

# FONC News

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No 150 ~ Winter issue ~ Dec 2020 - Feb 2021

*Journal of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery*



*West Lodge in 1981 shortly before its restoration by Southwark Council -  
acrylic painting by Ron Woollacott in ownership of Jeff Hart*

## ~~ FONC News No 150 ~~ SPECIAL EDITION ~~

Members information p.2

Story of the Newsletter p.4

FONC AGM p.6

Open House 2020 p.7

Cemetery News No 40 p.8

Works on East Lodge p.9

Sanctuary and Solace p.11

Calvin Simpson, actor p.13

Gunnersbury Cem'y p.15

Obituaries p.17

Marian Richardson p.18

Tour programme 2021 p.20

Monument Recording p.21

Diary Dates p.22

Trustees, etc p.23

## INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS ~

**Membership including your contact preferences:** Membership of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC) costs £2 UK (£10 overseas), renewable on the 1st April each year. Donations are always welcome. UK taxpayers are encouraged to sign a Gift Aid declaration. Please advise FONC if you wish to cancel your Gift Aid declaration, or if you change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on income and/or capital gains. Data is held by FONC to enable us to send members their copy of *FONC News* and also for the purpose of reclaiming tax. You can decide not to receive communications or change how we contact you at any time. *Please send your request to:* **FONC Membership** email: [membership@fonc.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.fonc.org.uk)**

**Cemetery Opening Times:** 8.00am to 4.00pm daily. The cemetery will be open from 8.00am to 5.00pm in March. Future closing times are yet to be decided. *Times are subject to change.* See notice at the cemetery entrances and Southwark Council's website. The cemetery may be closed without notice for safety reasons e.g. during very windy and stormy weather.

**Publications and Enquiry Desk:** The Publications and Enquiry Desk (PED) is open when FONC volunteers are in attendance. A wide range of books and leaflets about Nunhead Cemetery are available for sale at FONC's portacabin from 2.00pm to 4.00pm on Sundays when cemetery tours or workdays take place. If you would like to help on an occasional Sunday please contact Jane Hart e-mail: [jane.c.hart@btconnect.com](mailto:jane.c.hart@btconnect.com).

**FONC Meetings and Events:** Meetings of the trustees on the third Thursday of each month are currently 'virtual'. Meetings are open to members in a non-voting capacity. If you would like to 'attend' please e-mail [fonc@btconnect.com](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com) for the Zoom web-site link. Other events are announced in *FONC News* and on the web-site.

**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:**

**Nunhead Cemetery, Linden Grove, Nunhead, LONDON, SE15 3LP**

\*\*\*\*\* *Season's Greetings to all our readers* \*\*\*\*\*

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**Contributors:** Connie Beighton; Mary Anne Bonney; Michèle Louise Burford; Jane Hart; Jeff Hart; Cathy Mercer; Simon Mercer; Jeremy Partington; Carol Stevenson and Garry Wiles. Uncredited text is by the editor. *The editor and FONC trustees do not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by contributors.*

To mark the 150th edition of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery Newsletter/*FONC News*, we have added colour to the cover. Mary Anne Bonney has written an excellent account of the early days of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery's Newsletter when it was produced by the Hart and Bonney/Knowles families.



In June 1996 Richard A Jones, FONC's Mr Bugman, took over as editor and the newsletter was enhanced by the inclusion of photographs. When Richard stood down in 1998, the then chairman and current editor, agreed to take over the editorial reins. The rather unwieldy masthead 'Friends of Nunhead Cemetery Newsletter' was dropped and replaced by the rather shorter *FONC News* to suit the change in size of the publication from A4 to A5.

We always try to keep the contents current, interesting and informative, and I don't think members will be disappointed with this rather special issue. Please write to us with your thoughts, articles and ideas for future issues. We would love to hear from you.

*Ron Woollacott*

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**FONC Co-ordinator Jeff Hart celebrates  
the 150th edition of the Newsletter/*FONC News***

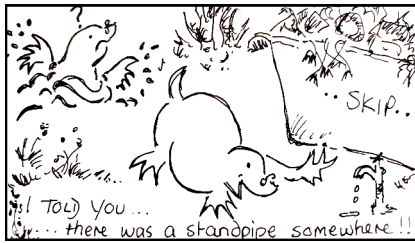
I would just like to add my congratulations and thanks to everyone who has been involved in contributing to and producing the FONC members newsletters/journals since our first edition in 1982. Others will have written in this issue more eloquently than I about its ups and downs. All I wish to add is that I believe that the newsletter has been key to the impetus FONC has developed over the years and in maintaining a membership level that is the envy of all other Friends groups. I fervently hope that, however the cemetery itself develops in the future, *FONC News* will continue to play an important part.

# The story of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery Newsletter / FONC News By Mary Anne Bonney

Every time I open a new FONC newsletter, I ask myself whether there can really be another whole magazine full of new and interesting articles about or relating to Nunhead Cemetery? The answer, when I have had a read, is always yes, and my next thought is always: I must write to Ron to congratulate him and the team. Now that we are approaching the deadline for issue 150, and with a gentle prod from Jeff Hart, I am writing my memories of the early days of producing the newsletter and some thoughts on the distance FONC has come since the first issue was painstakingly put together in Summer 1982.

