

# FONC News

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*Journal of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery*



Derelict Anglican chapel in 1970, before vandals set fire to the chapel thus destroying the timber interior and pointed roof *Photo Ron Woollacott*

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## ~ 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:** 1st April to 30th September, 8.30am - 7.00pm; 1st October to 31st October, 8.30am - 5.00pm; 1st November to 28th February, 8.30am - 4.00pm; 1st March to 31st March, 8.30am - 5.00pm. *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 by e-mail: [jane.c.hart@btconnect.com](mailto:jane.c.hart@btconnect.com).

**FONC Meetings and Events:** Meetings of the trustees that take place 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 website link. Other events are announced in *FONC News* and on the FONC website [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)

**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**

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**Editorial:**

I started working on this copy of *FONC News* during the months of January and February, and by the time you receive it spring will be mere weeks away. Although the pandemic is by no means over, things have improved recently and some of the necessary restrictions imposed by the government have been relaxed. Nunhead Cemetery is a perfectly wonderful place to visit at any time of the year, and particularly so in the spring.

In this issue Jeff Hart tells us why the cemetery has to be closed during high winds, and Ann Coley explains what is required by volunteers to make our Open Day in May a success and how you can help. Botanist Roy Vickery describes another plant that can be found in the cemetery, and Cathy Mercer, continuing her walks observing architectural features, makes a study of porches in her neighbourhood. There is also an interesting piece about the cemetery and description of the two chapels in 1850.



*Ron Woollacott*

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## Subscription Reminder

Please note that all subscriptions are due to be paid on or by the 1st April 2022. Donations are welcome. The annual subscription for UK members is £2, and for overseas members the rate is £10 which helps to cover the cost of mailing four issues of *FONC News* abroad. If you received a subscription reminder form with this issue please return it with your payment to **FONC Membership c/o 31 Normanby Road, LONDON, NW10 1BU**. If you did not receive a reminder form that will be because you have already renewed or have sent FONC a bank standing order. As always, we thank you for your continued support.

*Simon Mercer*

## Closing the Cemetery in High Winds

*Jeff Hart explains when the cemetery is likely to be closed due to predicted high winds*

As I write, storm Corrie is battering Scotland and much of the north of England. It is the latest in a series of fierce winds that have snapped thousands of trees like matchsticks, caused lengthy power outages and, unfortunately, resulted in a number of fatalities. Whilst Nunhead Cemetery has missed much of this devastation, there have been high winds over the years that have caused trees or branches to be blown down presenting a real hazard to visitors - not the least being the 1987 hurricane. This has been increasingly the case in recent years. When such winds are predicted Southwark Council have taken the sensible precaution of closing the cemetery - and other parks and open spaces in the Borough - to the public to avoid risk of injury or even death. FONC recognises the responsibility the Council has in this regard and fully supports such closures.

However, this can cause frustration for visitors to the cemetery at times when it may appear to them that, by the time they arrive at the entrance, the winds do not seem so bad. FONC has been trying to establish the criteria applied for closure of the cemetery and has recently received the following information from Julian Fowgies, Southwark's Arboricultural Services Manager:

*When tracking incoming stormy weather we ordinarily get concerned when wind gusts are forecast at 46mph or above. Wind gusts at and above this range are categorised by the Beaufort Scale (for land) at category 9, Severe Gale, to category 12, Hurricane.*

*Whilst we expect some level of branch breakage and small tree failure in the category 9 range, we would need to consider some variables before arriving at a decision to close any given site and instructing additional emergency call out provision:*

- *site usage (public safety)*
- *timings and predicted length of high winds*
- *the direction of the wind (prevailing/non-prevailing)*
- *the degree to which the trees are in leaf (leaf density - spring and autumn)*
- *the density of tree cover and topography of a given site*

*With Nunhead specifically the baseline trigger should be at category 10 - Storm (54-63mph) during the winter months when the trees are not in leaf. During the spring, summer and autumn months this should be adjusted down to include conditions consistent with category 9.*

