

FONC News

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Journal of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery



Historic hearse at FONC's Open Day 2022 *Photo: Pete Trotman*

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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. *Just send your request to:* **FONC Membership c/o 31 Normanby Road, LONDON, NW10 1BU** or email: 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: 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 on 020 8694 6079 or by e-mail: 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 for the Zoom website link. Other events are announced in *FONC News* and on the FONC website **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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Contributors: Josephine Amor; Connie Beighton; Michèle Louise Burford; Jeff Hart; Cathy Mercer; Joan Price; Tim Stevenson; Pete Trotman; Roy Vickery; Moira Walshe. Uncredited text is by the editor. *The editor and FONC trustees do not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by contributors.*

Editorial:

Welcome to a bumper Autumn issue. In addition to all the usual favourites, including the latest cemetery news and another article about cemetery flora, we have an evocative piece about the annual Open Day by Connie Beighton, and Cathy Mercer has written an amusing story about her grandfather who angered John Ruskin. Michèle Louise Burford completes the fascinating life story of Ruskin's engraver John Burgess, and Moira Walshe, whose ancestors are buried at Nunhead, tells us about her new book, the *Clarks of Crofton Hall*, and we have part one of the life story of yet another remarkable woman whose remains rest at Nunhead.

RW



FONC Face-to-Face AGM Returns

by Jeff Hart (FONC Co-ordinator)

Chairman of FONC Trustees Jeremy Partington expressed his delight at being able to welcome members back to a face-to-face Annual General Meeting held at the Green Community Centre, Nunhead Green, on the 16th June 2022. He noted that FONC activities and events had now returned to normal following the worst of the pandemic and thanked FONC volunteers and Southwark Council staff for their efforts during a very difficult time.

Co-ordinator Jeff Hart was able to report a welcome increase in FONC membership over the year and highlighted the efforts of Trustees to further improve on our good governance procedures. Whilst highlighting some of the key FONC activities over the year and noting the effort taken by both FONC volunteers and Southwark officers to submit what he considered to be an excellent National Heritage Lottery Fund application at the end of May, he very much regretted the extremely slow response by Southwark Council in carrying out the repairs necessary to re-instate access to the Anglican

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chapel. Vice-Chairman Carol Stevenson was able to strike a more positive note in reporting the excellent on-site volunteer activities in carrying out practical work and monument inscription recording. Treasurer Ann Coley noted that receipts were returning to pre-Covid levels and explained that the deficit for the year was as a result of significant expenditure on major monument repairs in line with the reserves policy adopted by the Trustees.

Four of our Trustees were standing down this year. Malcolm Collins, Ish Lennox and Alan Till were thanked for their excellent support over a number of years and the meeting noted that they would all be continuing to contribute to FONC's work as members. Jeremy Partington paid particular tribute to Gwyneth Stokes who was standing down after a remarkable 39 years as a Committee Member/Trustee. It was with great pleasure that we presented Gwyneth with a framed limited-edition print of the Anglican chapel in appreciation. In line with the requirements of the Constitution, Jeff Hart and Ron Woollacott were re-appointed as Trustees and, although unable to attend the meeting since he was enjoying his honeymoon in Zimbabwe, the meeting also welcomed the appointment of new Trustee Oliver Lomer who will be bringing new skills to augment the Board of Trustees.

At the conclusion of business, members enjoyed plentiful homemade refreshments organised by Ann Coley. This was followed by a briefing and questions on the draft Southwark Nunhead Cemetery Conservation Management Plan and an overview of other ongoing works at the cemetery, given by Matthew Hill, Project Manager for Parks and Open Spaces, London Borough of Southwark.

Note: For those members who were unable to attend the AGM, all AGM papers may be accessed on our website www.fonc.org.uk If anyone has any difficulty they can contact Jeff Hart direct.

Nunhead Cemetery News No 47

by Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator

Heavens above - Anglican chapel repairs begin □

Following continuous pressure from FONC there has at last been progress in, once again, making the Anglican chapel accessible to visitors. After removing more friable material, it was suddenly announced two days before our May Open Day that the chapel could be accessed 'at visitors own risk'

despite the essential safety repairs not having been carried out! Notices were accordingly placed on the chapel by Southwark, but FONC took the decision that it would be inappropriate for FONC to unlock the chapel gates and allow unsupervised access to over 4,000 visitors in one day. However, on the 18th July, Priest Restoration and Conservation arrived on site to begin the safety repairs which we are assured by Southwark will be completed by the 8th September - in time to allow Open House/Heritage Open Day visitors free access to the chapel.

Bats in the belfry?

The ever-popular bat walk in the cemetery led by London Wildlife Trust takes place on the evening of Thursday, 8th September. Full details of this and all other FONC tours can be found on the FONC website under the FONC Events tab and then under Guided Tours.

Boundary walls progress

Planning permission has now been granted for the proposed major rebuild works to the Limesford Road boundary walls. However, the works are not due to begin until 2023 and the Diocesan faculty, in regard to adjacent burials, is still awaited. We are also waiting to hear from Southwark regarding the longer-term plans for the Brockley footpath boundary walls which were extensively damaged by Storm Eunice. (see *FONC News* No 156).

Martyrs to recurring cracks

Almost unbelievably, after two complicated and expensive attempts at laying the new surfacing around the Scots Martyrs memorial and months of muddy disruption to the site, new cracks are starting to appear in the surface. This depressing situation was immediately reported to Southwark Council by FONC and we now await their response. In the meantime, more cracks are appearing and the first ones are widening.