I say painstakingly with good reason: in the early days, the editorial and production team consisted of the Hart and Bonney/Knowles families. We met of a weekend at each other's houses to type up the contributions, initially on our portable typewriters, then, as technology advanced, on more elaborate machines rescued from our places of work as they were replaced with word processors and eventually computers. With scissors, glue and Tippex (remember that?) articles and illustrations were pasted into a master copy to be duplicated initially, I think on the Nunhead Residents' Association's duplicator. Despite the primitive equipment, and the not always constructive participation of the younger Harts and Knowles's, the end result was remarkably professional. It was greatly enhanced by Maggie Hart's lively drawings of architectural features and wildlife and the cartoon 'Adventures of a Southwark Mole' which were the perfect antidote to the accounts of lengthy nego-

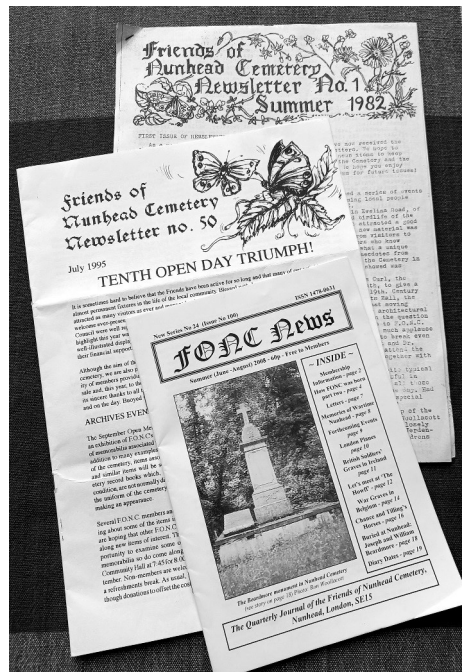




tiations with Southwark Council to gain FONC a voice and an active role in the management of the cemetery. Not that the written content was all gloomy by any means. From the beginning, FONC set out to bring together the various people with an interest

in the cemetery and was keen to bring the cemetery, its present state and its potential to as wide an audience as possible. Issue number one recounts how pleased we were to have enticed Dr (now Professor) James Stevens Curl, architect and the country's foremost historian on the Victorian Celebration of Death, to give a public lecture, and describes the month-long exhibition FONC arranged about the cemetery, its wildlife and the plans for its development. The more FONC got out and about - at fundraising stalls, giving talks and appearing in the media - the more people came forward: local historians, mourners, naturalists, people with memories of the cemetery as a place of remembrance or recreation, representatives of faith communities, and FONC strove - as it does today - to achieve a balance.

As well as the update on negotiations with Southwark Council, Issue No 1 included a feature on ivy, news of outings and tours and the first of a series by Ron Woollacott: Famous people at Nunhead, Thomas Tilling. By Issue No 5 we had worked out how to include Ron's delicate line drawings of what were to become the 'Notables' and their memorials. Issue No 50, July 1995, announced the publication of *More Nunhead Notables*. By then FONC was a registered charity and was approaching member number 2000. In Summer 2008 (Issue No 100) the journal had been *FONC News* for



*continued overleaf*



several years and was well established in its current A5 format. Photographs, contemporary and from the archives, added to the visual appeal. I particularly like, in this issue, June Green's childhood memories of roller skating to the cemetery to tend family members' graves and enjoy 'a lovely day out in the countryside' before catching the tram home to Walworth.

It has been a real pleasure to go back to the early issues of the Newsletter and, in particular, to remember the people who helped get the group up and running, many of them happily still FONC stalwarts, who, since we moved to St Albans way back in 1990, we have enjoyed catching up with at least once a year at the Open Day - until this year. I hope to see you again in May 2021, if not before. In the meantime, I look forward to the regular appearance of *FONC News* through the letterbox.■

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## **FONC AGM to be 'VIRTUAL' - Please help make us QUORATE!**

*By Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator*

Given the difficult circumstances for everyone this year, the FONC Annual General Meeting scheduled for 18th June 2020 was postponed to 17th December 2020 in anticipation of combining this with our usual members' Christmas event. Unfortunately, it became clear that a physical meeting in December would not be possible. The trustees have thus decided that, rather than miss this year's AGM altogether, it will be held as a Zoom virtual meeting on Thursday 17th December. We have the facilities to host up to 100 participants and hope that it will not just be trustees joining in as ***we need 25 participants to be quorate!*** To encourage participation the business will be kept to a minimum with just proposal of adoption of previously circulated (electronically) papers without detailed introduction. We will also give a short (10 minute) update of the current work to restore the East Lodge and the latest information on its future use.

We do recognise that this may appear to disenfranchise some who do not have the appropriate electronic facilities but hope that members will understand and accept this given the current constraints. The log-in details, and meeting papers, will be made available on the FONC web-site ([www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)) no later than 3rd December. Hard copies of papers can be provided by the co-ordinator on request. Any member wishing to propose a motion for the AGM should submit to vice-chairman Carol Stevenson no later than 2nd December (see page 23 for contact details). In the meantime,

the Annual Report of the Trustees and the examined Annual Accounts are now available in the members' pages of the website.