*Ordinarily we should be aware that gale and/or storm conditions are on the way with sufficient notice to close the site by tracking the wind gusts via the Met Office observations map. It should be noted though that wind speeds are often downscaled once weather systems hit land, therefore instructions to close sites should be made with enough notice to undertake the closure operationally (and inform comms), but not too far in advance that sites are shut unnecessarily when conditions are experienced.*

This is, of course, somewhat more complex than we were hoping for! FONC had proposed a simple ‘predicted speeds in excess of 40mph might lead to closure’. However, in the light of the Council criteria FONC suggests that, **when planning your visit to the cemetery, if wind speeds in excess of 46mph are predicted, you should check with Southwark Council’s website whether it is proposed to close the cemetery for that day. ■**

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## *A Request from Ann Coley*

### **Could you help us on Open Day in May?**

**G**oing back a few years, a campaign was run to convince people to donate the last hour of their wages of 1999 to children's charities to make the 21st Century a better place. As best I can determine, the initiative raised in excess of £14.5m, demonstrating that if many people contribute a relatively small amount to a cause, then it comes together to be a significant result.

In the previous edition of our journal you will have seen a report on the Open Day held on 4th September. As always, people came in from far and wide and seem to have a good time.

We have a band of volunteers who turn up each year to help make it happen. For some it is the only visit they make to the cemetery in the year but with great dedication they continue to come. We are grateful to each and every person who helps and the event couldn't continue without their support. Something that was particularly obvious last year was that some of the stalwarts of Open Day since the very beginning were unable to attend and that stretched those that were there just a little more thinly than before, and we were a little wearier by the end of the day.

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What would be really helpful would be if some of you could put 21st May 2022 in your diary now and plan to give FONC an hour or two of your time. A few extra volunteers would enable us all to have a quick look at what was going on, have a break and sit down with a cup of tea for a few minutes. This is what you might end up doing depending on time of day:

### **8.30am to 9.30am**

- Put up the big gazebos that cover the plant stall and refreshments. We can do it with six people, it's easier with eight
- Put up smaller gazebos for the FONC stalls, first aid, bug hunt
- Get tables into the right place
- Help control the vehicles coming on site
- Get publications boxes to the right place

### **9.30am to 10.30am**

- Put up tables and chairs
- Put signage in place
- Continue to help control vehicles
- Set up refreshments
- Set up FONC stalls/ information

### **between 11.00am and 5.00pm**

- Help on the FONC stalls with booking tours, signing up new members, selling publications
- Help on the refreshments either behind the scenes buttering scones, keeping the urns and teapots full, or on the stall selling tea and cake
- Keep the choirs running to time
- Help keep the main avenue clear as the vintage hearses move about
- Help direct people to tour start points
- Check the toilets for paper and change rubbish bags

### **5.00 pm to 6.30pm**

- Controlling vehicles as the site is cleared
- Taking tables and chairs down and moving back to collection points
- Packing up FONC stalls and moving contents back to where they belong
- Taking down gazebos and putting away
- Putting rubbish in the collection point
- Eating any leftovers (or taking home)

It may look like we know what we are doing and it is all a bit difficult, but most of the tasks are very straightforward and there will be an experienced volunteer nearby to help you. Also, most of our visitors appreciate it is a volunteer effort and are tolerant of our queues and understand that we don't always have all the answers.

If you can't do the day itself then about 3 weeks before, we put up posters round Southwark parks and take them down in the few days after the event. If anyone would offer to put up posters round Burgess Park, on the Canal Path, Dulwich Park or any other Southwark park it would be much appreciated.

It is even better if we know you are coming, so if you would like to help next time around, please contact: [volunteering@fonc.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@fonc.org.uk) and we will make sure we get in touch towards the end of April.

