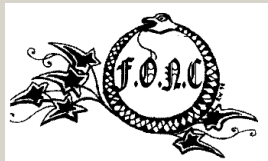


ISSN 1478-0631



# FONC News

No 165 ~ Autumn issue ~ Sept ~ Nov 2024

*Journal of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery*



*A grotesque on the east side of the inside wall in the Anglican Chapel at Nunhead Cemetery. Photo: Ron Woollacott*

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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 annually. 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 *FONC News*, for the purpose of reclaiming tax and to communicate other FONC matters. 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](mailto:membership@fonc.org.uk)

**FONC Membership:** Please direct all membership enquiries to the new Membership Secretary, Carol Stevenson. email: [membership@fonc.org.uk](mailto:membership@fonc.org.uk)

**Further information** about FONC and Nunhead Cemetery can be found on our excellent website managed by Simon Quill at [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)

**Cemetery Opening Times:** 1st April to 30th September, 8.30am - 7.00pm; 1st October to 31st October, 8.30am - 5.00pm; 1st November to 28th February, 8.30am - 4.00pm; 1st March to 31st March, 8.30am - 5.00pm. *Times are subject to change.* See 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 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 mobile phone 07764 600693 or by e-mail: [jane.c.hart@btconnect.com](mailto:jane.c.hart@btconnect.com)

**FONC Meetings and Events:** Meetings of the Trustees that take place on the 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](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com) for the Zoom website link. Other events are announced in *FONC News* and on the FONC website [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)

**Nunhead Cemetery Staff:** The cemetery staff can be contacted by 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](mailto:editorfonc@hotmail.com)

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

**Editorial:**

We hope everyone had an enjoyable summer despite the changeable weather. This issue contains much information about FONC and the cemetery now and in the future, including an update on the East Lodge; AGM report; Open Day report; forthcoming autumn arts events; work on the boundary wall at Limesford Road; future work with Froglife; more FONC publications being available; invitation to become a Trustee; independent examiner wanted, and more. Feature articles include one about a Swedish lifeboat that was a gift from a wine merchant who rests at Nunhead, and the sad story of the 1963 Perpignan air disaster. We hope, as always, that you find something within of interest. RW



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## Nunhead East Lodge:

### From Ruin To Revival

*update by Jane Hart*



As the excitement of being successful in achieving our funding to restore the East Lodge has died down, the hard work in actually delivering the project has started. The expectation that work would start on site quickly has been dashed mainly as a result of the time taken to get the first part of the work - the shell and core tender for the East lodge - finalised. Unfortunately there were a lot of issues that needed to be accurately set out to avoid any disputes or additional costs further down the line and, as a result, the invitation to tender has only recently been issued. More encouragingly the tender for the replacement FONC cabin has been let, with the build-

*continued on next page*

ing to be fabricated off-site, and hopefully delivered towards the end of this year. The job description and advertisement for the Outlook and Development Manager has also been finalised - so anyone interested in applying for the job should be able to view the advertisement on the FONC website as well as a range of other places, including Southwark's websites. Other work has been going on in the background, such as finalising the landscaping tender for work around the East Lodge and setting up the process for implementing both the Conservation Management Plan and the Woodland Management Plan.

FONC has been involved in organising new activities on site, such as an afternoon giving people an introduction to onsite volunteering activities, regular arts events in the chapel and working with other organisations such as FrogLife to improve biodiversity of species in the Nunhead Cemetery pond. All these activities will be evaluated to judge how well they work in attracting a more diverse range of people visiting and becoming more engaged in the cemetery, its history and ecology.