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## **Open House Weekend September 2020**

*Report by Jane Hart, photographs by Carol Stevenson*

As with so many other planned annual events, this year's London Open House weekend, although still taking place, was severely restricted by the pandemic. A large number of venues simply decided to keep their doors closed or offer virtual tours. However, FONC trustees, after careful consideration of how we could run Open House in the cemetery, decided that we would be able to go ahead with a socially distanced event on both days. We would offer both crypt visits and cemetery tours. We had undertaken a risk assessment and as a result Southwark Council had permitted us to offer tours of up to 10 attendees, but on the Monday prior to the Open House weekend, the rule of six was introduced thus limiting our tours to 5 participants plus the guide. To help organise tours effectively we had decided that pre-booking was necessary and, after advertising the tours on the notice boards within the cemetery, both cemetery tours and all five crypt visits each day were quickly filled.



Since FONC's annual Open Day in May had to be cancelled, many of the plants grown in anticipation of that event were still looking for new homes so Nicola Dunn and her eager band of volunteers offered to run their highly sought after plant stall on the Saturday of Open House. In addition FONC volunteers set up further stalls offering refreshments, the FONC publications

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and enquiries desk and monument inscription recording on both afternoons. Beautiful weather over the weekend encouraged many people to come out and visit the cemetery and, although sticking to clear social distancing, the whole weekend was very successful and enjoyed by all who participated - both those helping out and attending. It was so lovely holding such a friendly event in these difficult days and many visitors expressed their gratitude and appreciation for our efforts. Thank you to everyone involved!■

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## **Nunhead Cemetery News No 40**

***By Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator***

### ***Now you see them, now you don't!***

When barriers around the Anglican chapel were removed in early summer we assumed that the building was now 'safe' pending further survey work. We finally saw part of the report which showed that further work on brickwork above at least some windows was recommended. We have been waiting to learn of Southwark Council's intentions and when seeking an update in early October we were amazed to learn that the responsible officers were unaware that the barriers had been removed! These have now been reinstated but we still await Southwark's further plans that we hope will be completed before the intended spring art installation and our annual Open Day.

### ***It really cracks us up***

We still await Southwark Council's proposals to rectify the cracking in the new surfacing around the Scots Martyrs memorial and FONC portacabin. In the meantime further cracks and buckling are evident and the ugly barriers around



the major crack remain. We are pushing for a temporary repair but full resolution to the problem may be delayed by likely liability issues.

### ***The Covid-19 side effects***

We have all suffered to one degree or another during the current pandemic and wish to offer our sympathies to all those who have had to endure more than just inconvenience. There have been some unexpected effects however. Visitor numbers to the cemetery increased dramatically, particularly during the good summer weather. Others have found more time on their hands and there has been a marked increase in the number of people seeking to volunteer with FONC. Our expertise in producing risk assessments has been recognised and our reputation as a responsible, reliable and well-managed charitable incorporated organisation in our response to Covid-19 has been further advanced. Nevertheless, we all hope for a speedy return to normality so that our work continues under less challenging circumstances.

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## **Work Progressing on the East Lodge**

### ***Text and photographs by Jeremy Partington, Chairman***

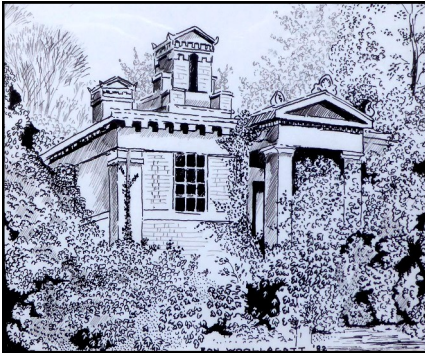
Readers who have been able to visit the cemetery regularly over the summer are likely to have spotted progress being made with the restoration of the East Lodge. As part of an election manifesto commitment, funding was found by the London Borough Southwark (LBS) to restore the East Lodge at Nunhead Cemetery. After a number of years the preliminary and enabling works are now under way to dismantle the front porch and walls prior to the installation of new drainage, underpinning and stabilising works. A few months ago, FONC volunteers moved items to a new store, provided by the contractors, in the lodge grounds. This has enabled the contractor to store components from the East Lodge in the container for future reuse in the restoration of the building.

As can be seen from the photographs (overleaf), the porch and front wall have now been dismantled and the interior fireplaces and the passages beneath the chimney on each storey are now clearly visible.

The trees located either side of the porch are self-seeded saplings. As shown, these were removed on 9th October. Progress might have been slow-

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er than the trustees and the project team had originally hoped but the complexity of restoring listed buildings means that this is not unusual. And after so much effort over so many years by FONC members and trustees working with LBS, it is pleasing to see visible progress with the works under way. It is now expected that the full restoration will continue until 2022.■



East Lodge 1982 - *pen and ink drawing*  
by Ron Woollacott - in ownership of Jeff Hart



6th August 2020 - scaffolding underway



3rd September - extra scaffolding installed



19th September - porch removed etc.



