetery, helping to improve soil and light conditions that would allow a summer meadow to be established. Two further teams worked collaboratively; one collecting and processing branches and other recycled materials, with the other team driving posts and weaving branches to create a

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dead-hedge. This was to manage access along the boundary of the wetlands meadow area and prevent trampling of native wild flower species.



Collecting and processing dead-hedging material.....and the hedge taking shape

During the team's lunch-break, FONC's Jeff Hart provided a talk to the volunteers on the history of Nunhead Cemetery, which provided an informative and important context to the conservation tasks that the teams were completing. As the day drew to a close, the teams had completed a tremendous amount of work with the entire Lewisham View having been cleared of brambles, 100m of footpath matting having been installed and 50m of dead-hedging completed. Quadron's Horticultural Development Manager, Andy Robinson, commented, 'It never ceases to amaze me how productive our volunteer teams are. It was a fantastic team effort with everyone from Time-bank, FONC, LBS and Quadron pulling together to work with The Copyright Licensing Agency, Publishers Licensing Society and Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society. The volunteers achieved a great result thanks to all their hard work and dedication – many thanks to everyone involved.' ■



The happy volunteers after a hard day's work

The Berryman Family Tomb at Nunhead The Missing ‘Melody’ (1971) Film Location

by Michael Viner

I was so pleased to read in the letter in *FO NC News* spring 2016, that Susan Raler of Bexleyheath enjoyed my article on the feature film ‘Melody’ (1971) which was partly filmed at Nunhead and, indeed, the film itself.

In the article, I mentioned one Nunhead Cemetery location in the film that I had been unable to trace, well, thanks to Ron Woollacott advising me of the general area where it was, the slope opposite the Muslim burial area on the right side of Scout Path, I am pleased to say that I’ve now found it! The location, the Berryman family tomb, was featured in the scene where ‘Melody’ (Tracey Hyde) and some of her school friends go to the cemetery at lunchtime. One of the friends, Muriel (Camille Davis) unfolds a poster of Mick Jagger (!) on the scroll tomb and shows Melody and the other girls, Rhoda and Peggy, how she kisses a boy. The scroll tomb is part of the Berryman family monument, including, at that time, a cross standing between the two scroll tombs and, guarding them in front, an impressive winged stone angel holding a wreath of which only sad fragments now remain.

Armed at last with the knowledge (and my camera) it wasn’t easy making my way uphill through the thick undergrowth, the foliage, the fallen and half fallen trees, tombs and headstones, and I still had to find its exact location. I just knew it was somewhere around there, but I had the scroll tomb from ‘Melody’ in my mind, and as I kept looking around, at last, to my delight, near the top of the slope, in dense woodland, I saw one of the two now moss-covered Berryman scroll tombs - here it was! It was barely recognisable from ‘Melody’ and 1971, sadly, the cross was in ruins, just the upright remaining, and where was the angel? Puzzled, I looked around and what at first appeared to be a tree stump was, in fact, the green moss-covered stump of the angel herself, the lower folds of her shroud and her moss-stained bare toes are all that remain, the rest hacked off at the shins and carted off. Ron later told me the angel was stolen in about 1974/5.

The monument, though, and in fact the surrounding area, had obviously been untouched for a good few years, if not a couple of decades, judging by

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*The ruined Berryman family monument in 2016
(Photo: Michael Viner)*

the build-up of moss on the tomb, which I had to clean off to be able to see clearly the inscription. While I was there a fox came out of its den under a half-topped monument nearby to investigate, no doubt surprised at the sudden signs of human life so far into what is now nature's domain.

The Berryman family commemorated there were a prominent family in the Greenwich area in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The patriarch of the family, Edward Berryman (1855-1933) was a printer, engraver and stationer who lived in Crosslet Vale, Greenwich, who founded the well-known printing firm E G Berryman & Sons Ltd, around the 1880s which was still going strong until recently, I believe, based in Greenwich to the end. They were listed in the 19th century as 'Printers for Work-Tickets, Posters etc.' and by the mid-20th century were printing a wide variety of items, such as restaurant menus, official reports, booklets, pamphlets - even record sleeves. A well-respected local businessman, Edward went on to become Mayor of Deptford from 1909 -1911.

The family members commemorated on the scroll tomb seen in 'Melody' are Elizabeth Berryman, Edward's daughter, who died aged 24, brother William, and William's wife Alice, who, unusually for the time, became co-company director of E G Berryman & Sons along with her husband. They died within a few months of each other, in their fifties, in 1913. Also, there is their only son 'Dear Little Willie' who sadly died aged just six, and whose name on the tomb, just glimpsed in the film, launched my research. He was not the couple's only child, the couple did have three daughters: Alice, Edith and Gertrude.

