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FONC News

No 164 ~ *Summer issue* ~ June ~ August 2024

Journal of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery



Mallard ducks on the Wetland Pond at Nunhead Cemetery
See pages 23 and 24. Photo: Jane Hart

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~ INFORMATION FOR FONC 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 membership@fonc.org.uk

FONC Membership: Due to a temporary absence please direct all membership enquiries to the acting Membership Secretary, Carol Stevenson. email: membership@fonc.org.uk until further notice.

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 notices 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 Enquiries Desk: The Publications and Enquiries 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 portable cabin from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Sundays when cemetery workdays take place and from 2.00pm to 4.00pm on tour days. 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 fourth Monday of each month at 7.00pm are currently 'virtual'. Meetings are open to members in a non-voting capacity. If you would like to 'attend', please email 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 telephoning **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

Editor: Ron Woollacott - email: editorfonc@hotmail.com

Contributors to this issue: Michèle Louise Burford; Ann Coley; Malcolm Harris; Jane Hart; Jeff Hart; Neil Horan; Jeremy Partington; Carol Stevenson; Roy Vickery. *The editor and FONC Trustees do not necessarily agree with the views expressed by the contributors.*

Editorial:

It has taken a very long time and a lot of hard work (toil, tears and sweat, but not the blood) to see the 40-year-old Friends' dream of a restored East Lodge become reality. I am referring of course to the announcement that the Heritage Fund has awarded £3.7 million to fully restore Nunhead Cemetery's East Lodge as announced in Jane's full report below.



Also in this issue there's news of a number of forthcoming events, up-to-date cemetery news; the chairman's visit to Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris; a story about the Burwash family buried at Nunhead; a feature on bramble, the bane of my life when I went grave searching; a poem about the cemetery; and the life story of an amazing woman. We do hope you will find something of interest on the following pages. Let us know what you would like to see, better still send us an article.

Ron W



GREAT NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY!

***Jane Hart reports on the East Lodge:
From Ruin to Revival project***

FONC and Southwark Council were thrilled to learn from The National Lottery Heritage Fund that our delivery phase application for £3.7million to fully restore the East Lodge has been successful! This follows complimentary evaluation of the year-long Development Phase of the project (with FONC contributing the equivalent of over £15,000 at £20 per hour volunteer input) and a presentation by Southwark Council and FONC to the lead Heritage Fund assessor in February, which was supported by Southwark Councillor Catherine Rose. The assessor said

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that our presentation clearly demonstrated our great enthusiasm and could not have been any better!

As previously reported, this project will restore the East Lodge as a new hub for community activity in the cemetery, with the visitor experience being enhanced by the provision of a new café and toilet facilities. A new modular building, replacing the existing dilapidated FONC cabin, will provide a base for volunteer practical activities.

The project - 'From Ruin to Revival' will:

- Fully restore the East Lodge to ensure its removal from Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.
- Provide accessible new facilities within the East Lodge - community rooms, publicly available and fully accessible toilets, an exhibition space, a café and FONC reception area and office.
- Carry out landscaping around the East Lodge to provide fully accessible step-free access to both floors.
- Replace the dilapidated FONC cabin with a new modular building.
- Attract a more diverse range of visitors to the site and to become more engaged in the cemetery, its history and ecology.
- Establish a financially sustainable model that will ensure the long-term management of the enhanced landscape and buildings in the cemetery.
- Recruit an Outreach and Development Manager for a four-year period to develop and deliver a community outreach programme.
- Create buildings and landscapes that contribute to environmental sustainability through minimising the carbon footprint and enhancing biodiversity.
- Make the East Lodge a valuable resource at the heart of the community providing a gateway to access the opportunities offered in the cemetery.

The restoration of the East Lodge is a Southwark Council commitment. In addition to support from FONC, the project has also attracted grants from Historic England, The Garfield Weston Foundation and The Pilgrim Trust.

Work will start on site later this year with the aim that the new modular building will be available by the end of this year and the East Lodge will be open in 2027. Watch out for regular updates on the progression of the project.



Important News from Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator
New Format and Date of FONC AGM 2024

In recent years we have struggled to meet the quorum for our Annual General Meeting (AGM), as required by our Constitution and as approved by the Charity Commission. We really want to give FONC members the opportunity to question and comment on the various reports that are presented and to have the opportunity to influence what we do, as well as approving the appointment of Trustees. Of course, this may not sound very exciting but it is essential that we conduct the affairs of our Charitable Incorporated Organisation in an inclusive, transparent and, above all, legally correct manner.

The Trustees have decided, therefore, to try a new approach for the AGM. Instead of a weekday evening meeting, this year the AGM will be held at 2.00pm on Saturday 28th June. Rather than a local pub or room, we will be holding the meeting in the roofless Anglican Chapel in the centre of the cemetery. We will make provision for inclement weather by erecting our large marquees inside the chapel. As an added attraction for members, as well as (non-alcoholic) drinks and home-made food being provided (donations welcome to off-set costs), we will also be conducting visits to the crypt under the chapel. It would help with seating if members could bring their own fold-up chairs.

Details of the AGM agenda and written reports will be placed on the website in due course but the Trustees have no motions to put to the meeting. If any member wishes to propose a motion to the meeting, this should be submitted in writing to the Vice-Chairman Carol Stevenson (email: practicalwork@fonc.org.uk) no later than the 7th June.

A message from the Acting Membership Secretary

My name is Carol, and I am currently covering the role of Membership Secretary for FONC, as our long-serving Honorary Membership Secretary Simon Mercer is unwell.

Please join me in wishing Simon well. We have learnt how much he has been doing for so many years without fuss. I would also like to thank Jane Hart who has taken on the book sales which he also managed.