19th September - self seeded-trees



10th October - self-seeded trees felled

# Sanctuary and Solace

*by Connie Beighton*

The two editions of *FONC News* published since May 2020 have been a welcome 'return to normal', offering the sense of things continuing as usual at a time of complete abnormality. The early summer journal was particularly cheering since it seemed miraculous that publication could be maintained during that period of strict lockdown when all we could do was walk in our own immediate areas. In reading that early *News* I could see past Nunhead Open Days in my mind's eye, particularly chatting with people on interesting local charity stalls, and then browsing through the plants on the plant stall and trying to figure where I could possibly squeeze something new into the house or garden. Everyone on those past Open Days, always apparently held in miraculously good weather, was welcoming and approachable. Then it was always a walk around the pathways, followed by a long stare at the undertakers' vintage hearses and the stunning funeral horses bedecked with feathers. Attendees at Nunhead's Open Days intrigue me. Everyone looks like the kind of person it would be good to chat to, and that includes the Goths who turn up each year, dressed in their own inimitable, carefully put-together style. Then there would be another walk around the cemetery, more gazing at graves, wondering about the lives of the people interred, and thinking about their achievements, disappointments and then their ending. I've never found anything morbid about visiting cemeteries, seeing them as a celebration of life and its allotted span. But Nunhead isn't an ordinary cemetery. It has its own special quality and of the Magnificent Seven great London cemeteries it is my favourite because of the sinuous paths, the Arcadian tangle of the greenery and, of course, the tombs themselves. It may not have attracted high society burials, but instead stalwart, skilled, mainly South East London professionals of good reputation and standing. With this year's Nunhead Open Day cancelled, receiving *FONC News* was a consolation.

Then the September 'midst-Covid' *News* arrived and, aside from informing me that the bristly, blue-flowered growth in the garden was definitely not borage, it was clear that you were going to open for Open House City weekend September 2020. An event not to be missed. Normally we travel to Nun-

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head by train but this time we drove. I think we can be forgiven in the circumstances. A calm, warm Saturday afternoon added to our enjoyment as we re-acquainted ourselves with familiar pathways and noticed the monument repairs. Contrary Mary's plant stall yielded a beautiful Peace Lily that is now in just the right plant holder, in just the right place, plus a harlequin blue and yellow flower the like of which I've never previously seen. It's an indoor plant that looks like a hybrid of an orchid and a primrose and is apparently a Cape Primrose. These plants are talismans to keep me company till I next visit Nunhead. I definitely should not have eaten the wonderful slice of Victorian sponge with far too much jam filling, but it was delicious, and all the more so for scoffing it from a paper napkin. Sitting on a bench I noticed for the first time that the chimneys of the West Lodge are shaped as a Greek sarcophagus. There was then the memorable moment of glimpsing St Paul's through the tree canopy. Always a magical sight. I wonder how on earth the cemetery layout allowed for that particular perspective. Accident or design? Or just Nunhead's special quality?

I cannot get to Nunhead frequently, and so my local imitation of it is the



All Saints' Cemetery, Carshalton,  
September 2012    *Photo: Connie Beighton*

cemetery attached to the ancient All Saints' Church, Carshalton. This cemetery too has gone through a period when it was a wild tangle of brambles, undergrowth, and overgrown graves. Now it is a large area, regularly maintained, but still allowing for abundant displays of wildflowers under the old trees, beginning with clumps of snowdrops in January, followed by crocuses and daffodils. In high summer the grasses are allowed to grow almost to waist height before being cut. The conkers are dropping now, the leaves too. There are sad corners of the cemetery with tiny graves for babies and toddlers from the 1930s and 1940s in-

scribed with names like Jane and Brian, presumably witness to children dying prior to the NHS from common childhood diseases. There are modest tombstones and more elegant ones, as well as a corner by the side of the church for liveried servants who gave faithful service to various Rectors from the early to mid-nineteenth century. All this, together with Commonwealth War Graves - 12 from the First World War and 46 from the Second World War - scattered randomly in every part. Squirrels chase each other and on a lucky day you hear the sound of a woodpecker drilling hard into a tree. Goths do not visit, but most fine weekends groups do, apparently in search of Pokémons - whatever they are.

My thanks go to the FONC committee members who decades ago rescued Nunhead from near dereliction, and for the current trustees who carry on tirelessly that excellent work. Thanks too to the many volunteers who help maintain Nunhead in every conceivable way. Nunhead Cemetery is a tribute to you all and an increasingly valuable resource. ■

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~~~~~ Buried at Nunhead No 22 ~~~~~

## **Calvin Simpson (1958-1990)**

**Actor of Stage and Television**

***By Ron Woollacott & Michèle Louise Burford***

**C**ALVIN GEORGE SIMPSON was born at Luton in Bedfordshire on 15 August 1958. A promising young black actor he was closely associated with the Umoja Theatre in Camberwell. In a production of 'Othello' in August 1981 at the Oval House Theatre, Lambeth, he played Othello with Jane Nash as Desdemona. In June 1983, at the Drill Hall Theatre, Bloomsbury, he played Carl, a US serviceman in '1983', a play about the terror nuclear weapons bring. *The Stage* said: 'A very powerful play, especially the scene where Carl, played by Calvin, Steff's American Air Force husband, is put in to drive a simulator of a Polaris missile carrying truck, and has to run down protesters who are standing in the road.'

At Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, in November 1983, Calvin appeared as Crooks in John Steinbeck's powerful drama 'Of Mice and Men'. Lennie was played by Clive Mantle and William Roberts was Slim. Calvin also appeared

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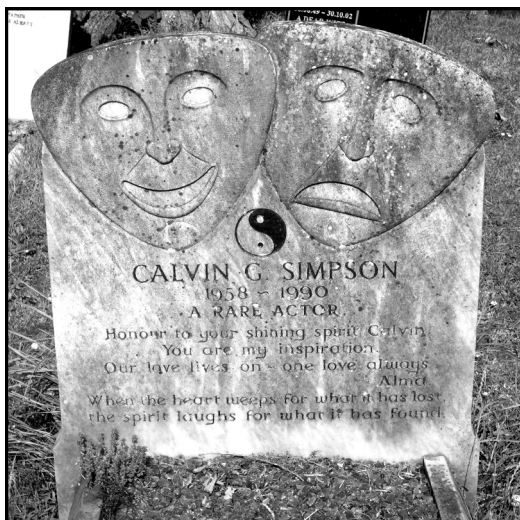
in May 1985 at the Tricycle, Kilburn, in 'Lonely Cowboy' directed by Nicolas Kent.