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## **FONC AGM 2024 Report** *by Jeff Hart*

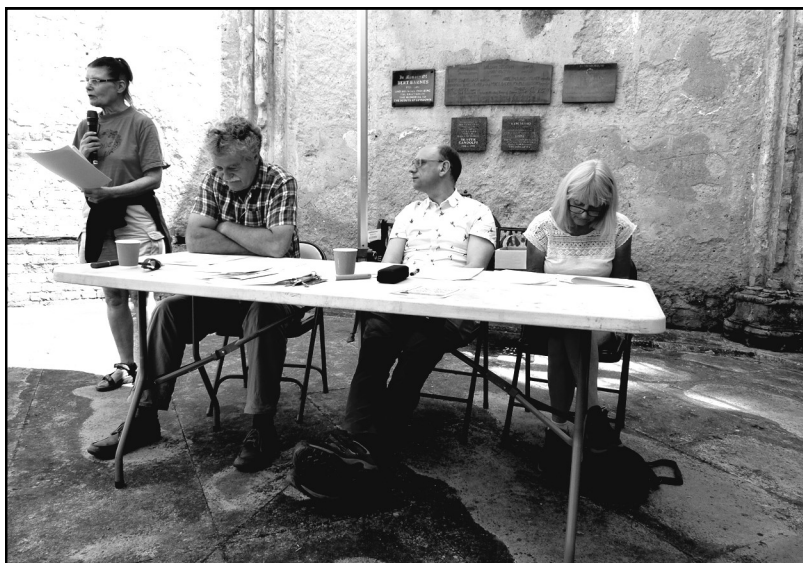
*Photos: Ron Woollacott*

**F**ONC's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Saturday, the 29th of June (not as erroneously shown as Saturday the 28th June in the last issue of *FONC News* - sorry!) in sunny, warm weather. Holding the meeting in the roofless Anglican Chapel was a risk but erecting our large marquees inside the chapel shaded those attending to listen, via our new PA system, to the reports of the Trustees (which can be found on our website [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk)).

Non-alcoholic drinks and home-made food were provided and followed by a visit to the crypt under the chapel. It was such a disappointment, therefore, that we once again struggled to achieve a quorum for the meeting. We really need FONC members to engage with the Trustees once a year to legitimise our actions on their behalf over the year. We realise that AGMs are not the most exciting of events, but we do try hard to make it easily accessible and sociable.

With all reports adopted by acclamation, Trustees Ann Coley, Jane Hart and Garry Wiles, who had served their three-year appointments,

were re-appointed. Teresa Neary stood down as a Trustee and was thanked for her very useful contributions during her term, including vulnerable persons policies. Teresa also co-ordinated this years' very successful Open Day.



FONC AGM 2024 in the Anglican Chapel at Nunhead Cemetery.

*Standing: Carol Stevenson, Vice-Chairman, addresses the meeting.  
Sitting, left to right: Jeff Hart, Co-ordinator; Jeremy Partington, Chairman;  
Jane Hart, Minutes Secretary.*



## **Autumn 2024: Arts events in the Anglican chapel**

*by Jane Hart*

**J**ust a reminder of the curated arts events which started in the Anglican chapel in August and will run until October. The Feminist Lecture Program series of curated arts exhibitions began in the chapel on the 4th of August with a series of six weekly exhibitions in the chapel finishing on the 15th of September. The second is the Project Octagon curated programme which will participate in the Nunhead Arts Trail on the 28th and 29th September with a further exhibition as part of the Frieze Arts Festival from the 9th to 13th October.

Further information on all arts events can be found on Instagram @thefeministlectureprogram and @artspaceoctogan.

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## **Yet more FONC Publications now available**

*by Jeff Hart*

**T**he latest in the series of biographies of our 'Nunhead Notables' is now available. *Nunhead Notables* Vol 5 is jointly authored by FONC stalwart Ron Woollacott and his daughter Michèle Louise Burford and maintains the very high standards of earlier 'Notables' productions. The book consists of 126 pages and includes a number of fascinating illustrations of some of the Notables and their works. It costs a modest £5 (or £4.50 to FONC members) and can be ordered through the FONC website (plus p&p) or purchased direct from the Publications and Enquiries Desk when on site at the cemetery.