Blooming new Flint Circle plans

In recent years, the circular flint walled planting bed inside the Linden Grove entrance has been enhanced by Southwark Council with bedding plants around the central box cone. However, the box has now succumbed to the dreaded box moth caterpillar and Southwark Council has taken the policy decision that the use of bedding plants in the Borough is unsustainable on

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environmental and cost grounds. As a result, the bed is currently just bare earth baked hard by the recent very hot weather. FONC was asked for its views on a new planting regime which we hope will be implemented later in the year. We have suggested that the bed becomes a herb garden which would be educational, sustainable, attractive and ecologically valuable. We hope to see rosemary hedging, a large central shrub such as myrtle and a variety of other small herbs filling the bed.

Conservation Management Plan consultations delayed

We were told by Matthew Hill, Project Manager for Parks and Open Spaces, at our AGM (see AGM report this issue) that Southwark Council would shortly respond to the amendments proposed by FONC to the draft Conservation Management Plan for the cemetery. It was also intended to begin public consultation on the Plan ‘in summer’. However, disappointingly, nothing has yet happened. The Plan will be an essential part of the delivery of the East Lodge project in due course so we hope that we will not have to wait too much longer. Similarly, we await resolution of a dispute between Southwark Council and the owner of the West Lodge before new Public Space Protection Order signage can be reinstated.

Full East Lodge survey report available

Further to our report of the East Lodge Activity Planning Survey outcome in *FONC News* No 156, Southwark has now published the full survey report (all 48 pages of it!) on their website. This analyses in detail the nearly 600 responses received to the joint FONC/Southwark survey. This can be accessed at <https://consultations.southwark.gov.uk/environment-leisure/east-lodge-restoration-and-activity-planning/> It is also expected that the current East Lodge preliminary works will be completed at the end of September by which time we hope to have good news on the outcome of the National Heritage Lottery Fund bid to enable full restoration to proceed.

Electronic access to FONC News

As a further enhancement of the FONC website, no password is now necessary to access the Members Area. All FONC members, and anyone else interested, can go to this heading where you will find back issues of *FONC News* (each one is placed there after the current issue has been distributed). The FONC Constitution and AGM papers can also be found under this heading.

Open House/Heritage Open Day

This year FONC will be participating in both the Open City/House event and the National Trust supported Heritage Open Days events over the weekend of 10th/11th September 2022. We will be providing our publications and enquiries desk, monumental inscription recording and light refreshments on both afternoons between 1.00pm and 5.00pm with general cemetery tours at 2.00pm and 3.00pm. In addition conducted visits to both the Anglican chapel and the chapel crypt will run every 45 minutes from 1.15pm on both afternoons. This is a great time for FONC members and friends for a more relaxed visit to explore areas of the cemetery which are not normally open to the public.

RIP: Miss Shirley Paterson of Plymouth

(A member of FONC since 1995)

Joan Price of Sanderstead has written to say that ‘another member has been gathered up,’ and as far as she knew she was still a member at her passing. The deceased lady was Miss Shirley Paterson of Plymouth. She continued, ‘We have mutual great grandparents and grandparents buried at Nunhead and many years ago Shirley wrote to Ron Woollacott who arranged (with Southwark Cemeteries Department) to have a path put through the brambles so we could visit same. I am 85 now and don't go far but enjoy reading the hard copy of *FONC News* sent through the post.

RIP: Mr S R Sumner (Roy)

(A member of FONC since 1994)

Josephine Amor has written to say that Mr S R Sumner (Roy), a long-time member of FONC, passed peacefully away at home on the 15th April 2022, aged 98. Roy was born in August 1923, and so only a year and a few months from making it to 100! He spent his childhood in south-east London, in Catford and Bellingham. He joined up with the REME (founder

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Mr S R Sumner

member) during the Second World War and then settled in Oxford, where he worked for Morris Motors.

Josephine continues: 'Roy was my father and I would like to continue his support of the Friends and take up his membership in his memory. Dad joined FONC in 1994 after researching the Sumner family grave plot at Nunhead (Grave No 22350 Square 119), which Ron Woollacott personally helped him with. Soon after, in 1996, we visited Nunhead on the Friends' Open Day to find the gravestone! (See photo attached of Roy with the Sumner gravestone in 1996).

I have since taken on his interest in the history of the family and have found out further information regarding the family members who are buried and commemorated at the cemetery. It would be great to share the interesting stories I have found about them in future journals of the Friends, if that is possible.'

Ed: *Thank you Josephine, we would love to hear from you and read about your family members interred at Nunhead.*

New Open Day Organiser needed this year *writes Tim Stevenson*

After being the organiser of FONC's annual Open Day for nearly twenty years, I have decided to stand down. We will therefore need a new organiser before the first invitations for 2023 are issued in November 2022.

The main job of the organiser is to issue invitations to existing and new stallholders, confirm their places when payment is received, and decide on the positions of stalls and the schedule for the musical performances. It is not a huge amount of work in advance and Jeff Hart acts as site manager on the day itself, so the correspondence can be done from home.

The creative part of the job is thinking of new stallholders to invite. We do not invite purely commercial stalls to Open Day. We want local groups who are connected with all of the different aspects that we love about Nunhead Cemetery - trees, plants, wildlife, local history, family history, cemetery-

ies and parks. A lot of visitors comment on how much they enjoy the non-commercial atmosphere of Open Day when compared to other local events. I have also tried to include more crafts suitable to a woodland, and more activities for families and children to have a go at. Balancing the attractions with the respect due to a cemetery is very important. A new organiser can bring a fresh approach and new ideas.