We hope to see you in May for another busy day. ■

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## **Nunhead Cemetery News No 45**

*By Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator*

### ***Further delays to Anglican chapel repairs***

We still await the repairs to the Anglican chapel following its closure for safety reasons two-and-a-half years ago. FONC has been chasing the Council at regular intervals and we had assumed that work would commence shortly after planning permission was granted last summer. However, we were then told that there were budgetary issues to resolve which, again, we were told had been solved. Priest Stonework and Restoration was ready to commence work on site in January, only to be told that there was an issue with the planning approval because 'things had changed'! We are still trying to get to the bottom of this as we had really hoped to use the chapel again for the May Open Day events.

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## ***Website changes***

As part of our review of how FONC is preparing for the future, we have just moved our website to a new, more flexible platform. One of the consequences of this change is that it has been decided to remove the FONC Members section of the website. We felt this was too complicated for members to access with its centrally generated passwords. We also felt that there was a greater need for general transparency for the wider public. This will mean a change to the way we are able to communicate electronically with members and to distribute electronic copies of *FONC News*. There are some issues still to be resolved so we will be working with our Membership Secretary, Simon Mercer, and Webmaster, Simon Quill - to both of whom we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude - to help improve the website further.

## ***PSPO and vandalism***

A site meeting, at which FONC was represented, was held on the 28th January 2022 to discuss improvements to the signage of the dogs on/off leads areas of the cemetery following a recent bout of vandalism to the sign posts. We are very happy with what is now being proposed. In addition, Southwark Council have said that, once the signage improvements are in place, they will be taking a more robust approach to enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order by issuing Fixed Penalty Notices to those dog owners refusing to comply, to be followed by prosecution if payment is not made.

## ***FONC Services well attended***

The All Souls Service, led by Father Dele and arranged by FONC trustee Ish Lennox, was again graced by the performance of the Lighthouse Cathedral Choir. After the service, hot refreshments and cake were served thanks, to FONC Treasurer, Ann Coley.

The Act of Remembrance Service was attended by around 30 people, who participated in the laying of wreaths at all of the usual six locations in the cemetery. Councillor Renata Hamvas joined the service at the Limesford Road gate to lay a wreath on behalf of Southwark Council. Afterwards, she said that she was pleased to have been able to participate and, impressed by the event, would ensure that it would be added to the Mayor's list of Acts of Remembrance being undertaken in the borough in future.



## Cemetery Flora: Hogweed, *Heracleum sphondylium*

by Roy Vickery, roy@plant-lore.com

**H**ogweed can be found scattered in rough grassy areas throughout the cemetery, where it flowers throughout the year, most prolifically in early summer. Flowering stalks can reach 6ft in height.

The name hogweed could refer to the plant's rather rough appearance, or because its flowers produce a smell which some people think resembles that of swine. A third alternative is that it was gathered for feeding to pigs, the name pig's bubbles being recorded from Devon and Somerset, where it was said to be 'extensively collected as food for pigs which are very fond of it'.

Another name is cow-parsnip, said to have been invented by William Turner, the 'Father of English botany', in 1548. He claimed that hogweed was 'good fodder for cows', but evidence for this is scanty. However, it seems that hogweed was considered to be good food for pet rabbits.

Although cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) was most widely known as mother-die, and believed to cause the death of one's mother if picked and taken indoors (see *FONC News* No 152), this name and superstition was attached to hogweed in the Midlands. In 2018 a Northwich, Cheshire, woman recalled:



Hogweed photo: Roy Vickery

Mum would never put it in the house. When we were kids and had a row with mum we would pick some and hide it in the house, then wake up screaming we've killed mum.

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However, despite this, she, like children elsewhere, used to hollow stems to make peashooters:

A friend who grew up in Germany in a military family said that when children they made pea-shooters from hogweed plants and used elder berries as ammunition, and caused their mothers much annoyance as the elderberries would leave purple blotches on their clothes.

In Kent in the 1920s children made ‘flutes’ from hogweed stems, in Cornwall early in the twentieth century children made ‘skeets’ or syringes from the stems, while in north Devon in the 1940s, the stem of hogweed was used as a cigarette substitute, and boy’s bacca was a common term.