I took on the role at short notice and I have to apologise, because I

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misunderstood the spreadsheet and sent subscription reminders to all those members who pay each year by standing order. I am so sorry. You were very patient with me, and many of you sent me another standing order form. The Trustees have agreed that if you already have a standing order, I will not submit the new one to the bank, which would mean you were paying twice as much as you had intended.

Your membership renewals are flowing in, and my post lady wants to know why I am now keeping her so busy! Only those of you who really have not yet renewed (on the day I printed the reminders for *FONC News*) will have got another reminder. We send *FONC News* electronically to all those members who have an email address recorded, even if they also get an hard copy. If you want it and don't get it, please send me your email address (and your name). If you don't want it but are getting it, please also let me know.

It has also been suggested that we could email information to you about upcoming events. We would not try to sell you anything or send anything from anybody else except the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery. Again, please let me know if you object.

If you have any questions, please email foncmembership@gmail.com and I also receive messages sent to membership@fonc.org.uk. I will be at the Publications and Enquiry Desk on the Open Day, wearing a brightly coloured hat.

Thank you so much for your patience.

Carol Stevenson, Vice-chairman and Acting Membership Secretary, FONC.

Summer Arts events in the beautiful Anglican chapel

by Jane Hart

Two separately curated arts events are being planned to take place in the Anglican chapel this summer. Firstly, over a 10-week period - from July to mid-September - the Feminist Lecture Programme is planning to run a series of curated art exhibitions where selected emerging Female, Non-binary and Trans artists will present short solo exhibitions in the chapel. The second is Project Octagon, a contemporary outdoor art initiative celebrating the cemetery's rich heritage and unique ecology. A number of selected artists have been invited to exhibit in the chapel over the weekend of the Nunhead Arts Trail (28th-29th September) with

a further exhibition taking place as part of the Frieze Arts Festival from the 9th-13th October. Please look out for updates regarding who is exhibiting and when the exhibitions will take place on the FONC website www.fonc.org.uk on Instagram and cemetery posters.

An appreciative letter and a generous donation from Ann Onymous

A FONC member living in Wales writes: ‘Thank you for another super *FONC News*. You get so much variety into a few pages, monuments, history, flowers and trees, and of course all the latest on the East Lodge. How I admire FONC for slogging on with this project.’ With the letter was a cheque for £420.00 made payable to FONC ~ many thanks Ann. Ann Onymous is a descendant of a 19th century man who lies in a common grave at Nunhead.

Nunhead Cemetery News No 54 *by Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator*

More cemetery improvements in the works

Although most of our recent energies have been taken up with the East Lodge project, we are still seeking to make progress on other capital works in the cemetery. As usual, however, progress is sometimes painfully slow. We had anticipated that the Limesford Road boundary wall rebuild - complete with new railings to match those on Linden Grove - would have been completed by the end of last year. However, these have not yet started because the contractors, Conway, need an eight-month window in which to carry out the work. This is proving very difficult to schedule because it entails approvals for road closures, diversion routes and the co-operation of Thames Water since existing drainage will be affected. The latter point, in particular, is proving problematic since Thames Water has no sense of urgency on this matter.

Slightly better news is that management of the Construction Industries Levy funded feasibility study on the possibility of re-roofing the

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Anglican chapel has finally found a committed home in Southwark Council's structure. The Parks and Leisure team have taken on the job and we hope to see a surveyor appointed to carry out the work later this year. The best news, as mentioned in the last issue of *FONC News*, is that the next tranche of monument repairs has been agreed with FONC and should start this September. It will comprise 30 memorials in total that will make a real visual impression for visitors.

Common grave markers on the move

Over the last few months, it seems that an individual has taken it upon themselves to move common grave markers (the 12 inch by 12 inch headstones that are placed on common grave burial plots) to line an informal path in the Dissenters part of the cemetery opposite the site of the Dissenters chapel. It could be argued that this has rescued the stones from disappearing into the muddy soil and makes them clearly visible. However, moving headstones from their original position, even if they may have previously been moved by vandals, bomb damage or whatever other reason, is illegal. Southwark Bereavement Services has reported the matter to the police and is carrying out further investigation. FONC cannot condone the moving of headstones in this way, although our research indicates that they may not have been moved very far from their original position. It remains to be seen what further action Southwark Council may wish to take.

School visits proving very popular

Over sixty children from Ivydale Primary School enjoyed an afternoon visit to the cemetery on the 11th March 2024 as part of their studies of Southwark in the Victorian Period. With five FONC members leading the children in three different groups, we set the cemetery in the wider context of the period using various examples ranging from headstone inscriptions, building and monument styles, occupations and ages, planting and notable people. Earlier in the year, on the 30th January, twenty-five Year 3 pupils from Hollydale Road School thoroughly enjoyed exploring the trees and shrubs in the cemetery to learn about how to identify different species, the importance of trees and how their wood was used. We are happy to receive further requests from schools and colleges for cemetery visits.

Nunhead Cemetery in the Wars

Whilst there are countless 'Nunhead Notables' memorialised in the cemetery, there are many who are not blessed with a headstone or marker

or whose memorial is now undecipherable or even in ruins. FONC was delighted, therefore, to be approached by two organisations interested in doing something with regard to particular military personnel (a particular passion of our Co-ordinator!). Firstly, the Sons of Union Veterans of the American Civil War, who arranged for a memorial to Ensign John Davis in the cemetery some years ago, have now identified a further nine Civil War veterans buried at Nunhead and wish to ensure that they are properly commemorated. The 'Sons' can arrange for the US Federal Government to provide suitable markers. FONC has been researching the burial plots to determine what needs to be done. The Napoleonic and Revolutionary War Graves Charity has also contacted FONC with a view to providing a memorial for the unmarked grave of Private Edward Costello, who fought throughout the Peninsula and Waterloo campaigns. It seems likely that Costello was the inspiration for Bernard Cornwell's 'Sharpe' character. Following a site visit, they may also be interested in the graves of several other Waterloo veterans buried at Nunhead (see *Nunhead Cemetery and the Battle of Waterloo* by Jeff Hart).