If you take this on, I will let you have all of the information you need, and I will sit with you and talk you through all the details. The other members of the FONC committee will no doubt also be happy to help. This would be a great opportunity for someone interested in moving into the field of events management as it is a very well-established event with unique features - although the role is obviously a voluntary one.

My grandfather met John Ruskin!

by Cathy Mercer

I was interested to read about John Ruskin's eccentric coach ride across England in the spring issue of *FONC News*.

John Ruskin's eccentric behaviour was well known and my father used to tell us a funny story about the experiences of his father, Robert. In a nutshell, Robert was on holiday in the Lake District with a friend and Ruskin 'attacked' the two of them!

Robert and his friend were out enjoying a gentle bicycle ride near lovely Coniston Water, where Ruskin lived; suddenly an angry man dashed out in the road, shouting and waving a stick and hitting their bicycles. It was of course John Ruskin himself and the cause of his ire was not my grandfather or his friend but their bicycles - he shouted at them about the wickedness of bicycles and the modern world.

My grandfather was born in 1865 and must have been in his teens or early



Caricature by Kuklos 1888
Courtesy M L Burford

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twenties by then, so this incident must have taken place in the 1880s, so Ruskin (1819-90) must have been in his 70s. The bicycle had been around for half a century by then and fortunately neither he nor his friend nor their bikes were badly damaged!

My grandfather died in 1938 but my father used to love telling this story about his father's eccentric brush with fame.■

Buried at Nunhead No 23 (Part two)

Arthur Burgess 1843 -1886, Ruskin's assistant

by Michèle Louise Burford

In 1875, after Selwyn Image had left Oxford, Burgess was able to meet him frequently and Image reflects that: 'as the years went by our intimate relationship increased. We entered into one another's lives, if I may say so, absolutely. There was not a care, an expectation, a work, an interest of any kind of importance, which we did not share. We trusted one another so thoroughly, that I am sure there was nothing about myself that I cared to hide from him; and I believe that there was little about him, that he hid from me.'

In 1880 Burgess went to Normandy in France where Ruskin had asked him to photograph among others, the North West Portal of Rouen Cathedral - it happened to be one of the last pictures taken with the carved heads, as shortly afterwards some restoration work had taken place and they no longer existed.

On the 31st May 1880 Selwyn Image wrote to the architect Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo (1851-1942): 'Burgess is anxious to get a little model drawing'. By this time Burgess was spending some time studying art with Selwyn Image and his friends, drawing from life models and copying works of art in the National Gallery.

After the death of his father in 1880, Burgess continued to live with his widowed mother and two sisters at 73 Montpelier Road, Peckham. He also shared a studio with Selwyn Image at 5 Grafton Square, Clapham, and in February 1881 Image wrote to Mackmurdo: 'I have been very busy experimenting at the studio and helping to look after a sick friend', which most probably refers to Burgess, as it was on the 18th November 1881 that Ruskin wrote to George Allen to say: 'Burgess is past work I find and I've been terri-

bly hindered in this last *Proserpina*. I can pay Burgess no more for salary after Xmas.'

A new and exciting movement was being established by Burgess's Oxford friends that were now residing in London and in 1882 the *Century Guild of Artists* was founded by Mackmurdo. The architect and poet Herbert Percy Horne (1864-1916) and Selwyn Image were members, and associates included the illustrator Heywood Sumner (1853-1940), the sculptor Benjamin Creswick (1853-1946), and Clement Heaton (1861-1940), who specialised in cloisonné. The Guild's periodical *Hobby Horse* was much admired by William Morris (1834-1896), and over the years contained contributions from Mackmurdo, Image, Horne, Burgess, May Morris (1862-1938), Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), Hubert Parry (1848-1918), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and several others.

On the 9th October 1884, Burgess attended the Parish Church of Saint Pancras in London, and 'prayed a Licence' to be married there to Emma Phillips of Camberwell. Just two days later, Arthur Burgess, a bachelor, aged 41, was married to Emma Phillips, a spinster, aged 31. Selwyn Image was a witness to the marriage. Emma was already pregnant, and within the first three months of 1885 their only child, Mary, was born.

Before marrying Burgess, Emma was living with her parents, William Henry Phillips (1809-1884) and Charlotte née Daniels at Church House, Linden Grove, Nunhead. The house was built for her uncle, the monumental stonemason Henry Daniel and stood directly opposite the gates to Nunhead Cemetery. It was a large gloomy gothic house with glass display cases in the front garden containing examples of grave memorials, which were still there in the 1960s and after the house was converted into apartments. Emma's father invented the first fire extinguisher named the 'Phillip's Fire Annihilator' in 1845. Rather ironically, the factory in Battersea Fields that produced them burned down on the 31st October 1852 killing the night watchman's wife. William Henry Phillips died not long after his daughter's marriage and was buried at Nunhead Cemetery on the 28th November 1884 (see Ron Woollacott's *More Nunhead Notables* published by FONC).