In November 1985, when he was appearing in 'Ritual' at the Donmar Warehouse, Covent Garden, *The Stage* said: 'The irascible Calvin Simpson is hilarious as the ghost of Uncle Charles - on crutches - and there is a well-paced, "natural" performance from Ingram Hood, as the lynchpin of the piece.'

At the Arts, in September 1987, Calvin played Mr Pilgrom in Derek Walcott's 'Remembrance' and in November 1987, also at the Arts, he was in 'Tewodros', a play by Tsegaye Gabre Medhin. In January 1988 he played Hamar William at the Albany Empire in 'The Nine Night' a 'delicious comedy' of West Indian life by Edgar White.

At Edinburgh in March 1988, Calvin performed in the one-man show 'Slipping into Darkness' by Jamal Ali, and in June 1988 at the Young Vic. he was cast in 'Solomon and the Big Cat' alongside the talented Diane Louise Jordan (who was the first black presenter of the children's TV show 'Blue Peter'). From 1st February to 3rd March 1990, Calvin appeared in a production of Aaron Iveson's play 'Side Pockets' at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East in the part of Jenkins, a bartender.

Calvin also made a number of television appearances. In episode three of 'Mother Love', broadcast on ITV in 1989, he played the porter; the principal actors being Diana Rigg (1938-2020), James Wilby and David McCallum. In November 1989 he played Arnold in the Channel 4 series 'When Love Dies' featuring Norman Beaton (1934-1994) as the pastor. He was Clovis Jones in episode seven, season two, in the BBC TV series 'South of the Border' which was first aired on 22nd June 1990. He also had parts in 'The Bill' and 'The Lenny Henry Show'. Calvin's promising career was tragically cut short when he was killed on 11th April 1990, aged only 31. He had been working



Masks of comedy and tragedy on headstone over Calvin Simpson's grave  
Photo: Ron Woollacott



as a courier between acting parts and while he was cycling along Stamford Street, Waterloo, he collided with a lorry.■

Postscript: On 3rd June 1990, show-business friends of the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, staged a one-day gala to raise money for Calvin's family, and more than 50 stars of stage and screen took part in the gala.

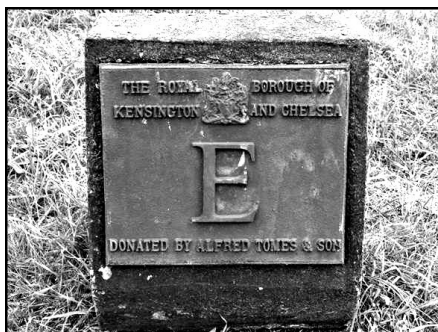
**Grave No 45926, Square 17. Private grave -headstone. Sources:** Memorial inscription; Burial records; *The Stage*, various issues from 13 August 1981 to 31 May 1990; Ron Woollacott, *More Nunhead Notables*, 1995, p.68; *Nunhead's Entertainers* (to be published); IMDb; Information from William Roberts, actor and author, who was in 'Of Mice and Men' with Calvin.

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## Gunnersbury Cemetery

*By Cathy Mercer - photos by Simon Mercer*

Gunnersbury Cemetery lies on the south east corner of Gunnersbury Park, in the London Borough of Hounslow. It is also known as Kensington and Chelsea Cemetery because it is owned by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Gunnersbury Cemetery is both pleasant and unusual, because it is beautifully planted and very well maintained, with glorious



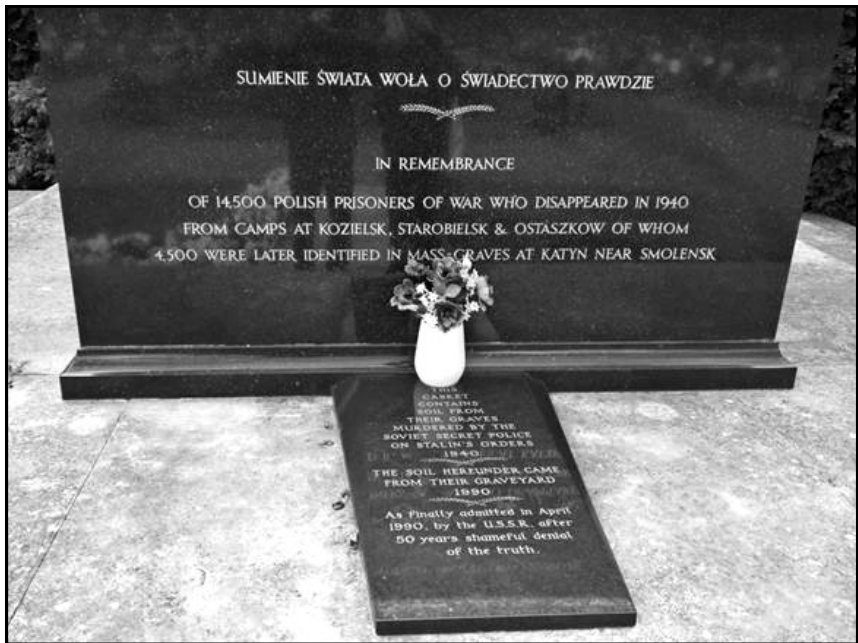
The grave on the extreme right is that of Dr Tatiana Pavlovna Glowacki-Prus  
born St Petersburg died in London

hanging baskets welcoming visitors at the gate.