I guess some may question whether using the tomb as a film location was appropriate and in good taste. Obviously, as a fan of the film I am biased and bound to defend its use, but I have to say that it was respectfully done and was in keeping with the film's theme of the juxtaposition of young life (and love) and those who've long departed life, and if I was a member of a family whose tomb was used in such a fine, special film I'd be proud.

Regardless of my opinions on this, it can't be denied that 'Melody' (1971) contains probably the only existing film or perhaps even image of the Berryman tomb, as it was before its time-worn, overgrown and vandalised state of today. ■

REPORT OF FONC'S ANNUAL OPEN DAY 2016

It never ceases to amaze us at the tremendous turnout at our annual Open Day in May. It is the one time in the year that visitors in excess of two thousand descend on Nunhead Cemetery, many having come from many miles around. The very first visitor to the Grave Enquiry Desk, even before the event had officially opened, hailed from Chelmsford, and he was the first of many that were visiting Nunhead for the very first time.

Among the many attractions this year were the usual tours of the cemetery and crypt; children's bug hunt; wood crafting demonstrations; publications for sale; birds of prey; Contrary Mary's plant stall; homemade refreshments; genealogy, history, ecology and local groups stalls; and choirs in the chapel. Special attractions this year included a sculpture exhibition in the mausoleum; Morris dancers; and Francis Chappell's Victorian style hearse and horses. The weather was fair for the time of year and a thoroughly good day was enjoyed by all, visitors and volunteers alike. Perhaps this is a good place to point out that most of the groups attending the Open Day do so to raise funds for their own good causes and they keep all of the money they receive. FONC charges a modest fee to offset the cost of providing a trestle table and two folding chairs which we have to hire for the day.

Many thanks to all those who took part in making Saturday 21st May 2016 another successful Open Day - our 32nd - including each and everyone of our hard-working volunteers (we could always do with more), and everyone who donated plants and homemade cakes for sale on FONC's own stalls. Our special thanks to Tim and Carol Stevenson for organising the event, and Jeff Hart for keeping everyone on their toes during the day. ■

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEMETERY FRIENDS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT NEWBURY 2016

This year's NCFF AGM was hosted by the Friends of Newtown Road Cemetery at Phoenix Resource Centre, Newbury, and was attended by 31 delegates from 16 Cemetery Friends groups. Jeff and Jane Hart attended on behalf of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, and FONC members Gwyneth Stokes and Carol Stevenson attended as NCFF secretary and treasurer respectively.

The chairman welcomed the Mayor of Newbury and all the representatives of the Friends' groups to the meeting, some of whom had come from as far afield as Glasgow, South Wales and Somerset. After the chairman's opening remarks, apologies and adoption of last year's minutes, the secretary reported a steady rise in membership which was now made up of 83 cemetery groups and 14 associate members. There had also been an increasing interest from councils on group formation. She said the Federation continues to support Historic England (Formerly known as English Heritage) in contributing to relevant surveys.

National Cemeteries Week - this event will take place from 10th to 18th September to include the annual weekend heritage events throughout the UK. The secretary informed members that it is incumbent on each group to advertise their own events locally.

In response to comments regarding a lower than usual turnout this year it was suggested that there could be a variety of reasons for this, not least the many nationwide events celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday. It was suggested that some research could be undertaken but the secretary felt that the committee must concentrate on positive tasks and that lower numbers did not mean meetings were not useful. It was agreed that figures do vary from year to year for many and various reasons.

The website address has been changed by the webmaster for reasons of speed and tighter security, the cost of new work installed on the site has been absorbed into the fee.

The following members were re-elected to serve for another year: Robert Stephenson, chairman; Gwyneth Stokes, secretary; Carol Stevenson, treasurer. The hosts were thanked for a successful day and an excellent lunch before the meeting closed at 3.30pm. ■

LETTERS



Mrs Julie Long of Wallingford, Oxon writes:

Having visited Nunhead for the first time a couple of months ago and having many relatives buried there, I would very much like to become a member. Unfortunately I'm not close enough to be a regular visitor, but I'm really pleased that the cemetery is in safe hands and look forward to reading about your progress.

Sylvia Stalder of Tilehurst, Berkshire writes:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all the team for your excellent work on behalf of the members.