In January 1886 *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, after a false start, began publication again, the second issue starting with another No 1. *The Scotsman* reviewed it on the 19th January 1886 and said: 'If one may judge by the first number, one might say that the prancing of the Hobby-Horse is not

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likely to attract very much public notice. It is, if anything, a fantastic beast; and its attempts to masquerade in the skin of the Pegasus are by no means sprightly. Selwyn Image opens the number with some gushing poetry. The best thing in the number is Mr Arthur H Mackmurdo's very full and thoughtfully written notes on pictures of Margaritone of Arezzo, Cimabue, and Giotto. For the frontispiece there is a pretty piece of pictorial fantasy by Arthur Burgess, entitled, *The Lady of the Rains*, in which the female figure is gracefully represented.'

Sad news of Burgess reached Ruskin on the 1st April 1886, which left him 'dreadfully tired and low', and little over a month later on the 9th May 1886, Burgess passed away at 25 Somerville Road, Queens Road, Peckham. He had died of atrophy of brain (dementia), phthisis (tuberculosis), and exhaustion. He left a personal estate of £2,293 to his widow Emma.

Selwyn Image relates that 'his health for many years was bad, his circumstances were unavoidably hard, he was cursed or blessed, as you like to call it, with a self torturing spirit of extreme subtlety, which probably no circumstances in the world could have saved him from the pains and dangers of.'

Ruskin wrote to Joan Severn from Brantwood that month to say: 'Poor Burgess is dead, and will be for all the remainder of my life, a burden, on my conscience.' Although Burgess had not worked for Ruskin since 1881, according to Ruskin's memorial to him, he had hoped with Burgess's help 'to carry out the design of *Our Father's have told us*. But very certainly - any farther effort in that direction is now impossible to me: the more that I perceive the new generation risen round us cares nothing about what its Fathers either did or said.'

Selwyn Image, in his memorial in *Century Guild Hobby Horse* No 6, April 1887, gives further insight into the character of Burgess: 'I do not wish, as he would not have wished me, to write a panegyric over him. He had great weaknesses, and great faults; he had powers so rare, and virtues so fine, that I am afraid it would sound merely exaggeration, if I said all the good that I knew of him.... No man I believe ever breathed, whose spiritual and moral instincts were more delicate; whose devotion to his friends was more thorough and chivalrous; who more readily and on every occasion held his keen intelligence patiently and unreservedly at their service. He did foolish things, and it may be, unworthy things; why should I hesitate to say what nobody was so ready to acknowledge as he was himself? I loved him too dearly, and honoured him too highly, to care now about denying his faults, or about

speaking of his splendid qualities with unbalanced emotion.’ Selwyn Image also produced a beautiful woodcut in the same publication in memory of Burgess. It was given to the British Museum by Selwyn Image, and their catalogue explains the allegorical imagery as *The river of life, overhung by the poppies of death, whence the soul, symbolised by the bird, flies upwards into light.*

At Brantwood, on the 28th February 1887, John Ruskin completed his memorial to Arthur Burgess with the following words: ‘I am thankful to say securely for both of us, that we did what we could thoroughly, and that all we did together will remain trustworthy and useful - uncontradicted, and unbettered, till it is forgotten.’ The complete epitaph which appears in No 6 of *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, ran to eight pages not including the accompanying examples of Burgess's engravings of Ruskin's drawings, which had been prepared for the unfinished portion of *Proserpina*.

Arthur Burgess was interred at Nunhead Cemetery, on the 13th May 1886 in family grave No 15862, square 21, where his father William was buried in 1880. A few months later on the 17th August 1886, Emma was at the graveside again to bury their baby daughter, Mary. Burgess's mother was buried in the same grave on the 1st January 1892, and finally Emma, his widow, who never remarried, was buried there on the 11th February 1910. Probably, following in the Quaker tradition, no headstone was placed over the grave and although square 21 is around 150 feet x 100 feet, it contained only two graves for many years. Sadly, the old burial plans were, in all probability, not referred to when, a century after Arthur Burgess had been laid to rest, new burials by Southwark Council took place in the 1980s and three new graves were excavated diagonally and directly over the Burgess family grave.■



Woodcut by Selwyn Image
from *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*
No 6 (1887)

Cemetery Flora: Ivy, *Hedera Helix*

by Roy Vickery, roy@plant-lore.com

Ivy is a plant about which cemetery enthusiasts have different views. Some regard it as a pest which obscures gravestones and invades woodland areas. Others regard it as a valuable source of food and shelter for insects and birds. Others appreciate it for its aesthetic qualities, its evergreen foliage can be seen as a symbol of eternal life and it enhances the gothic atmosphere



Ivy, *Hedera Helix* Photo: Roy Vickery

which some people expect in our older burial grounds.

Like holly, ivy has associations with Christmas, but at least in urban areas it is not much used in decorating homes. Before the widespread installation of central heating it would remain attractive throughout the festive season but, now homes are usually warmer and drier ivy leaves soon lose their sheen, and the twigs then lose their leaves.

However, there was a widespread belief that ivy was unlucky and should not be brought indoors. Or it is was safe indoors only at Christmastide: 'Holly and ivy must not be taken in house until Christmas Eve and must be removed by

January 6th'.

Despite this, ivy was valued on washdays when water in which ivy leaves had been boiled was used to clean clothing, particularly the blue serge uniforms worn by railwaymen, postmen, and many more: 'With an old clothes brush take your husband's serge suit and proceed to brush in the liquid, especially [into] the lapel and neck and cuffs. Then take a clean cloth and iron it all over. It's like new'.