It is cricket!

We have also been contacted by the heritage officer of Surrey County Cricket Club, who lives in Nunhead and knows the cemetery, about the grave of Bobby 'the Guv'nor' Abel (see *Nunhead Notables* volume I by Ron Woollacott). Abel still holds the record for the highest ever score by a Surrey batsman. His headstone at Nunhead displays a wicket, crossed bats and a cricket ball. It is not in bad condition but could do with some renovation which Surrey is interested in paying for. They may also be interested in Surrey and England captain Henry 'Harry' Jupp (see *More Nunhead Notables*) who is also buried at Nunhead. Jupp played in the first ever Test match and scored the first Test 50. Jeff and Jane Hart (avid cricket and Surrey fans) will be meeting with Surrey at the Oval to discuss further.

We're in the money!

Small in comparison to the East Lodge grant, FONC has also been successful in an application to Southwark's Cultural Celebrations Grants for our annual Open Day in May. The grant of £3,850 is to pay for a new disabled access ramp to access the Anglican chapel; the hire of portable toilets; and the purchase of public address equipment to enhance projection of events information to visitors. Other than the toilets, this equip-

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ment will also be invaluable for other arts events, tours and activities in the chapel and will enhance our carol and other services in future years.

A Sky TV production filmed in the cemetery on the 15th/16th February. Although FONC was not involved in facilitating this, we were still pleased to receive a donation of £250!

Events, events, events.

In addition to the arts events this summer, there are plenty of other events to look forward to in the cemetery. We have just hosted a visit by the Historic Buildings and Places charity, and we will be hosting several other special interest group tours, including the Society of Genealogists, the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery (Tunbridge Wells) and the Gates Green Women's Institute (information on booking private tours can be found on our website). The Lewisham Community Day on the 28th June is a volunteering event and FONC will be hosting pupils from Colfe School who will be carrying out practical conservation work on site. The Peckham and Nunhead Free Film Festival will be showing again at Nunhead on the 7th September. The Open House/Heritage weekend is on the 14th/15th September and the Nunhead Arts Trail is on the 28th/29th September. Our bat walk in April attracted over 50 visitors who were rewarded by numerous sightings of bats. Look out for details of the next bat prowls on the 5th September.

A Curtailed First Visit to the Cemetery of Père Lachaise, Paris *by Jeremy Partington*

Despite living near Paris for several months just over 30 years ago, I never visited the famous Cemetery of Père Lachaise. Consequently, my first visit was in early January 2024.

The Cemetery of Père Lachaise is world famous as the final resting place of a number of both famous French and international notables including Murat, Géricault, Delacroix, Chopin, Molière, Proust, Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde and Gertrude Stein.

The cemetery covers around 44 hectares (110 acres) and was originally opened by Napoléon in 1804; at that time a mile from the main city and just outside its walls. The name is taken from Père François de la Chaise, confessor to King Louis XIV who had lived in a Jesuit house on the site.

Like many cemeteries, Père Lachaise is situated on a hillside meaning monuments and paths are set out along terraces in some areas. The original design of the cemetery took inspiration from English gardens. Although the numerous trees mean the site is verdant, lawns do not really feature. Père Lachaise is mainly laid to uneven paths with thousands of graves and monuments crowded between them. Having been extended several times, the paths in the western side of the cemetery are more curving and, arguably, romantic while in the eastern side of the site, paths are laid out to a grid plan.

The walk from the Père Lachaise metro station (which, being at the corner of the cemetery site, is not actually the closest to the main entrance) takes the visitor past a memorial to the Parisians who lost their lives during the First World War. This imposing memorial was unveiled on the 11th November 2018 and runs from the corner of the cemetery site to the main entrance. It is nearly 300m long and contains over 94,400 names.



Memorial to Parisians who lost their lives during the First World War

Photo: Jeremy Partington

Interestingly, within the cemetery there are graves (usually substantial monuments) that are inscribed to indicate a lease taken in perpetuity, this

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being one of the options available when purchasing a plot. Père Lachaise remains a working cemetery with some recent burials being apparent. Despite initial appearances of the cemetery being very crowded, there are still some empty plots.

For potential visitors - during Paris Olympic year or later - I suggest doing the research for the graves you wish to visit before you arrive. I did some but... although there are orientation boards with a cemetery plan near the main entrance, there was no printed map available on site on the day of our visit.



Monument to Héloïse and Abélard

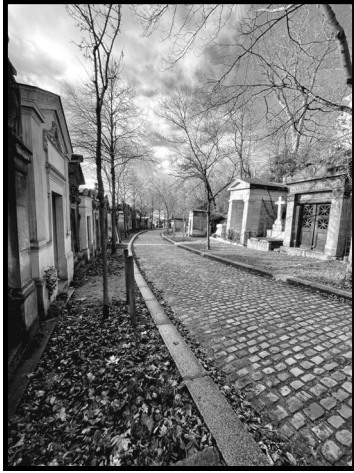
Photo: Jeremy Partington

Despite that, we found the Rothschild family vault that was, perhaps, more subdued than their wealth and influence might have suggested. One of the most impressive monuments at Père Lachaise is that of the 12th century lovers Héloïse and Pierre Abélard (died 21st April 1142). Their tomb was moved to the cemetery in 1817 to increase its popularity. It includes their

figures in repose with stone vaulting above.