In 2023 Ron and Michèle also published privately *Death in Tragic Circumstances* which FONC purchased sixty copies of for sale at our events. The book includes 'true stories of murder, mayhem, manslaughter and suicide victims and perpetrators' all of whom are interred at the cemetery. With over 250 pages and illustrated by contemporary prints and photographs, the authors have managed to make these stories both informative and entertaining at the same time. As a result, the book has

already proved to be very popular, almost selling out already, and we were pleased to be given permission by the authors to reprint further copies for direct sale. This is now available as above at a price of £10 (or £9 to FONC members).

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## **Limesford Road Boundary Wall Repairs Begin**

*Text by Jeff Hart. Photos: Jeremy Partington*

The Limesford Road boundary wall rebuild - complete with new railings to match those on Linden Grove - as reported on in the last issue of *FONC News* began on the 10th of June 2024. The work is scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2025. Because of the need to move various services and provide space to work in, Limesford Road itself has been restricted to a single lane, one-way route with vehicles travelling from west to east. Diversion routes have been set out. The Limesford Road entrance will continue to open as usual for the duration of the work. To minimise disruption to residents, and allow on-street parking, the work has been split into two tranches, the first running from the Borland Road end of the walls to the entrance gates, with the second being from the entrance gates to the Ivydale Road end of Limesford Road. It was the intention to salvage as much original material as possible, but the brickwork was



*Demolition work in Limesford Road*

*continued on next page*



*New boundary wall in Limesford Road in the course of construction.*

found to be in such poor condition as to be unusable for anything other than hardcore and what were thought to be stone coping stones turned out to be relatively modern concrete reproductions. New materials will match the originals as closely as possible, and the York stone paving will be re-used. FONC is regularly monitoring the work and liaising with Southwark Council and will report further in the next issue.

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## **What a Croak! *by Jane Hart***

**F**roglife has recently received Heritage Fund funding for its Blue Chain project which is aimed at creating and improving habitats for amphibians and reptiles and giving opportunities for local communities to get involved with nature on their doorstep. It's loosely based on the popular Green Chain Walking route covering Southeast London, including Nunhead Cemetery. The project is looking to protect native species of amphibians and reptiles found in Southeast London, examples being the common toad, great crested newt, grass snake and slow worm. These

species need help, particularly in urban areas, where freshwater habitats have massively declined, and pollution, disease and invasive species have all had a big impact. By creating and restoring ponds Froglife aims to create a network, a 'blue chain', of joined up habitats that's not only beneficial to amphibians and reptiles but a wide range of other wildlife species including birds, small mammals, plants and invertebrates. FONC has linked up with Froglife to aid this work with two particular events.

The first is a training session in the cemetery on SUNDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2024 from 10.00am to 12noon. This is aimed at providing attendees with training on native amphibian and reptile species ID and freshwater ecology. This training session will form part of the Blue Chain guardians' element of their project, tying in with the aim of helping FONC to maintain the Nunhead Cemetery pond for wildlife in the future and impart knowledge beyond the scope of the Blue Chain. The second is to undertake work to improve the Nunhead Cemetery pond on SUNDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2024 with the session running from 10.00am to 3.00pm. The work, involving Froglife and FONC volunteers, will include desilting, clearing emergent vegetation and possibly introducing some new aquatic and oxygenating plants.

We are keen to support these events and encourage members to take part. If you are interested in attending one or both of these events, please let me know - jane.c.hart@btconnect.com so we can make sure we have appropriate facilities at these events.

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## **FONC Independent Examiner of Accounts**

*by Ann Coley, FONC Hon Treasurer*

### **Thanks**

FONC wish to thank George Young, who has stood down as our Independent Examiner after 25 years. George has been a quiet presence in the background through all this time making sure that the FONC accounts are in order and providing suggestions and advice where necessary. As Treasurer I have appreciated his thorough and timely review of the records and am very grateful for his years of service.