Another widespread use of ivy was to tie a leaf, either fresh, boiled or seeped in vinegar, around a corn and leave it on for about three days, after

which it will be found that the corn and its root will come away, and will not return. I've tried this and it works. Other medicinal uses included the treatment of burns in County Cork, and eczema in Derbyshire.

Farmers would tempt sick sheep by offering them ivy: 'if they did not eat ivy, they were going to die'. In the Norwich area ivy was believed to have a 'miraculous healing power' for healing cattle sick with foot-and-mouth disease. The animals would 'seek out the nearest available ivy on a tree or hedge, as if by instinct'.

Although it is usually assumed that ivy berries are poisonous, it is recorded that during the German occupation of the Channel Islands 'ivy berries were boiled and eaten'.

At present ivy seems to be doing extraordinarily well. It's the only member of the essentially tropical plant family Araliaceae native to Britain, and presumably due to climate change is now more vigorous and producing a greater number of larger and more succulent berries. It's said that when ivy climbs up trees it creates year-round shade under which little other than ivy can thrive, thus it smothers well-loved spring flowers, such as primroses and wood anemones.■

Nunhead Open Day 2022: back to normal this Year

Connie Beighton describes the attractions and celebratory atmosphere of our post-Covid event

Even the bugs are well looked after at Nunhead's Open Day. Eager children sign up to collect them around the cemetery, placing them carefully into boxes, and then taking them to the Bug Man for identification. It's a fascinating way for children to learn about insect life. The important event for the bug is that after identification it's released in the Bug Release Area to ensure that it hops, crawls or wriggles back into a secure hideaway in the undergrowth. Everyone involved has a good time, possibly even the bugs. I've never noticed the Release Area before, but as we sat on a convenient bench, close to Mary's Plant Stall, there it was just at hand.

Why were we on the bench? To eat a sumptuous lunch consisting of a slice of vegetarian walnut and olive cake followed by a hunk of rum and rai-

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sin cake, both of which were on offer at the catering stall and both deserving several culinary stars. We had of course already bought indoor plants from Mary's renowned plant stall, and they join previous finds like the Peace Lily and a Primrose Harlequin, both now in vigorous flower in our home.

2022 Open Day felt like a celebration after the two Covid years we've endured. This year we could wander Nunhead's pathways without recoiling when close to someone, and most importantly, without masks. The profusion of spring flowers was still at its best, frothy cow parsley interspersed with king buttercups and giant clover. Has it ever rained on an Open Day? Or is it like our childhoods, when our memories only offer up images of cloudless days? Surely there must have been rainy, miserable Open Days, but never in my experience. Year by year the Day has grown into an event that local people, and some not so local, are determined to attend. There's a community atmosphere with something for all ages and interests, with many families literally 'making a day of it'.

Dogs abound, but as required, all are on leads. And what dogs they are. From our perch on the bench we could people-watch (a relaxing occupation) and witness the dog fashion parade. Was there ever such a profusion of dogs of all shapes and sizes, colours and temperament? Mostly they loved looking at each other, apart from the stand-off between two dogs of the same size but indeterminate breed, an encounter that started neutrally but ended with a lot of bark, but no bite. I think they were just showing off. There were a lot of stylish dog accessories too, including a contraption on the back of a very large dog that actually had saddle bags on it, presumably for canine necessities.

Next it was up the Main Avenue to check what the stalls had on offer, always an interesting walk, spotting the local interest groups, looking at their literature and finding out what they did. I was delighted to find once again the man who makes toys and household items from off-cuts of wood: a very useful supplier of whimsical rope-and-wood robots, complete with screws, washers and bolts for facial features, all combining to make each small robot an individual - an ideal gift for grandchildren.

We chatted at the Flint Circle to re-enactors from the French 45th Infantry Regiment, dressed and equipped for the period when they were fighting with Napoleon's Army across Europe, culminating in the battle of Waterloo. They were very informative about their roles as either soldiers, surgeons, or the women providing food and provisions to the French Army on campaign.

Uniforms and equipment were convincingly authentic, complete with tricolour cockades demonstrating allegiance to the Revolution. I had never seen them at the cemetery previously, and gathered they were there to publicise their re-enactment group and also add their regiments name and story to highlight Nunhead as the burial place of Corporal John Dickson, a Paisley weaver, who joined the Scots Greys, and at the Battle of Waterloo seized the French 45s Regimental standard, and lived to tell the tale.

Next it was to the wood-turning area, though I prefer the alternative name of ‘bodging’. Fallen trees were being crafted into household goods and furniture, all of an incredibly high standard of workmanship and design. An excellent way to recycle, resulting in objects to treasure. There we found a young man with vats of water containing the inner and outer bark from a fallen Lime tree, producing a dye in which he was steeping white tee shirts that emerged with an attractive span of warm orangey-browns on them. The craftsmanship, creativity and skill in that woodland area was impressive.

One last turn around the pathways to find the open vista towards Saint Pauls, but this time we couldn’t see the Dome, either because it was too cloudy, or the greenery blocked our view. Something to leave till next time. We left for home, once again grateful to the FONC Trustees and all the volunteers for the dedicated and time-consuming hard work they give to make Nunhead such a very special place where visitors are connected both with the past and the vibrancy of the present. ■

Camberwell Old Cemetery Re-dedication Service

Report by Jeff Hart

A number of years ago, Southwark Council’s proposals for the provision of new burial space at Camberwell Old Cemetery was met by fierce opposition from local people. A campaign, at times highly controversial in itself, was fought by local groups to stop or at least modify plans for the clearance of mature trees and re-use of burial space. Although FONC was asked to involve itself in the issue, we felt that, whilst offering advice and guidance where appropriate, active involvement in the campaign was not germane to our principal objectives.