Opened in 1929, its nine hectares are the last resting place for a remarkable mixture of people and nationalities, including Russians, with striking Orthodox crosses on their monuments. Most notable are the large number of

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Poles, many eminent, in the main because of the long-established Polish Church in nearby Ealing. The most significant monument, however, is the Katyn Monument, a shiny black obelisk which commemorates the 22,000 Polish officers and members of the intelligentsia executed by the Soviet Union in 1940. Discovery of their mass graves in the Katyn Forest were announced in 1943 by the Germans but it was not until 1990 that the Soviet government accepted responsibility for the slaughter. Surrounded by flowers in Polish red and white, the sober Katyn Monument was erected in 1976, long before the Katyn Massacre was acknowledged and so there were no UK government representatives at the official opening.



The Katyn monument commemorating 22,000 Polish officers and members of the intelligentsia executed by the Soviet Union in 1940

The cemetery also holds 49 Commonwealth War Graves and is the last resting place to several eminent individuals, including Sir Aston Webb (1849 -1930), architect of Buckingham Palace's Edwardian frontage, and Sir Carol Reed, British director of many films including *The Third Man* and *Oliver!*

It is a pleasure to visit such a well maintained cemetery. Gunnersbury Cemetery is open throughout the year and, when we visited, the hanging bas-

kets were being watered and the facilities were pristine. The neat grounds sensitively allow uncut areas as havens for wildlife. A new cemetery office is under construction as Gunnersbury is the management centre for the Royal Borough's two cemeteries, the other being nearby Hanwell Cemetery. For full up-to-date details, visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk)