There are few reports of hogweed being used in folk medicine. On the Isle of Man stems and roots were boiled and the liquid drunk to treat jaundice and other liver troubles. In Norfolk the sap was used to treat warts, and in the mid-eighteenth century young tender shoots with their outer skin removed ‘enjoyed a reputation as a digestive’ in the Inner Hebrides. In Ireland hogweed was boiled in water and given to cows ‘to keep rheumatism at bay’.

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## Peering at porches

*Text and photos by Cathy Mercer*

*During the pandemic Cathy and Simon took the opportunity to observe the various aspects of street architecture in their neighbourhood. In this article they take a look at porches.*

Last summer we again did lots of local walks observing architectural features. Previously we’ve looked at doors but now we’ve started looking more at porches - connected to doors, of course, but more complicated and rather more pricier to change, so more likely to be the ‘real thing’ on older buildings.

Like doors, porches make for good observation, as they vary over time and are big enough to allow for observation and photography without having to peer too close. It would be good also to look at the bright attractive mosaics and tiles which Victorian porches often had but these are harder to examine from a distance and sadly have often been removed or covered over.

We live in Dollis Hill, near Wembley, and most houses here are Victorian, Edwardian or 1920s and 1930s. Victorian porches were often quite ornate, with fancy columns or woodwork trellising [*Figure 1*]. Houses don't often retain their original doors but they do keep the wooden trellising and the tiled roofs. Here you can see a pair of porches in a terrace, with an original door in the original porch on the right. The left-hand door has been replaced but the original porches still stand.

Interestingly, the Victorian terraces on this road have different porches on



*Fig 1*



*Fig 2*



*Fig 3*

*Fig 1.* Pair of porches on Bertie Road, Willesden, one with original door and one without.

*Fig 2.* Recessed arched doorway on Bertie Road with mosaic surviving.

*Fig 3.* Squared recessed porch on Bertie Road

each side of the street - the north side has attractive recessed arches or squared-off recesses [*Figures 2 and 3*], while the south side houses have equally pretty and practical jutting tiled roofs [*Figure 1*], all creating variety. Porch tiles are often cheaper clay tiles, rather than slate, as here. These are often quite decorative, though sadly not here. One does however wonder if all this variety was deliberate planning or dependant on the stocks in local builders' yards!

Recessed porches often have the original door replaced with one flush with the main front wall to create a little extra space. Sometimes the original door survives behind the modern door. However, the sheltering function of the porch for visitors is sadly lost.

The houses were of course, Victorian on both sides but after spotting this difference we started noticing others, such as one side had bay windows and the other did not. When we looked really closely at the arched porches on the

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north side, we also noticed that the porches - and their houses - grew narrower half-way down the road [Figure 4]. There is no obvious reason for this other than the developers wanting to squeeze in a few more houses!

Victorian architecture can be fussy but here the attractive porches on smaller terraces in nearby Cricklewood [Figure 5] retain their original decorative columns and gables, with modern paintwork enhancing the pretty effect. The decorative porches contrast well with the plainer brickwork of the houses.



Fig 4. Two arched recessed porches on Bertie Road - the one slightly narrower than the other one which retains its attractive tiles



Fig 5. Attractive columns decorate this porch on a Cricklewood Terrace

The Arts and Crafts Movement in the late Victorian period encouraged more rustic styles and this is reflected in the Edwardian terraces of the Dollis Hill Estate, where we live. Here the porches are wide and deep, decorated with wooden trellising above the doors, allowing space for furniture and storage [Figure 6]. The trellising requires good paintwork but generally survives, perhaps because it is above head height and so out of reach of knocks. However, the original balustrades which surrounded the porch are less fortunate and rarely survive - they're in a more precarious position at ground level and get in the way of dustbins and other essentials. This house is unusual in retaining its trellising above the door, with attractive original patterning, as well as its balustrade, though whether or not this is original is uncertain.