Since then, many of the proposals were modified to address the concerns

continued on next page



Camberwell Old Cemetery Re-Dedication Service
Photos: Jeff Hart

expressed and although some aspects did not meet the aspirations of the campaigners, work has now been completed in a way which has certainly enhanced some parts of the cemetery. During the campaign it was revealed that some 44 interments in unmarked common graves in what was called ‘Area Z’ were of servicemen and women who had lost their lives as the result of their service in both World Wars. With the intervention of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, each of these burials is now marked with the standard headstones in an area now called ‘The Oaks and The Glades’. This has been cleared of contaminated soil, carefully landscaped with new access paths and seeded with grasses and wildflowers to produce a beautiful meadow landscape ringed with splendid mature trees and with a spectacular view of the Shard in the distance. A new entrance to the cemetery on Ryedale leading to this area is graced with splendid new leaf motif gates.

It was with great pleasure, therefore, that FONC was invited to attend the re-dedication service and to lay a wreath in memory of the newly commemorated fallen. The opening address by Southwark Mayor, Sunil Chopra (who until recently was also a councillor for the Nunhead ward), included praise for the work of Cemetery Friends for both Camberwell and Nunhead. The names of all 44 fallen were read out by representatives of the Royal British Legion, whose standard was carried by the imposing Sgt Mark Stevens in full uniform, before the new entrance gate ribbon was cut by Councillor Catherine Rose and the Mayor.■

NFCF AGM held in Leicester

Report by Jeff Hart

Chairman Jeremy Partington led the FONC delegation to the Annual General Meeting of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF) hosted by the Friends of Welford Road Cemetery on the 11th June 2022. Meeting in person for the first time since 2019, attendees were welcomed by the Mayor of Leicester and enjoyed a presentation by Dr Elizabeth Blood on the history of Welford Road before heading off to tour the cemetery, visiting, among others, and most appropriately, the final resting place of pioneer tour arranger, Thomas Cook.

The business meeting in the afternoon heard an excellent and informative report by NFCF Vice-chairman Colin Fenn on the very important work that the Federation does on behalf of its members. The NFCF is represented on the Ministry of Justice's burial consultation group and puts the views of cemetery users and Friends on matters of burial law, including the uncertain status of hospital and asylum burial grounds and abandoned churchyards.

Over-zealous monument safety regimes applied by local authorities remain a threat in some places whilst public/Friends funding for the repair of private memorials can raise difficult ownership issues. The Federation offers advice and guidance to all who have an interest in their local cemeteries.

FONC's retiring Trustee, Gwyneth Stokes, has agreed to continue as the Secretary of the NFCF for one more year before intending to stand down in 2023.■

Street signs old and new

Text and Photos by Cathy Mercer

On our local walks last winter we started spotting old street signs - much older than the common wood and plastic signs parked on street corners. We started noticing much older metal street signs high up on the side of houses and the more we looked, the more we spotted, high up on corner houses and above the normal sight line. Here's one on a corner house (figure 1), conveniently out of reach of any naughty children!

continued on next page



Figure 1 - Heber Road in Cricklewood with a small street-name sign under a first floor window

What is particularly odd about all these old street-name signs in our part of London is that they show the street name with the postcode but the postcode is invariably incomplete, just the letters from the postcode, usually with a small wooden panel with the number of the postal area added to complete the postcode. So here we have NW for north west London and then, tacked neatly on the side, is a small wooden panel completing the postcode to give NW2.

I started to research London postcodes and discovered that they have developed over the years. The London postcode system was originally developed way back in 1856 by the Postmaster General

Sir Rowland Hill, who also famously designed the pre-pay penny post. He devised a system which divided London into two central and eight outer areas, using the standard compass points EC, WC, N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, and NW - East Central, West Central etc.

This system worked remarkably well, even while London was expanding fast, apart from small changes in the 1860s, when the NE area was subsumed into E, and S became part of SE and SW. Much later, in 1917, the large postal areas were subdivided for reasons of wartime efficiency into the much smaller areas, which we use now, e.g. SE15. Since then, the system has remained very stable, apart from the expansion of the postcode system in the late 1960s, with three additional letters and numbers added.

All this means that any street-name sign that uses the letters without the numbers should pre-date 1917 and the little number panels must have been added in or after 1917. This is helpful if you're trying to date housing developments. It would also be interesting to know if street signs have survived with NE and S on them.

The old metal street signs high up on houses seem to have been much fewer in number than the modern ones on posts that stand on street corners. A surprising number are still in place in our part of the London Borough of Brent, generally and rather surprisingly well maintained, with black lettering



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

Figure 2 - Normanby Road. *Figure 3* - an old metal sign for Kendal Road, in an unusual colour combination. *Figure 4* - a modern street sign for Kendal Road - compare and contrast for legibility and practicalities!

on a white background, that shows up the street details well (figure 2). We have also spotted one sign with white lettering on a black background (figure 3), though we thought this colour combination was less clear. It's also interesting how much larger the lettering is on modern street signs (figure 4) and of course modern signs give more information, make use of colour and are much lower, nearer to eye level.