I really look forward to receiving *FONC News* and find its contents so very interesting. How lovely to have a magazine we can read without each page being half covered with advertisements!

Unfortunately I live too far away to be closely involved, but I did manage to visit a few weeks ago and was thrilled to find the family grave I had been seeking for several years, that I think must have been obscured by greenery. I could even read most of the wording, all over 100 years old. The first inscription was from 1869.

Remarkable Women buried in Nunhead Cemetery No 2 *by Ron Woollacott and Michèle Louise Burford*

JENNY HILL—MUSIC-HALL ARTISTE (Part 3) *Victorian entertainer known as the 'The Vital Spark'*

JENNY'S 'FAREWELL BENEFIT' AND ENGAGEMENT IN USA

In December 1890, Jenny was given a 'farewell benefit' at the Canterbury Theatre before leaving England to fulfil a 'lucrative engagement' in New York with the American impresario Tony Pastor. The testimonial committee presented her with a 'handsome gold repeater studded with diamonds, and a

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chatelaine, of the total value of 150 guineas.’ The theatre was crowded and there was ‘quite a rush of artists to contribute to the liberal programme organised in the lady’s honour because Jenny Hill was as popular with members of the profession as with the public. Among the artistes appearing in her honour were Ada Blanche (see *Nunhead Notables*), Jenny Valmore, Tom Leamore, the ‘Two Irish Gentlemen’ Tennyson and O’Gorman, the Moore and Burgess Minstrels, and many others. Jenny herself performed a new sketch entitled ‘Shades of St Paul’s’. Shortly before midnight the stage was set for the presentation, and when the curtain rose the audience were delighted by ‘a wondrous display of floral offerings.’ Jenny’s agent, Hugh Jay Didcot, came to the front of the stage and said he had received over 59 telegrams and as many gifts for the special lady whom they all delighted to honour. There were floral tributes from Mr and Mrs Tony Pastor of New York, Vesta Tilley, and many other well-wishers.

Jenny told the audience that although she was going to America, it would not be for long as she was to due to appear at the Canterbury in a new sketch at Easter. She added that she was due to sail by the *Teutonic* on the 29th January 1891, only because she had been persuaded by Tony Pastor of New York, who, for the past three years, had been her guest. Besides, she wanted to know what America was like. She said her work in the profession from the age of nine, when she ran away from home and sought an engagement at the Victoria Gardens, Yarmouth, had been a labour of love. She said the great honour that had been done to her would always be remembered. Her speech was followed by ‘tumultuous cheering’. She thanked Hugh Jay Didcott and the testimonial committee, and asked the audience to join her in singing ‘For they are jolly good fellows’.

Jenny remained in America for about three months before returning to England.

AT HOME IN SOUTH STREATHAM

Quite soon after returning home from the United States Jenny was taken seriously ill. The following report appeared in *The Era* on the 2nd May 1891: ‘Miss Jenny Hill, we regret to hear, is dangerously ill through an attack of la grippe (influenza) with pulmonary complications. On Wednesday Dr Percy Boulton of Seymour Street, was called to her assistance at her residence in Streatham, and on Thursday happily some of the worst symptoms showed considerable abatement.’ Jenny appears to have fully recovered quite soon

after the newspaper report, because another notice appeared in *The Era* on the 18th July: ‘Mr and Mrs Turnbull (Miss Jenny Hill) give a garden party Tuesday next at their residence, the Hermitage, South Streatham, the reception to Mr and Mrs Tony Pastor of New York.’ On another page in the same issue the following notice appeared: ‘In connection with the grand fete and gala of the ‘Terriers’ on Tuesday next in support of their philanthropic fund at the Greyhound, Dulwich, among the lady cricketers who will play during the day against eleven gentlemen will be found Misses Jenny Hill, Marie Lloyd (and others).’ The ‘Terriers’, a mutual benefit society (similar to the Water Rats) had been set up by a group of music-hall performers in 1890, and included among its members, Charles Chaplin, father of the great Charlie Chaplin.