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## **New Independent Examiner required**

George's retirement leaves us with a vacancy, and whilst there are a couple of people outside of FONC we can approach, it might be more appropriate if a member would consider taking on this role. It is a relatively small commitment but would be of great help to FONC.

## **What is the Independent Examiner?**

The Charity Commission (CC) describe the work of the Independent Examiner as a 'light touch scrutiny' to provide some independent assurance that the charity's money has been properly accounted for and that accounting records are kept.

## **Are qualifications necessary?**

The CC requirement is for an independent person who is reasonably believed by the Trustees to have the requisite ability and practical experience to carry out a competent examination of the accounts. In practice this means that the examiner cannot be a Trustee of the charity (or a close relative) but can be a supporter, provided they are not involved with the day-to-day administration. The CC gives two main criteria for determining that the examiner meets the requisite ability requirement. These are:

- That they understand their responsibilities as explained in CC guidance CC32 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-examination-of-charityaccounts-examiners-cc32>)
- That they have sufficient financial awareness, numeracy skills and relevant experience to carry out the work and make the judgements required.

There is no requirement for a charity of FONC's size to have a qualified accountant as our Examiner, and relevant experience would also include having been treasurer in a charity or club, it doesn't have to include paid work in finance.

## **How complex are the FONC accounts?**

Truthfully, not that complex. We currently have three bank accounts and in total about 200 transactions a year (some membership transactions are consolidated for recording purposes). Records are kept on an Excel

spreadsheet and can be provided in both a printed and soft copy version. The accounts and Treasurer's commentary for 2023-24 can be found on the FONC website:

<https://www.fonc.org.uk/members-area/members-area-logged-in/agm-minutes-and-reports/>

### **What does the Examiners report look like?**

Please see the above link for the 2023-24 report.

### **What is the time requirement, and when?**

All records are cross referenced to physical supporting documents (where necessary) and are filed in order. The transactions are linked logically (I hope) to the summaries and accounts. Whilst in the first year some time would be needed to understand the FONC financial policy and records, I would hope that the ongoing commitment would be perhaps 7 to 10 hours a year. The year end is the 31st March and accounts are usually completed in April. I usually wait for the April bank statement to be received before handing over the records for review in May, but this could be a week or two earlier by arrangement. Records can be delivered or posted to the Examiner. Our AGM is usually towards the end of June, so ideally the report would be received early in June to go on the website.

### **Who do I contact for more information?**

If you think you might be interested in taking on this responsibility, please contact me at [treasurer@fonc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@fonc.org.uk) and we can discuss. I would appreciate responses by the 21st October 2024.

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## **Birds in the Cemetery**

Trustee Charles Newman has drawn our attention to an article about the birds in Nunhead Cemetery, which was featured in a summer issue of *Birdwatching* magazine. The article describes the cemetery as 'a wooded oasis in the midst of urban sprawl' and we can't disagree with that, and provides a list of 23 bird species to be seen, and the best places within the cemetery to see them during the spring and summer and autumn and winter months.



## **Nunhead Cemetery News No 55**

*Text and photos by Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator*

### **The ‘Big Help Out’**

We welcomed nine more new volunteers to the cemetery on the 9th June 2024 as part of the second annual ‘Big Help Out’ event. An enthusiastic group, coming from as far afield as Dartford and Tottenham, carried out vegetation clearance from major memorials on The Slope and monument inscription recording near the Anglican Chapel. Some volun-





*Volunteers removing vegetation from monuments.*

teers had a go at both activities and the FONC supervisors were really impressed with their enthusiasm and hard work. Several have subsequently attended our regular practical work and monument inscription recording days. We now hope to make this afternoon taster session a regular event in early June in future years.