The grave of world-famous chanteuse Édith Piaf (born Édith Gassion; 19th December 1915 - 10th October 1963) was a draw for visitors. It is located cheek by jowl with other graves and has no particular features to make it stand out from a distance, although her stage name and surname inscribed in gold becomes clear as you approach the tomb. Down the hill from her resting place the cemetery has a significant number of post-war memorials. One is dedicated to Spaniards that died to preserve liberty from 1939 to 1945. (A row of senior Communist Party officials' graves is nearby).

Unsurprisingly, there are monuments to commemorate numerous French victims of the Nazi occupation, resistance to it and to those deported to Germany as forced labour. However, some of the most imposing memorials in this corner of the cemetery are dedicated to the victims of the most significant Nazi concentration camps. To my surprise there



General views of Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris Photos: Jeremy Partington

are also recent memorials commemorating those lost in a number of air disasters.

Due to the forecast of high winds, the cemetery was closed in the early afternoon. Staff went round with a bell - remember when that happened at Nunhead? - so our visit was curtailed before I'd got to some of the locations I wanted to visit. So, Oscar Wilde and the Communards of May 1871 will have to wait for another time. I'm sure they will!

**Lend a hand, make a change -
The Big Help Out - volunteering initiative
on the 9th June 2024 *by Jane Hart***

Last year as part of the celebrations to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III, the Big Help Out was set up to encourage people to volunteer locally. FONC took part last May and is keen to be involved in this initiative again. We will be putting on a short session - an introduction to practical work in Nunhead Cemetery - on the afternoon of the 9th June 2024 from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm. The session is aimed at introducing new volunteers to two activities - woodland management concentrating on logging up windblown trees, opening up glades to butterfly conservation and other seasonal work. The second activity is partic-

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ipating in the ongoing monument inscription recording project which aims to capture the inscriptions on headstones before they disappear forever. Volunteers can register for the event on the Big Help Out app or can just turn up on the afternoon! FONC members are welcome to help supervising or volunteering.

The Burwash Plot - a family affair

by Malcolm Harris

This follows on from my earlier article (see *FONC News* No 163), where I wrote about my first steps into memorial transcription recording. I had been working on the family grave of David Burwash in square number 112. It was important to me to remember that the plots are sacred and those who were laid to rest there might well have family descendants living and may even be reading this. There will be a story to all plots of course, with many now long lost with time, with some family members living many years on earth but some only a few days before being laid to rest at Nunhead. I have long been involved with genealogy, so I put on my research hat to see what I might uncover about this Burwash family.

I have many internet websites to use, to see what I might uncover. As there were five names on the headstone, I should be able to determine something. Of instant note was the relatively young age of Isabelle Ward Burwash, who might have died during childbirth, aged 28. Sydney died aged 39 and Edwin at 43. However, their father David lived 25 years longer than his wife Ann, dying aged 75 in 1876.

The 1841 England census records David as 'a public notary' aged 40 with his wife Ann, also aged 40. Five children are also recorded, Frederick aged 20, Edwin aged 11, Harry aged eight, Edward aged six and lastly Sydney aged one. They resided in the parish of St Mary, Islington East.

The 1861 England census records David was a widower aged 63 living with one daughter Harriet aged 24. Two servants are also recorded. He then resided at 25 St Johns Villas, Islington.

The 1871 England census shows David's son Sydney now living at 42 Elmore Street, Islington, aged 30, with his wife Jane aged 27. Sydney was an 'articled clerk to a notary' and was born in Islington. The notary is likely to have been his father, David.

We can deduce that David Burwash was a person of some standing in London and of some wealth too. His father Thomas was given the freedom of the City of London in 1791. David had two live-in servants and

also resided in a very fashionable area of London, being very near to Highgate. Two addresses were recorded on the Burwash headstone too.

Now to David's occupation as a notary. Notaries attest the authenticity of deeds and other legal documents for use at home (UK) and abroad. He would have been a specialist lawyer and was appointed and regulated through the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. David would also have had expertise in at least two or more foreign languages. Thus, David would have most likely studied for his profession at a university for a Law degree, and must have come from wealthy parents in order to have followed this type of profession.

He is listed in the Law Directory as 'Notaries Public who are not Proctors,' and his office was at 26 Birchin lane, Cornhill, London. I am not sure what date this would have been though, likely early in his career.

David may have been a member of the Worshipful Company of Scriveners. It is also possible that he may have been Master of the Company at some stage. I am investigating this aspect. Companies normally keep very good records.

Upon further research I found a 'Bill of Exchange' from the Manchester and Salford Bank in the British Museum which was authenticated by David as the notary. It was donated by Lt Col John F Todhunter so likely connected to military procurement. David is also mentioned in court papers from the Old Bailey on behalf of prosecutors in many fraud cases too.

But what of Isabelle Ward who died so young? She married Edwin Augustus Burwash in the last quarter of 1858 at Dartford in Kent, likely at Holy Trinity parish church. I could find no record of any children born to them. Edwin who died in 1875 married in the second quarter of 1874 to either Florence or Lucy Oram. She died in the second quarter of 1880, aged only 26.

To sum up David was very successful in life and must have had wealth much of his life. He was born in 1797 to wealthy parents (Thomas and



The Burwash headstone
Photo: Malcom Harris

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Ann). However, as the headstone was quite modest on his death, I would surmise that there was not much money towards the end of his life in 1876. There is a record of David Burwash marrying in 1851 and Mary Lucina may be a second wife.