Grave of Sir Carol Reed 1906 -1976

Gunnersbury Cemetery is about 15 minutes' walk from Acton Town underground station and well worth a visit, especially together with delightful Gunnersbury House and Park next door. This was originally the home of Princess Amelia, daughter of George III. In the 19th century it became the home of the Rothschild family and was eventually opened as a public park in 1926 by Neville Chamberlain, then Minister of Health. The house is now home to the local museum, with a stirring display on local football team Brentford FC. The house and park have recently benefitted from a large lottery grant and both look spic and span and as welcoming as Gunnersbury Cemetery.■



~~~ *Requiescat en Pace* ~~~



**GERRY BOWDEN 1935 - 2020**

The late Gerry Bowden was Conservative MP for the old Dulwich (Camberwell) constituency from 1983 to 1992, having defeated the Labour candidate Kate Hoey in 1983, and again defeating her at the 1987 general election. Kate, an early and former member of FONC, won the seat of Vauxhall in a by-election in 1989. Gerry Bowden was eventually unseated in 1992 by the Labour candidate, the late Tessa Jowell MP. When Gerry Bowden was elected MP, Nunhead Cemetery was in the old Dulwich constituency.

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He was always approachable and most helpful to his constituents. He also took an interest in the aims and work of FONC and in 1983 FONC's co-ordinator Jeff Hart and Ron Woollacott (who was chairman at the time) had the pleasure of taking Gerry and members of his family on a personal tour of Nunhead Cemetery. Gerry Bowden died on 7th January 2020, aged 84.

## **EDWIN BELL 1934 - 2020**

Edwin Bell of Nunhead, also known as Eddie Bell, was a member of FONC for the greater part of 18 years from 1998 to 2016. He was a regular attendee at FONC's Christmas socials and always enjoyed the annual Open Day in May at Nunhead Cemetery.

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### **Remarkable Women buried in Nunhead Cemetery No 6 (Part 3)**

*By Ron Woollacott and Michèle Louise Burford*

#### **MRS MARIAN RICHARDSON (1830-1872)**

#### **Poet, Friend and Supporter of Garibaldi the Italian Patriot**

Marian Richardson was secretary of the Garibaldi Yacht Fund of which her husband was treasurer. On 13th August 1864 the *London City Press* carried the following report: 'Mrs Richardson, honorary secretary to the London Committee (of the Garibaldi Yacht Fund) has much pleasure in issuing a total list of subscriptions and most respectfully solicits further support. The amount required to purchase, fit and send out a yacht to Caprera [an island off the coast of Sardinia] is estimated at about £950.' Following the report was a long list of subscribers.

In October 1864, a number of newspapers carried a report stating that Mrs Richardson had issued a circular informing subscribers to the fund that a yacht had been purchased and was currently being fitted out at Cowes on the Isle of Wight. The yacht, purchased as a present for General Garibaldi, was called the 'Princess Olga', and left her moorings on her passage to Caprera on Monday 24th October 1864. Among the dignitaries who bid farewell to the 'Princess Olga' were Sir John Rhoderic McGrigor, Bt (1811-1890), John and Marian Richardson, representing the Yacht Fund, and Colonel G Bruzzesi of Milan, a personal friend of Garibaldi.

In November 1864 General Garibaldi wrote to John and Marian as follows: 'Most esteemed Mr and Mrs Richardson - I have to give you my most

heartly thanks and gratitude for all the great kindnesses so generously bestowed on me by you ever since I first set foot in your land of liberty until you sent me the yacht. I pray you will believe me as your friend at all times.'

Marian's collection of poetry entitled *The Talk of the Household - Poems*, was published by her father's firm, Samuel Straker and Sons of 26 Leadenhall Street, in July 1865 and was reviewed by the *London City Press* on 5th August 1865 as follows:

'It has on more than one occasion been our pleasurable duty to speak in approving terms of the kindly, genial way in which the authoress of this pretty little volume has wielded her pen when a good cause has required assistance, or an event in which the nation felt an interest has given scope for the exercise of her poetic faculty. The authoress has done well in gathering together her occasional pieces, for some of them at least possess value beyond that given to them by the passing events which they refer. She sings with much sweetness of times and things which have been, and are, "the talk of the household," and her verses will find a warm response in every home where the domestic affections are properly cultivated, where nature's true nobility are admired, and where the duty of the members of the family towards their less fortunate or erring fellow-creatures is recognised. We heartily welcome Mrs Richardson's volume, and hope it will not be her last.'

*The Talk of the Household - Poems*, was the only collection of Marian's poetry to be published, a copy of which was presented to HM Queen Victoria, and acknowledged by Sir Charles Beaumont Phipps (1801-1866), Keeper of the Privy Purse. Among the many distinguished subscribers to her book were the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland; the Earl of Shaftesbury; General Garibaldi; Colonel Bruzzesi; Sir Charles McGrigor; Matthew Noble, sculptor; John Passmore Edwards, philanthropist; Miss Isabella Fyvie (Mrs Mayo); and Robert Alexander Gray JP, DL; along with 13 Members of Parliament including John Bright, George J Goschen and Charles Gilpin, and more than 30 common councillors and aldermen of the City of London.

In 1870 Marian Richardson became seriously ill with cancer and died after 'long and patient suffering' at Lancaster House, Peckham Rye on 25th January 1872, aged 41. Just two years later she was joined by her husband.

*continued overleaf*

*Headstone. Grave No 11716 in square 104. Sources:* Burial records; Monumental inscription; *Wells Journal*, 6th April 1861; *London City Press*, 13th August 1864, 5th August 1865; *Oxford Times*, 29th October 1864; *Kentish Chronicle* 19th November 1864; *Morning Post*, 7th December 1864; Marian Richardson, *The Talk of the Household - Poems*, 1865; *North West Kent Family History*, Vol 6 No 2 July 1992, pp 45-48; Ron Woollacott, *More Nunhead Notables*, 1995 p 62; Chris McCabe, *Cenotaph South - Mapping the lost poets of Nunhead Cemetery*, 2016 pp 105, 248-256, 289, 300; Correspondence between the late Miss Audrey Third of Sevenoaks and Ron Woollacott in 1993.■

NB: Miss Audrey Third, a great-granddaughter of Marian Richardson, who kindly provided Ron Woollacott with a mass of biographical information about the Straker and Richardson families, joined FONC on 25th January 1993 and sadly died on 22nd August 1994. Her brother, the late Right Revd Richard Third, former Bishop of Maidstone and Dover, and later Assistant Bishop in Bath and Wells diocese, informed FONC of her passing. He died on 5th May 2016, aged 88.

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### ~~~~FONC'S TOUR PROGRAMME 2021~~~~

Whilst Covid-19 restrictions apply attendance on tours is currently limited to five persons and must be booked in advance (via [fonc@btconnect.com](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com)). Updates on this situation will appear on cemetery notice boards and our website as circumstances change.