Fig 6. A porch on Mulgrave Road, Dollis Hill Estate, with original trellising and balustrade

Perhaps not surprisingly, many houses have boxed in these large recessed porches, thus creating far-sized storage spaces. These altered porches are often full of house-plants and generally retain the original doors.



*Fig 7.* A 'simple' un-recessed porch on the Dollis Hill estate

The houses on the Dollis Hill Estate are very much of a muchness - two-storey brick with bay windows and sashes. But look closer at their porches and you may see that the houses on some of the streets have smaller, simpler entrances, with small projecting tiled roofs over the doorway instead of the ample recessed space, and mini-balustrades instead of trellising [*Figure 7*].

There are also a few later 'modernist' houses on the Estate, filling in wartime bomb-sites. These later houses are simpler in style but blend in well:

similar height, width, brick, and - you've guessed it, attractive porches [*Figure 8*]. The period after the First World War saw brick terraces replaced with semis and maisonettes. Although the style of houses changed quite dramatically over time, with casement windows replacing sash and bricks acquiring pebble-dashed coatings, porches seem to stay more consistent but become less fussy and more practical, retaining good arches and recessing or projecting roofs, useful when fumbling for keys and allowing postie to deliver without getting too wet.

Many maisonettes were built in the area in the 1920s and 1930s, with separate front doors and shared front and back gardens with hedges, giving a cosy traditional feel, as they looked just like terraced houses. This worked so well that some of the maisonettes retained their original occupiers until quite recently

The doors are arranged in pairs, with the lower maisonette always having a door at the front of the building, with traditional stained glass. The upper maisonette's door sometimes paired up with its neighbour below [*Figure 9*] and sometimes tucked round the corner, with tiled roofing sweeping round



*Fig 8.* 'Modernist' in-fill houses on the Dollis Hill Estate with porches - one recessed door and one in-filled porch

*continued on next page*



Fig 9. Maisonettes with paired doors under a single porch

the corner in end-of-terrace maisonettes [Figure 10].

More modern blocks of flats are also often designed in a traditional style, as this 1990s block shows. The warm red brick is reflected in the clay tiles over the shared projecting porch, doing its traditional job of protecting householders and visitors [Figure 11]. It's interesting to see how looking closely at particular architectural features can reveal more too about the details of houses and wider neighbourhoods and to see how traditional features have been retained, restored, adapted or even occasionally deleted. ■



< Fig 10. Maisonettes with porch sweeping the corner of the house to protect both doors



> Fig 11. A 1990s apartment block with traditional porch

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## Obituary

~ STANLEY HYAM ~

We are sorry to learn of the death of Stanley Hyam, member No 2011, who died recently. He joined FONC in October 1995 and lived for many years in Ivydale Road, Nunhead, until moving into a nursing home near Virginia Water, Surrey, some time ago. Stan, who was in his nineties, was Head of Property at the Amalgamated Engineering Union until his retirement in 1990.

~ **Buried at Nunhead No 22** ~  
**John Tucker 1816 - 1886**  
**John Ruskin's Coach Builder**  
*by Michèle Louise Burford*

In October 1875 the great Victorian art critic, John Ruskin, visited the coach builder, Tucker of Camberwell, where his new carriage was being built. He wrote to his cousin Mrs Joan Severn to say he was ‘greatly delighted with my brougham, especially the inside. I never chose *anything* that’s turned out so much to my mind as that green pattern for lining. I ordered my little shield [family arms] in its real colours, black, white and red - and a basket for luggage on the top, and we’ll have a fine time in the spring.’

The carriage was required for Ruskin's ‘old fashioned’ posting tour, from London to Coniston in the Lake District, complete with a postilion, which took three and a half weeks to complete. It was built by John Tucker whose coachworks were located at 73 Denmark Hill, Camberwell.

Tucker was born in Bexley, Kent, in 1816, the son of Stephen, a carpenter, and his wife Mary. At St Mary’s Church, Lambeth, on the 22nd July 1839 Tucker married Sarah Maizey, the daughter of a rope maker, and at that time his occupation was a coach painter and continued to be so according to the censuses in 1841 and 1851. However, by 1861 he had become a coach maker, employing three men and residing at 8 Rockingham Place, Elephant and Castle, Newington, with his wife and their children Emily and Stephen.