Life was quite short for Isabelle, Florence and Sydney. As David lived near Highgate, I would have thought that would have been his choice for his final resting place. Membership of a Livery Company in London would have been expensive, and he would have regularly entertained at the Mansion House with the Lord Mayor of London and also at other Worshipful Company buildings from time to time. The Scriveners' building was destroyed in the great fire of 1666.

Editor's note: The reason David Burwash is buried at Nunhead Cemetery is because in 1850, when he purchased the burial rights to his family grave from the London Cemetery Company, he was living in Peckham.

Bramble Arches

by Roy Vickery, roy@plant-lore.com

Brambles rapidly get around by sending out long arching shoots which root when they reach the ground thus forming new plants. Crawling, or being passed, under one of these shoots - known as stolons - was formerly thought to cure a wide range of ailments.

In about 1040 it was recorded that a 'new root' of bramble together with other ingredients could be used to treat dysentery, but the first record of bramble arches being used as a cure dates from 1607 when it was stated that if a horse that was 'shrew-run' - supposedly paralysed by a shrew - was passed through an arch all would be well.



Bramble arches Photo: Roy Vickery

In the 1680s John Aubrey recorded that whooping cough could be cured by creeping under a bramble 'that roots again in the ground at the other end', and this cure continued to be used until the late 1930s. Usually some sort of ritual was involved. In Staffordshire the

child patient was passed over and under a bramble arch ‘nine times on three mornings before sunrise, while repeating “Under the briar and over the briar, I wish to leave the chin cough here”.’

Although it seems that the arches were most often used to treat whooping cough, crawling under them was thought to cure blackheads in Cornwall and Devon, boils in Dorset, fever in Co. Tipperary, hernias in Somerset, and rheumatism in Co. Kerry, while in Wales children with rickets or which were slow to walk were made to crawl or creep under ‘blackberry brambles three times a week.’

An unusually late use of a bramble arch cure was recorded from North Tawton, Devon, in the mid-1950s when a child with ‘gummy eyes’ was taken to the doctor, who noticed that its body was badly scratched. When he enquired about this the child’s mother explained ‘Us tried to cure ‘un. Us drew ‘un three times through a brimble-bush backwards, and us got the old duck to quack three times into the mouth of ‘un, but that didn’t cure ‘un.’

There are also records from Ireland and Sussex of sick cows being passed under bramble arches, or possibly having an arch tied round them.

Another Irish use, still practised in the 1940s, was crawling under bramble arches to bring good luck when playing cards, though it was sometimes believed that this would result in the Devil later claiming your soul.

Remarkable Women Buried at Nunhead No 8 **The Amazing Mrs Bartlett (1806-1875)**

by Ron Woollacott and Michèle Louise Burford

Lavinia Strickland Bartlett *nee* Hartnell was born at Preston-Candover, a village in Hampshire on the 27 November 1806, the third child of George Hartnell. When she was still very young, having commenced work as a Sunday school teacher at an unusually early age, she was called by some, derisively, and by others in earnest, the ‘preaching’ or ‘praying’ girl.

Lavinia’s seminary for young women

In 1820, when she was about 14 years old, her father died, and this greatly affected the circumstances of the family. Mr Hartnell had been

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receiving a pension following an attack of paralysis which rendered him incapable of working, but this ceased at his death. To help her widowed mother, Lavinia opened a seminary for girls and young women. The school was an immediate success and the fees received helped her mother maintain her home.

Lavinia, having adopted Baptist views, sought communion with the Baptist Church at Gold Hill, near Gerrard's Cross in Buckinghamshire, and was baptised by the Reverend David Ives at the age of 21 on the 26th of October 1828.

Lavinia travels to London

Miss Hartnell's Seminary and Boarding School for Young Ladies was especially noted for its class of fancy needlework and embroidery which Lavinia herself taught to the students. One day it occurred to her that this needlework might make a profit, and so she set about making 'beautiful infant's caps' and took the coach to London.

On arriving at Holborn and wishing to get into the heart of the City, she boarded the first omnibus she saw, and much to her disappointment found herself in the West End. An elderly gentleman, noticing she was confused, approached her and asked if he could help. She said she wanted to find the City warehouses, at which the old man offered to introduce her to a friend who kept a large warehouse at St Paul's Churchyard. At first, she was reluctant to accept his kind offer, for he was a complete stranger and she a country girl, however, he seemed trustworthy enough, so together they boarded an omnibus for the City.

Lavinia the businesswoman

On arrival at the warehouse, the old man's friend examined the samples of Lavinia's needlework and was so delighted with them, that he gave her an immediate and unlimited order. Since she was without any capital whatsoever, he even offered to supply all the material she might need without cost. Within a very short time she became well known in 'all the leading city houses in the same line of business.' Her business flourished and she eventually employed several hundred young women. All her earnings were spent on those who needed help.

Marriage, children and the Baptist Church

Early in 1836, Lavinia married Edward Bartlett, a printer and compositor from Dulwich, then in Surrey, and their first son, Edward was born that year on the 26th of November and baptised at St Giles's Church, Camberwell, Surrey, on the 25th of June 1837. Their second son, George, was born in May 1838. In the early days of her married life,

Lavinia endured much pain and suffering caused by an ‘affection of the heart.’ In fact she suffered from poor health throughout her life.

At the time of the 1841 census the Bartletts were residing in Addington Square, Camberwell. In 1843, because Lavinia’s business did not require her presence quite so often, she returned to the church at Gold Hill then under the pastorate of Dr Steane (1798-1882), the Reverend David Ives having left to form another church at Seer Green in Buckinghamshire. Settling down as a member of Dr Steane’s church she very soon took an active interest in its welfare.