If you live in inner London, have a look round and see if you can spot any older street-name signs perched up on the sides of houses – did your local authority add little numbered plates to update the postcodes? And have you got any of the obsolete NE and S street signs in your area?■

FONC POLICIES

Over the years FONC has adopted a number of policy statements. The Trustees would like to remind members that some of these apply to the activities of members on site and when representing FONC. In particular, policies regarding child protection and vulnerable adults have been updated. Please familiarise yourselves with these policies by visiting the FONC website at <https://www.fonc.org.uk/fonc-policies/> If you have any questions regarding these policy statements, please contact the FONC Co-ordinator.

The Clarks of Crofton Hall:

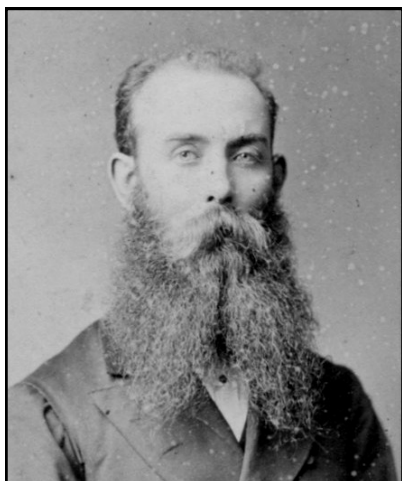
The Rise of a Victorian Family

by Moira Walshe

At Nunhead Cemetery, along Dissenters Road, lie 11 members of my family, the Clarks. Their graves are located in two separate plots on opposite sides of the path. When I first visited in 2006, the older plot, which was originally purchased in 1850 for a baby son, had nothing left but the smooth top stone to the memorial.

On the other side, and a little further along by the side of the path, is the pedestal memorial to my great-grandfather Thomas Clark (1841-1927), his wife Frances (1846-1904), and their infant son, Sydney who died in 1876; it had suffered damage from bombing and neglect. The only visible sign of it belonging to them was the name 'CLARK' on the front kerb which had buckled over due to pressure from tree roots.

My family are perhaps not 'Nunhead Notables' but they were successful Victorians. My great-great-grandfather, also named Thomas Clark (1819-1895), rose from obscurity to become a successful merchant in the City of London. He was importing exotic produce into the capital from around the



Thomas Clark (1841-1927) and Frances Clark *nee* Bailey (1846-1904)
Moira Walshe's great-grandparents both of whom are interred at Nunhead

globe. It was a lucrative trade which brought him and his family great financial rewards, allowing them to live very comfortably. His son, my great-grandfather, was also in the family business. However, he also became a writer, poet and artist.

My own grandfather, Herbert, was born into privilege in 1871 but lived into the modern era which saw social change.

I've recently written a book about three generations of my family. It is entitled *The Clarks of Crofton Hall: The Rise of a Victorian Family*. The Crofton Hall in the title refers to their home in the 1860s, a house which stood in the hamlet of Crofton, near Orpington. Later on, they moved to Sydenham to be near the Crystal Palace which had just transferred to the new location following the Hyde Park exhibition of 1851. At the time that the first interment took place at Nunhead, the family were living off the Old Kent Road, Peckham.

The book is full of Victorian photographs of the family and includes extracts from the diary of my great-great aunt Matilda (Thomas Clark senior's daughter) which she wrote between 1872-1874 when they lived at Upper Norwood. It is the culmination of 30 years of research. If anyone is interested in purchasing a copy, please contact me at moira.walsh@btinternet.com the RRP is £14.99 plus there is a small additional charge for p&p. The book can also be obtained direct from the publisher's Troubador at www.troubador.co.uk where you can also read more about it and see reviews. ■

The Gurney family of Licensed Victuallers

Will the lady who now lives in Devon and whose ancestors include the Gurney family of the 'Star of India' public house, Gordon Road, Peckham, and elsewhere, please contact Ron Woollacott. She may remember meeting Ron when he took her to see the graves of the Gurneys in Nunhead Cemetery a good many years ago. The reason for this request is a change which involved new software, and upgrade to Microsoft Windows 10 meant all the addresses stored on the computer were lost along with other important information, even though being saved on a memory stick and external drive. That's the wonder of Microsoft!

Remarkable Women buried in Nunhead Cemetery No 7 (Part 1)

Sister Annie—the Angel of Surrey Chapel

by Ron Woollacott & Michèle Louise Burford

Although known at the Surrey Chapel in Southwark as Sister Annie, she was born Emma Caroline Davis on the 15th April 1859 at 19 Glasshouse Yard, Aldersgate Street, ‘within the sound of Bow Bells,’ and was very proud of the fact that she was a true Cockney. Her father, David Frederick Davies, was a wine porter, and her mother, Mary Ann, was a book-folder at a well-known London stationers.

Emma’s mother died in December 1867 when Emma was eight-years-old, and she, being the eldest of three girls, had to act as ‘mother’ to Mary and Jane, her younger sisters. Soon afterwards, however, the family moved to Bermondsey and in 1868 Emma’s father married Jane Parry, a spinster, at St James’s Church. Emma and her sisters attended the Primitive Methodist Sunday School in Bermondsey, but Emma was not a model scholar, anything but, she was often in trouble for laughing in class, or for encouraging other children to laugh. Nevertheless, she had a desire to be good, and was always ready to do a good turn for others.

At the age of 13 Emma left school and found employment as a domestic servant, but after a year, with the consent of her father and stepmother, she left that situation and obtained work as a book-folder at Messrs Samuel Strakers of Farringdon Street, where her grandmother, Mary Davis, had been a forewoman book-folder. When she reached the age of 16 she started to teach in the local Sunday school, and in order to qualify for the task she attended the Teacher Training Class at the Sunday School Union.