THE VITAL SPARK FLICKERS AND DIES

Jenny had left Streatham by 1893. She seems to have separated from Turnbull as she was now residing at 16 Rumsey Road, Stockwell. Later that year, on the 14th November, she sold her house and furniture and sailed for South Africa. In May 1894 she returned to England for health reasons (Boase), and sadly died of phthisis (pulmonary tuberculosis) at 241 Brixton Road, Lambeth, the home of her eldest daughter Peggy Pryde, on the 28th June 1896, aged 46. Jenny was laid to rest at Nunhead Cemetery on Thursday 2nd July and the



Photo: Rex Batten
from *Nunhead and the Music Hall* 2000

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chaplain, 'who was much moved by the grief of the many mourners', delivered the following eulogy: 'I understand that the lady we all mourn delighted many in public, making many hearts glad, not only in public, but in private, she was bright, social, kind and loving.' He concluded with the words, 'the Vital Spark is extinguished, but the good memory dwells deep down in the hearts of those nearest and dearest to her.' Jenny's death was registered in Lambeth in the name of Jane Woodley, and the name recorded on her headstone is Jenny Hill (Woodley). Woodley being her married name. Her effects at death amounted to £2,137, about £220,900 in today's money. Probate was granted to Arthur Holloway, auctioneer. Her former partner, Edward Turnbull, died at Stockport in 1905, aged 45. ■

Grave No 23061, Square 143. Headstone with carved angel. (consecrated).

Sources: Burial records; Memorial inscription; Census returns for 1851 and 1881; Marriage records of St Mary's Church, Lambeth, 1866; *North London News*, 27th December 1862; *Grantham Journal*, 13th March 1880; *The Era*, 5th February 1881, 13th January 1883, 27th November 1886; *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 13th June 1884; *Aberdeen Evening Press*, 9th October 1884; *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 11th September 1888; 1st June 1889; 18th January 1890; 20th December 1890; 2nd May 1891; 18th July 1891; Charles Douglas Stuart and A J Park, *The Variety Stage, A history of the music-hall from the earliest times to the present time*, 1895, pp.32, 102, 114, 125, 131; Frederic Boase, *Modern English Biography*, Volume 5, 1912; H Chance Newton, *Idols of the 'Halls'*, 1928, pp. 49, 50, 110-112, 171, 212, 221; Ron Woollacott, *Nunhead Notables*, 1984, pp. 24, 25, revised edition 2002, pp. 58, 59; Peter Honri, *John Wilton's Music Hall*, 1985, pp. 82, 88, 92, 102, 107; Rex Batten, *Nunhead and the Music Hall*, 2000, pp. 24-28; Richard Anthony Baker, *British Music Hall*, 2014, pp. 87-90, 137, 162; Laurence Senelik, *Oxford Dictionary of Biography*.

~ DATES FOR YOUR DIARY ~

WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR OF NUNHEAD CEMETERY ► *Sunday 11th September 2016 at 2.15pm.* Please meet your guide for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to the cemetery in Linden Grove.

MILITARY CONNECTIONS TOUR ► *Sunday 16th October 2016 at 2.15pm.* Meet at the flint circle just inside the entrance gates in Linden Grove for an interesting tour of the military graves in Nunhead Cemetery led by FONC co-ordinator Jeff Hart.

REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT ► *Sunday 13th November 2016 at 10.45am.* Meet at the War Memorial by the Limesford Road gates. Wreaths

supplied by the Royal British Legion, for which we make a donation, will be laid at all the Commonwealth War Graves sites.

CEMETERY SYMBOLS TOUR ► *Sunday 13th November 2016 at 2.15pm.* Meet your guide for the afternoon, Carole Tyrrell, at the flint circle, just inside the main entrance in Linden Grove, for a tour of some of the fascinating grave symbols to be seen on gravestones.

FONC'S CHRISTMAS SOCIAL ► *Thursday 15th December 2016 at 7.00pm* in the function room of the Pyrotechnists Arms, Nunhead Green. This is an opportunity for members to meet with other Friends and supporters. Full details in the December issue of *FONC News*.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION RECORDING ► Transcribing the inscriptions in Nunhead Cemetery is an important and ongoing task. We meet at the FONC Portakabin opposite the Scottish Martyrs' monument, near Linden Grove entrance. For more information and dates and times, please contact Paul Dyer (MI Co-ordinator) on 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 near the Linden Grove entrance. Stay an hour or two or all day, it's entirely up to you. *Appropriate clothing including sturdy footwear is essential.*

GUIDED TOURS OF NUNHEAD CEMETERY ► *take place on the last Sunday in every month starting at 2.15pm.* Please meet at the flint circle just 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.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: *The December tour of Nunhead Cemetery has been rescheduled for Boxing Day Monday 26th December 2016.*

Please note that all tours and events are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. If 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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The editor, *FONC News*, c/o fonc@btconnect.com

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(Copy received after this date may be used in a future issue)

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)



National Federation of
CEMETERY FRIENDS

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