New Park Street Baptist Chapel in Newington

In the census of 1851, Lavinia, her husband and two sons, were again living in Camberwell together with her mother Mary, and her brother Jeremiah Hartnell. Tragedy struck in 1854 when her husband died of cholera aged 46, during the epidemic of Asian cholera that broke out in London, and spread south of the Thames.

Her two sons, having become members of the Reverend Dr Charles Haddon’s Spurgeon’s New Park Street Baptist Chapel at Newington, Surrey, she too decided to transfer to New Park Street, if the church would have her.

Mrs Bartlett and her class at New Park Street

Lavinia joined New Park Street Baptist Chapel in February 1856, and in 1859 she was asked to take charge of the women’s class that met at the chapel every Sunday. The class at that time consisted of just three members (the usual number was about 20) but very soon increased dramatically. Mrs Lavinia Strickland Bartlett was a popular, dedicated, and down-to-earth teacher, and it wasn’t long before her class had outgrown its accommodation.

Mrs Bartlett’s class moves into the Metropolitan Tabernacle

With the completion of Spurgeon’s Metropolitan Tabernacle at the Elephant and Castle, Newington Butts in 1862, Mrs Bartlett and her class moved into the main lecture hall, and by 1865 the average attendance of adults amounted to 700. Through her teaching around 1,000 new members were added to the Metropolitan Tabernacle, besides many more to other churches. Mrs Bartlett also took a deep interest in Spurgeon’s Pastor’s College and raised over a period of 12 years about £3,346, that’s £355,000 in today’s money, in support of the students. She also raised funds for the orphanage. Despite failing health, she continued teaching

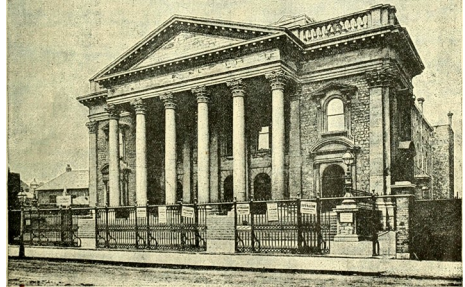
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right up to the time of her death.

Mrs Bartlett succumbs to pleurisy

On the 26th of July 1875, on returning home from her class she told her son Edward, that she felt unwell and began vomiting. The doctor was called who said she was suffering from an attack of pleurisy, which gradually worsened, until inflammation of the lungs set in.

On Sunday morning the Reverend Dr Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), who had been notified by telegram, came to see her, and at five o'clock on Monday morning the 2nd of August 1875 she 'sweetly fell asleep in Jesus,' aged 68. Her body was taken to the Metropolitan Tabernacle for the funeral service.



The Metropolitan Tabernacle at Newington

Picture: Flickr

The funeral and committal

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle and at Nunhead Cemetery where she was interred 'several thousand friends were present.' Pastor Charles Haddon Spurgeon gave a solemn address, and his brother, Pastor James A Spurgeon, engaged in prayer. Elder John T Dunn (1830-1902) committed the body to the grave.

NB. A monument in polished Aberdeen granite by David Cripps Preston, monumental mason of Nunhead, was erected over the grave by her sorrowing class, pastors, elders, deacons, and students at the Pastors' College. The monument now a ruin, was most probably damaged during an enemy air raid in 1944 in which the nearby Dissenters' Chapel was irreparably damaged and demolished in 1952.

(Grave No 13452, Square 166).

Sources: London Cemetery Company's Nunhead burial index; Monumental inscription (part); Census returns 1841-1871; Edward H Bartlett, *Mrs Bartlett and her Class*, 1877; Frederic Boase, *Modern English Biography*, Vol I, 1892; S Spurgeon and J Harrald (editors), *C H Spurgeon Autobiography-The Full Harvest 1860-1892*, 1973; Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon - A New Biography*, 1984, pp. 114, 120, 156; Ron Woollacott, *Nunhead Notables*, 1984, p. 9, revised edition 2002, p. 19; Ron Woollacott, *Nunhead's Nonconformists* (to be published).



Obituary: Alison Goss, FONC Member 3140

by Ann Coley

FONC was sorry to hear of the death of Alison earlier this year. She joined the Friends in 2003 and volunteered with us until the Covid Pandemic curtailed everyone's activities.

Alison is remembered fondly by both the practical workday volunteers, where she was a regular on the first Sunday of the month, and by the team running the refreshments stall on Open Day as she was one of the most reliable volunteers serving tea and cakes.

As a new volunteer back in 2010 I was often paired with Alison, and she proved a kindly introduction to the ways of FONC. She was interested in the world around her and did frequent walks and tours round London so was always interesting to chat with, to see what she had been up to and the information she had gleaned.

By the time I volunteered with Alison she had started to slow a little although she was still game for a bit of tree trimming on occasion. Up until 2020 she still enjoyed clearing graves, weeding and planting, but I think one of her enduring memories was when the pond was extended early in her days as a FONC volunteer. For those that don't know the cemetery, the pond is sited in a naturally damp area and is based on very solid clay. The volunteers extended it - in pouring rain - by hand, as the clay had broken a mechanical digger (or so I am told) and everyone ended up covered in dark mud. Alison had to head home on the bus afterwards and she often wondered what the driver and other passengers made of the state of her that day.

The attached photo doesn't do Alison justice, but most pictures held seem to show the back of her head, or her bending to plant something and so are even less flattering.

Our thoughts are with her family and friends.



The late Alison Goss
Photo: Ann Coley

Nunhead Cemetery ~ A Poem by Neil Horan

The following five verses have been selected from a poem written and submitted by FONC member Neil Horan. The complete poem comprises some 48 verses, sadly, far too lengthy to be published in full here.