**All tours start on Sundays at 2.00pm  
(except Open Day and Open House Weekend or as indicated below)**

17th January - Military connections tour - Jeff Hart  
31st January - General tour - Keith Turpin  
14th February - Music Hall artistes/producers tour - Jeff Hart  
28th February - General tour - John Turpin  
7th March - International Women's Day - Jane Hart  
14th March - Crypt/chapel visits - J Partington/Malcolm Collins/Anne Coley  
21st March - Woodland trail tour - Jeff Hart  
28th March - General tour - Tim Stevenson  
11th April - Cemetery symbols tour - John Turpin  
25th April - General tour - Jeff Hart  
9th May - *World War Two walk (tbc)* - Jeremy Partington/Jeff Hart



**Saturday 15th May - Open Day 11am-5pm** - General and crypt tours  
 23rd May - Crypt/chapel visits - J Partington/Malcolm Collins/Anne Coley  
 30th May - General tour - Keith Turpin  
 13th June - Woodland trail tour - Tim Stevenson  
 20th June - Waterloo Anniversary Event - Jeff Hart  
 27th June - General tour - John Turpin  
 11th July - Crypt/chapel visits - J Partington/Malcolm Collins/Anne Coley  
 18th July - Military connections tour - Jeff Hart  
 25th July - General tour - Tim Stevenson  
 8th August - Music Hall artistes/producers tour - Jeff Hart  
 29th August - General tour - John Turpin  
**Thursday 9th September 7.15pm - LWT bat sighting walk (tbc)**  
 12th September - Woodland trail tour - Tim Stevenson  
 Sat/Sun 18th/19th September 11am -5pm - Open House - various tour leaders  
 26th September - General tour - Keith Turpin  
 10th October - Cemetery symbols tour - Keith Turpin  
**17th October - Nunhead poets - Chris McCabe/ Tim Stevenson/ J Hart (tbc)**  
**Saturday 23rd October - LWT Fungi tour (tbc)**  
 31st October - General tour - Jeff Hart  
 14th November - Great War Walk - Jeff Hart/Jeremy Partington  
 28th November - General tour - Tim Stevenson  
 12th December - Woodland trail tour - Jeff Hart  
 Wednesday 29th December - General tour - *tour guide to be announced*

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## **Monument Inscription Recording Schedule 2021**

### ***Monument Inscription Co-ordinator Garry Wiles***

We meet twice monthly, on the last Sunday of each month and on the 2nd or 3rd Tuesday. We usually work between 10.00am - 4.00pm, weather permitting, but I can accommodate shorter hours within this period if that suits you better. The schedule for 2021 is set out below (we do not meet in December):

| <b>2021</b> | <b>Tuesdays</b> | <b>Sundays</b> |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| January     | 12th            | 31st           |
| February    | 16th            | 28th           |
| March       | 16th            | 28th           |
| April       | 13th            | 25th           |
| May         | 18th            | 30th           |

*continued overleaf*

|           |      |      |
|-----------|------|------|
| June      | 15th | 27th |
| July      | 13th | 25th |
| August    | 17th | 29th |
| September | 14th | 26th |
| October   | 12th | 31st |
| November  | 16th | 28th |

If you are interested in joining us in this rewarding and stimulating work, please contact me on [foncinscriptions@gmail.com](mailto:foncinscriptions@gmail.com). You will first need to be a member of FONC before undertaking any voluntary work.

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### IMPORTANT:

*In view of the continuing Covid-19 restrictions please check the cemetery notice boards and our website [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk) for any changes to the information shown below*

**MONUMENT INSCRIPTION RECORDING** ► Transcribing the inscriptions in Nunhead Cemetery is an important and ongoing task. We meet at the FONC portacabin near the Linden Grove entrance. *The schedule for 2021 is printed above.* For further information and timings and how to volunteer please contact Garry Wiles at [foncinscriptions@gmail.com](mailto:foncinscriptions@gmail.com) or on his mobile phone number 077 999 71 597. *Appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear is essential.*

**PRACTICAL 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 portacabin 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.*

**WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR** ► *Sunday 13th December at 2pm.* Meet your tour guide at the flint circle just inside the main gates in Linden Grove.

**GENERAL TOUR** ► *Sunday 27th December at 2pm.* Meet your tour guide at the flint circle just inside the main gates in Linden Grove.

**CHRISTMAS AGM** ► *Thursday 17th December.* The trustees have decided that, rather than miss this year's AGM altogether, it will be held as a Zoom virtual meeting on the 17th December 2020. We have the facilities to host up to 100 participants and hope that it will not just be the trustees joining in as *we need 25 participants to be quorate!* *Please go to page 6 for additional information.*

## ~ FONC TRUSTEES ~

*Chairman:* **Jeremy Partington**

*Vice-chairman:* **Carol Stevenson**

- email: [nunhead.stevensons@gmail.com](mailto:nunhead.stevensons@gmail.com)

*FONC Co-ordinator:* **Jeff Hart OBE** - email: [fonc@btconnect.com](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com)

*Minutes secretary:* **Jane Hart**, *Hon treasurer:* **Ann Coley**

*Hon membership secretary:* **Simon Mercer** - email: [membership@fonc.org.uk](mailto:membership@fonc.org.uk)

*FONC News editor:* **Ron Woollacott MBE, FRSA**

- email: [editorfonc@hotmail.com](mailto:editorfonc@hotmail.com)

*Other trustees:* **Malcolm Collins, Ish Lennox, Cathy Mercer, Gwyneth Stokes,**

**Alan Till, Keith Turpin, Maureen Woollacott**

\*\*\*\*\*

*Voluntary practical work co-ordinator:* **Tim Stevenson**

- email: [nunhead.stevensons@gmail.com](mailto:nunhead.stevensons@gmail.com)

*Volunteering co-ordinator:* **Ish Lennox** - email: [volunteering@fonc.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@fonc.org.uk)

*Monument inscription recording co-ordinator:* **Garry Wiles**

- email: [foncinscriptions@gmail.com](mailto:foncinscriptions@gmail.com)

*FONC News Hand-delivery co-ordinator:* **Nicola Dunn**

*FONC News Postal co-ordinator:* **Linda Martin**

*Webmaster:* **Simon Quill**

Please send all letters, news items and feature articles for publication to:

**The editor, *FONC News*, email: [editorfonc@hotmail.com](mailto:editorfonc@hotmail.com)**

***The deadline for letters and articles for the next issue is 21st January 2021***

**(Please note copy received after this date may be used in a subsequent issue)**

## Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)



***Friends of Nunhead Cemetery - Established 1981***

***Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No 1178763***

A member of the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE).

A founder member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF)

FONC is a recipient of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Birthday Award for Environmental Improvements (National Commendation) 1998

**FONC's website address is: [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)**

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***Above: FONC's ANNUAL OPEN DAY 19th MAY 2001***  
**Watercolour (artist not known) commissioned by Stonewest to commemorate the completion of the HLF funded work 1999/2001 and presented to FONC**

***Below: A VIEW OF OPEN DAY 2012 - photo: Ron Woollacott***