In 1881 the family’s address was 56 Raymouth Road, Rotherhithe. Emma’s father died in 1884 at the age of 48, and was buried in a common grave at Nunhead Cemetery. After the death of her father, and as her stepmother and sisters were well-provided for, she left home, and with a friend rented rooms in Stamford Street, near Blackfriars Road, to be nearer her place of work. There were around 300 young women and girls employed at the stationers, and by her skill and hard work she was soon made a forewoman. Her duties included teaching beginners their work, and maintaining discipline in the workroom. She was a very popular and likeable person and the girls were devoted to her, so much so, that they were most upset when

she left to take up the better position as a forewoman in Frowde's Bible Warehouse. She also became a member of the Surrey Chapel in Blackfriars Road.

In December 1893, Emma, who had been a Sunday school teacher since transferring her membership to the Surrey Chapel, was invited by the new minister, the Reverend James Tolefree Parr (1855-1930), to become a 'Sister of the People'. The minister preferred the term 'Sister of the People,' to any other, simply because, although 'Sister of Mercy' was a beautiful name, he did not like its Roman Catholic associations, and 'Deaconess', although scriptural, was Greek. He preferred 'Sister of the People' because it was a human and democratic title. This was a completely new post, as there were no such Sisters in Primitive Methodism at that time. Emma was ordained at a public service, taking the name of 'Sister Annie,' the name of her old Sunday school teacher.

The Surrey Chapel was located in north Southwark which was then known as the crime centre of London. There were streets near the chapel in which every house was a house of ill-fame, and the pavement outside the chapel was the nightly haunt of the 'lowest type of fallen womanhood.' It was in this dark region of 'poverty, squalor, drunkenness, vice and heathenism' that Sister Annie commenced her ministry.

For 17 years Sister Annie was an 'Angel of Mercy' to the poor and the destitute of Blackfriars Road and neighbourhood. She fed the hungry, clothed the naked, nursed the sick, comforted the bereaved, cheered the lonely, and soothed the dying and led sinners to Jesus Christ. Everyone in the locality and even further afield, seemed to know Sister Annie, 'the clergy, doctors, relieving officers, police and tradesmen, poor mothers, drunks and dossers alike'.



At the end of her first year she had visited over 1,300 homes and had given continuous or temporary relief to 450 families. She wrote, 'I have visited the starving poor many times without number; I have given nourishment to the sick when they were absolutely sinking for want of it, and afterwards I stayed awhile with them tidying up their rooms.'

Sister Annie was a life-long teetotaller, and since her Band of Hope days an enthusiastic and successful temperance worker. She said, 'let us remember the environment of the poor, the complete lack of home comfort, the necessity for dulling every fibre in order to endure the surrounding horrors, and the cheapness of drink, enables the poor to forget their poverty and translates them into the realm of happy dreams.'

At the Surrey Chapel they tried to lessen the popularity of the public house by introducing Saturday evening temperance meetings at which refreshments were served at a cheap rate. Sister Annie was an active worker at these meetings, and many of those that regularly attended readily signed the pledge.

to be continued

A reprint of

Freemasonry and the Enlightenment

Architecture, Symbols and Influences

by James Stevens Curl

The above title has been long out of print, yet demand has not ceased, Professor Curl has decided to bring out a reprint, to be published shortly under The Nerfl Press imprint, which you may recall published the limited editions of Loudon's *Cemeteries*. As soon as he receives sufficient orders, payment to the printer and binder can be made. The printing will be of the highest quality, and will be by W & G Baird, who handled the two previous books for The Nerfl Press.

This superbly illustrated study of Freemasonry's influence on Western culture, especially in the 18th and early-19th centuries, has been recognised as one of the most original and important contributions towards a greater understanding of the Enlightenment published in recent times.

A fine softback reprint of a long out-of-stock classic, originally published to great acclaim, finely printed on 356 pp, with 71 colour plates, 227 b & w illus, and 24 figs, and costs only £60 per copy, including postage and packing within the UK only. For more information on method of payment or to order please email jscurl@btinternet.com

~~ DIARY DATES ~~

GENERAL GUIDED TOURS OF THE CEMETERY *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.

LWT EVENING BAT WALK: *Thursday 8th September.* Full details of this and all other FONC tours can be found on the FONC website under the FONC Events tab and then under Guided Tours.

OPEN HOUSE AND HERITAGE OPEN DAYS: *Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th September from 1.00pm to 5.00pm on both days.* General tours, crypt and chapel visits.

WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR: *Sunday 18th September.* Meet your guide for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main cemetery gates in Linden Grove.

CEMETERY SYMBOLS TOUR: *Sunday 9th October.* Meet your guide for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main cemetery gates in Linden Grove.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH TOUR: *Sunday 16th October.* Meet your guide for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main cemetery gates in Linden Grove.

PRACTICAL WORKDAYS *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 or by mobile phone 077 999 71 597. *Appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear is essential.*

Please note: *All tours and events are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. If possible up-to-date information concerning any changes will be announced in FONC News or on our website www.fonc.org.uk and notice boards in Nunhead Cemetery.*

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Please send all letters, news items and feature articles for publication to:
The editor, FONC News, c/o 185 Gordon Road, LONDON SE15 3RT
or email: editorfonc@hotmail.com

The deadline for letters and articles for the next issue is the 17th October 2022

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

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