If you would like to receive a PDF copy of the entire poem please contact Neil Horan at sliabhgallan@gmail.com and he will forward a copy to you.

(5)

Nunhead Cemetery began in the Surrey countryside,
With space that was both broad and wide.
Eighteen-forty was the date and the year,
When this new Burying Ground did appear.

(6)

Of the London Cemetery Company it was the property,
Which did administer it with due respect and dignity.
It came to be a treasured place to be laid to rest,
Since it was looked on as one of the best.

(7)

'The Avenue' is the 'Main Road' in the Cemetery,
It has the look of Majesty.
It is long, straight and wide,
Lined by lofty trees on either side.

(8)

'The Avenue' was a spot that was highly prized and sought out,
It has Monuments which are both elegant and stout.
It leads to the Chapel, where catacombs can be found,
Where rests the Dead beneath the ground.

(9)

I lived beside the Cemetery for 18 years,
During which it often calmed my fears.
I found there great tranquillity,
Which always increased my Mind's ability.

Former member Stanley Hyam's generous bequest to FONC

Stanley Hyam, known as Stan to his friends, was a member of FONC for more than 26 years from October 1995 to 2022 in which year he sadly died in his nineties (see obituary in the spring issue *FONC News* No 155, March-May 2022). A long-time resident of Nunhead he lived in Ivydale Road close to the cemetery. His father, Stanley George Hyam, was a trainer for the popular, but now alas defunct, Nunhead Football Club during the 1930s, .

Stan, who was Head of Properties at the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) in Peckham Road until his retirement in 1990, was interested in local history and also enjoyed taking photographs in Nunhead Cemetery, some of which were reproduced in *FONC News*. He would often stop by at 185 Gordon Road for a cup of tea and a chat with former FONC chairman, Ron Woollacott, and he was a regular attendant at meetings of the local residents' association. Stan always supported the aims and the work of the Friends and has made a most generous bequest to FONC in the sum of £25,294, for which we are extremely grateful.

Keeping a watch on the Birds *A report by Jeff Hart*

When drafting the programme of cemetery tours for 2024, new FONC Trustee Charles Newman queried whether we had previously led a bird spotting tour. Explaining that we had not had a sufficiently knowledgeable member to lead such a walk, Charles offered to give it a go! With a dawn start (subsequently advertised as 7.00 am) on Saturday 6th April, some twenty hardy souls arrived in good time and, together with four FONC Trustees, were greeted with a cacophony of bird song on a bright sunny morning, as we unlocked the Linden Grove gates. It was impossible to ignore the crows bouncing on the corrugated sheeting above the East Lodge, cawing noisily in the London Planes on Linden Grove and exploring the bins upturned by foxes outside the entrance. Be-

continued on next page

fore we had taken more than a few steps, we were rewarded with the sighting of a Great Spotted Woodpecker hammering out his message on a Lime tree at the start of the Main Avenue.

Thereafter, a fascinating walk ensued with participants happily, but quietly, chatting about subsequent sightings and exchanging bird spotting stories. The walk circumnavigated the cemetery finishing back at the FONC cabin shortly before 9.00 am. The bird count included: Carrion Crow; Ring-necked parakeet; Feral Pigeon; Wood Pigeon; Great Spotted Woodpecker; Blackbird; Great Tit; Blue Tit; Robin; Chiffchaff; Wren; Jay; Magpie; Nuthatch; Song Thrush; Blackcap. However, my personal favourite was the pair of lovely Collared Doves in amorous mood and apparently looking for a quiet spot in thick ivy atop a dead sycamore! With such a successful walk, we will certainly be repeating the event again next Spring.

Note: The following week a pair of Mallard Ducks were happily feeding and swimming around on the Wetland Pond. Are they the same pair who attempted nesting there last year? If you spot them, please don't disturb, although, unfortunately, the chances of ducklings seem remote with so many foxes on site. (See the photo on the front cover).

More FONC publications available

by Jeff Hart

Two 'new' FONC publications are now available from our Publications and Enquiries Desk or by post from our website (www.fonc.org.uk). The first is a reprint of the *Short Guide to Nunhead Cemetery* with slightly amended text and new illustrations (£3.50 or £3.00 to FONC members plus p&p). This replaces the old version which is now nearly out of stock. The second 'new' publication is *The Walworth Scouts and the Leysdown Tragedy* (£6 or £5.50 to FONC members plus p&p). This is an amalgamation and update of the two earlier books by the late Rex Batten - the 1992 *The Leysdown Tragedy* (long out of print) and the 2003 *The Walworth Scouts* (only a few copies left). The new publication updates the story since 2003 and includes several new illustrations. At 64 pages, it is a fitting reminder of the great contribution made by FONC Committee member Rex, still sorely missed by those who knew him.

Was a Revenant really seen at Nunhead?

by Ron Woollacott

In 1974, some five years after Nunhead Cemetery had been abandoned by United Cemeteries Ltd, a group of Southwark councillors met with local MPs and the Under Secretary for the Department of the Environment and agreed that the problem of the derelict and vandalised cemetery at Nunhead had to be resolved. Consequently, in the summer of 1975, the royal assent was given to a Bill which enabled Southwark Council to take possession of the cemetery by compulsory purchase.

On acquiring the cemetery and its buildings, which included two derelict gate lodges, a mortuary chapel and a range of catacombs, the council immediately set about making the cemetery safe. Several tons of fly-tipped rubbish were removed, and the mile-long boundary wall was repaired. The dangerous Portland stone gate piers were reassembled, unsafe headstones laid flat, vandalised burial vaults sealed, and trees felled. Needless to say, during the work historic monuments were damaged, and specimen trees destroyed.