In 1871 his address was 46 Denmark Road, Lambeth, a short walk from the coach works on Denmark Hill.

Ruskin placed an order for the carriage in March 1875, and was notoriously quite difficult to please, and naturally was not content with the usual standard design. According to Arthur Severn, who travelled with his wife Joan on the tour, ‘It was a regular posting carriage, with good strong wheels, a place behind for the luggage, and cunning drawers inside it for all kinds of things that we might require on this journey’.

On the 17th March 1875, Ruskin wrote to Joan Severn about one ‘great change I have made is to have softly cushioned panels instead of glass for people on front seat to lean against. The two front glasses and door glasses

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will be enough for me'. Ruskin paid £190 for Tucker's carriage, worth around £18,000 in today's money.

The first journey in the new carriage commenced from London on the 20th April 1876 and took the party, consisting of Ruskin, and Joan and Arthur Severn, through numerous towns and pretty villages via St Albans, Sheffield, Pontefract, Selby, Knaresborough, Ripon, Richmond, Penrith and Ambleside and at last to Ruskin's home, Brantwood at Coniston.



Ruskin's carriage - drawing by Michèle L Burford

It was unusual to travel such a distance at this time by carriage as most travellers preferred the convenience and speed of the railway. John Tucker was therefore quite fortunate that Ruskin preferred for 'pleasure' to travel wherever possible by carriage. The tour had to be arranged with great precision as many of the inns around the country no longer had large stables for changes of horses and postilions, which was necessary at every stop.

The carriage caused quite a sensation at the King's Head posting Inn, Sheffield, as a very large crowd had assembled outside, according to Arthur Severn, 'to see what extraordinary kind of mortals could be going to travel in such a way'. Joan and Arthur Severn sat inside the carriage, the postilion rode on one of the pair of horses, and strangely enough, John Ruskin himself, rode outside on the box!

John Tucker's wife Sarah died in 1881 and was buried at Nunhead Cemetery on the 4th March 1881.

About 2.00 am on the 20th November 1883, disaster struck when an alarming fire broke out at Tucker's coachworks at the rear of 73 Denmark Hill. The buildings were almost all constructed of wood and, despite the fire engine attending from Peckham Road, by the time the firemen arrived the place was 'one mass of flames'. The whole of the workshops were entirely



guttled and destroyed, together with a stock of 16 valuable carriages and coach building materials. Fortunately, the contents of the buildings were insured. The cause of the fire was never discovered.

John Tucker died on the 11th February 1886, leaving a personal estate of £1,225 to his married daughter, Emily Wright. He was buried in grave number 12191, Square 106,\* at Nunhead Cemetery on the 18th February 1886, with his wife and two others.

As for the carriage, this was thereafter only used locally by Ruskin and the Severn family, and for carrying Ruskin's numerous guests. Now, 146 years later, although motionless, the carriage remains a great attraction to today's many visitors to Brantwood where it is kept. ■

\* The grave is in an inaccessible part of the cemetery.

*(Michèle is an enthusiastic Ruskinian and a Friend of Ruskin's Brantwood.)*

**Sources:** Burial records, Ancestry.co.uk, British Newspaper Archive

**References:** *The Professor*, Arthur Severn's Memoir of John Ruskin, edited by James S Dearden

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## Nunhead Cemetery

The following extract is from the 1850 edition of

### **A Topographical History of Surrey, Volume III**

by Edward Wedlake Brayley FSA &c.