The clearance of scrub was carried out by local young men employed under the Manpower Commission's Job Creation Scheme. The work was supervised by the Superintendent of Southwark Cemeteries who had the onerous task of supervising up to 20 youths at a time, while still performing his duties in charge of Southwark's two working cemeteries, Camberwell Old and Camberwell New, as well as Honor Oak Crematorium. The lads, however, managed to do the work they were contracted for and removed masses of unsightly undergrowth and cleared clogged up paths.

One day, a group of these young workers reported seeing the mysterious figure of an unusually tall man, who appeared to emerge from the vicinity of the Eastern Catacombs, only to vanish almost immediately. They said he was dressed entirely in black and was carrying what seemed to be a large book. I first heard of the incident when an excited and inquisitive young reporter from the *SE London and Kentish Mercury*, 'phoned me early one morning in the spring of 1976 and asked me if I believed in ghosts, 'I try to keep an open mind about such things', I said, trying to understand why he was asking such a question. He then told me about

continued on next page

the lads and the mysterious apparition of a man they said they had seen, and wanted to know if I knew of anyone buried at Nunhead that might fit the mystery man's description. The reporter had contacted me, he explained, because he knew that I was researching the cemetery and its occupants.

Of course, there are many persons of above average height buried in the cemetery and anyone of them might fit the bill, I told the enthusiastic journalist, but one particular character who came to mind was William Daniel Jenkins, a Bank of England clerk, who died on the 24th of March 1798, aged 31, some 42 years before Nunhead Cemetery was founded.

The almost seven-foot body of Long Jenkins, the sobriquet by which he was known, was originally buried within the walled Court Garden of the Bank of England (the former burial ground of St Christopher-le-Stocks), by permission of the Governors to protect it from the anatomists who wanted his remains, and were prepared to pay 200 guineas for it.

In 1933, during extensive building work at the Bank of England, Long Jenkin's coffin was unearthed and removed to Nunhead Cemetery. The huge lead coffin - it weighed three-hundred-weight and was over seven feet long - was placed on the floor of an antechamber in the Eastern Catacombs, and there it remained, perfectly safe, until one November night in 1974 when the catacombs were raided by a gang of ghoulish vandals. Coffins were dashed to pieces, lead linings ripped open, and artefacts and metal nameplates stolen. Hardly a single coffin escaped the desecration.

Sadly, the lead encased body of Long Jenkins, long protected from the clutches of 18th and 19th century anatomists, was desecrated by vandals in the 20th. Who knows, perhaps the young men who claimed they saw the apparition of a tall man dressed in black, had actually witnessed Long Jenkins returning to the safety of the Bank of England's Court Garden.

Do I believe in ghosts? Well, as I said before, I keep an open mind about such things. I should point out, however, that having spent many hundreds of hours in Nunhead Cemetery over the years, I never came across one, or perhaps I should say, one never came across me.

NB. Long before Long Jenkins' body was removed from the Court Garden of the Bank of England, his ghost was said to haunt the Bank where he would startle the armed guards at night by rattling their rifles.

Another version of this article was first published in FONC News No 78, Winter 2002/3 entitled A Revenant at Nunhead?

~~~ DIARY DATES ~~~

GENERAL GUIDED TOURS OF THE CEMETERY *take place on the last Sunday in every month starting at 2.00pm.* We meet near the flint circle just inside the cemetery's main gates in Linden Grove, Nunhead, London SE15 3LP. Tours take between one and a half to two hours. The Publications and Enquiries Desk will be present, weather and volunteers permitting.

THEMED TOURS DURING SUMMER 2024. All tours start promptly at 2.00 pm on Sunday afternoons except Open Day and Open House Weekend. or as may be shown below marked thus*. Meet your guide/s for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main cemetery gates in Linden Grove.

WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR: *Sunday 9th June*

VOLUNTEERING - THE BIG HELP OUT: *Sunday 9th June - see page 13*

WATERLOO ANNIVERSARY EVENT: *Sunday 16th June*

CEMETERY SYMBOLS TOUR: *Sunday 7th July*

* **CRYPT & CHAPEL VISITS:** *Sunday 21st July at 2.00pm (Meet at the chapel)*

MUSIC HALL ARTISTES TOUR: *Sunday 11th August*

MILITARY CONNECTIONS TOUR: *Sunday 18th August*

PRACTICAL WORKDAYS *take place on the first Sunday in the month from 10.00am to 4.30pm.* New volunteers are always welcome. Meet at the FONC cabin 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 MIs in the cemetery is an important and ongoing task. We meet at the FONC cabin 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 07799 971597. *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.*

FONC'S AGM WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE ANGLICAN CHAPEL AT NUNHEAD CEMETERY ON SATURDAY 28th JUNE 2024 AT 2.00 PM. *Drinks (non-alcoholic) and home made food will be provided (donations to offset costs please).* Bring a fold-up chair if you have one. We will also be conducting visits to the crypt for those members who are interested. *Please go to page 5*

FONC TRUSTEES

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Vice-chairman: **Carol Stevenson** - email: practicalwork@fonc.org.uk

FONC Co-ordinator: **Jeff Hart OBE** - 020 8694 6079 email: fonc@btconnect.com

Minutes secretary and Volunteering Co-ordinator: **Jane Hart**

email: volunteering@fonc.org.uk

Hon treasurer: **Ann Coley**

Hon membership secretary: Due to a temporary absence please direct all membership enquiries to: Carol Stevenson, email; membership@fonc.org.uk until further notice

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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 20th July 2024

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

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