Assisted by John Britton FSA &c, and E W Brayley junior FIS and FGS

The *Nunhead Cemetery* which occupies an elevated situation between Peckham Rye and the Kent Road, (and the greater portion of which formed a part of the old Shard Estate), was purchased a few years ago by the London Cemetery Company, and is now their freehold. It comprises an area of nearly fifty acres, which is enclosed within a neat iron-railing; and was consecrated, with the exception of eight acres left for the burial of Dissenters, by the Bishop of Winchester, in 1840. No chapels were erected until the summer of 1844; previous to which a competition was opened and sixty-five designs were submitted to the company, from which those by Mr Thomas Little and Mr Brakspear were chosen, and the buildings immediately proceeded with.

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The principal chapel (Mr Little's), which is in the decorated pointed style, is octagonal in form, built with light-coloured brick, having a pointed roof of slate. There is an attached ante-chapel, or vestibule, expanding like a small transept; and a square and lofty entrance-porch, or rather tower, open on three sides, and sufficiently large to admit hearses, and other carriages to be drawn up within it; this is embattled, and surmounted at the corners by tall pinnacles richly ornamented. Six sides of the octagon are neatly fitted up with stalls for the attending mourners: at the entrance is a carved oaken screen, and on the opposite side, a small reading-desk for the delivery of the burial service. The ante-chapel is intended to be ornamented in an arcade like manner, for the reception of tablets or other memorials. Beneath the chapel are spacious vaults, partially fitted up as catacombs. The cost was about £4,000.

The Dissenters Chapel, on the unconsecrated ground, is a smaller building; lighted on each side by three hexangular-shaped windows, and at the end by a triple lancet window, with a tracery head of quatrefoils and other ornaments. Here is an ante-chapel, with a gallery above for the accommodation of spectators; this chapel is, also, neatly fitted up with stalls of a similar character to those in the other chapel. There is a small robing room; and vaults for catacombs beneath the entire building. The company's chaplain is the Revd Henry Morgan LL.B.; who is the curate of the district church of St Mary Magdalene.

But few tombs or head-stones are yet placed in the grounds, which are well laid with shrubs and flowers; there are no inscriptions of importance. A large vault, near the entrance of the principal chapel, has recently been made for George Reed, Esq, of Blackheath Park; but no burial has taken place.

At the entrance of the cemetery are two neat lodges; one is occupied as an office, and the other as the habitation for the resident manager, Mr Buxton. The views obtained from the higher ground in the cemetery are very attractive: on one side is seen London, backed by Highgate and Hampstead hills; and on the others, the hills of Surrey and Kent.■



Carving of an angel and shield at the entrance to the Anglican chapel *Photo: Ron Woollacott*

## ~ DIARY DATES ~

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY TOUR ► Sunday 13th March at 2.00pm.** Meet your guide for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to Nunhead Cemetery in Linden Grove .

**VISITS TO THE CHAPEL CRYPT ► Sunday 20th March at 2.00pm.** Meet your guides for the afternoon outside the Anglican chapel,

**CEMETERY SYMBOLS TOUR ► Sunday 10th April at 2.00pm.** Meet your guide for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to Nunhead Cemetery in Linden Grove .

**SECOND WORLD WAR TOUR ► Sunday 8th May at 2.00pm.** Meet your guide for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main entrance to Nunhead Cemetery in Linden Grove .

**ANNUAL OPEN DAY NUNHEAD CEMETERY ► Saturday 21st May from 11.00am to 5.00pm.** Numerous stalls, general tours and crypt visits.

**VISITS TO THE CHAPEL CRYPT ► Sunday 22nd May at 2.00pm.** Meet your guides for the afternoon outside the Anglican chapel,

**GENERAL GUIDED TOURS OF THE CEMETERY ► *these take place on the last Sunday in every month starting at 2.00pm.*** Meet near the flint circle just inside the main gates in Linden Grove. Tours take between one and a half to two hours. The publications and information desk will be present, weather and volunteers permitting.

**PRACTICAL WORKDAYS ► *these take place on the first Sunday in the month from 10.00 am 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.*

**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. For further information and timings and how to volunteer please contact Garry Wiles at [foncinscriptions@gmail.com](mailto:foncinscriptions@gmail.com). *Appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear is essential.*

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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 19th April 2022*

(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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