### **Film night on 7th September 2024**

As noted in the last issue of *FONC News*, the Peckham and Nunhead Free Film Festival returns to Nunhead Cemetery on Saturday 7th September. We don't have details of the film to be shown yet, or the arrangements to attend. As last year some 450 filmgoers turned up for the 300 places that were available, we recommend that readers monitor the Festival website for further details. This is at <https://www.facebook.com/peckhamfreefilmfestival/>

### **September events aplenty!**

Do check our website [www.fonc.org.uk](http://www.fonc.org.uk) for details of our Autumn events beginning in September. The Open House/Heritage Open Days

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weekend, with cemetery tours at 2.00pm and 3.00pm and crypt and chapel visits at 1.15pm; 2.15pm; 3.00pm & 3.45pm, is on the 14th and 15th September and the Nunhead Arts Trail chapel exhibition is on the 28th and 29th September. Look out for the next bat prowls on the 5th September, woodland walk on 15th September and the amphibian identification/monitoring training session on the 22nd September.

## **Controversy hits National Federation AGM 2024**

The Friends of Foster Hill Road Cemetery in Bedford made a splendid job of hosting the Annual General Meeting of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF) on the 8th June. We were greeted by a bag-piper, representing the period when Highland troops were billeted in Bedford before moving to the Western Front in the First World War, and guides in period costume told many a tale of interesting people buried in the cemetery. This included the grave of a Polish Jewish heroine who fought the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1944 and survived the concentration camps to be resettled in Bedford, along with many other Polish families, where she married happily.

However, controversy arose in the business meeting when the NFCF put forward a motion to dissolve the Federation and replace it with a Community Interest Company called the National Federation of Cemetery Friends CIC. Although it was generally agreed that some means of protecting the Committee members from unlimited liability (there had been a threat of legal action over a particular issue) was necessary, some Federation members (including Nunhead) felt that this had not been put forward in accordance with the NFCF Constitution and that there was insufficient information available to take a definitive view on the proposed CIC. As a result, it was agreed to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on the 27th July to re-visit the issue. After further subsequent consideration, FONC Trustees continued to have some concerns. However, as it was clear at the beginning of the EGM that sufficient proxy votes had been cast in favour of the motion to dissolve the Federation, there was no point in continuing to debate the issue. FONC thus abstained from voting. The NFCF committee members will now aim to register the new CIC as soon as possible.

## **PSPO at Nunhead Cemetery allowed to Lapse**

*by Jeff Hart*

**F**ONC has written to Southwark Council officers and local Councilors to express our concern that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which, among other Borough-wide provisions, introduced provisions for the control of dogs in the cemetery, has not been renewed. This means that there are currently no controls on dogs in Nunhead Cemetery.

A new PSPO was adopted on the 23rd March 2018 and FONC was actively involved in drawing up the provisions applying to Nunhead Cemetery and in implementing them on site through appropriate signage and visitor education. There is a legal requirement to review and re-new, amend or repeal a PSPO every three years. This was done just over three years ago. The next review was due in March of this year. Despite several requests by FONC to various officers for information regarding the review, nothing was forthcoming. We now find that the PSPO expired in April 2024 and that there were apparently no plans to renew it. This appears to FONC an unsatisfactory state of affairs. Despite clearly having a specific interest in this matter and having made representations to each of the Council meetings that considered the PSPO previously, we have not been consulted in any way on Southwark's intentions.

The PSPO is required to be reviewed by a specific process which includes public consultation. This has not happened and there has been no publication of the apparent decision not to renew the PSPO. There is a requirement to formally discharge a PSPO and there is no indication that Southwark Council has done this either. Notices and signage intended to inform and direct visitors on site also, misleadingly, remains in place.

There have recently been complaints from other dog-owners about a dangerous dog attacking other dogs in the cemetery and of the behaviour of its owner. This is far from being the only complaint that has been made to FONC or to the Council. To us, this reinforces the need for appropriate, enforceable provisions to be in place in regard to dogs in the cemetery which is, of course, also a designated nature reserve. This becomes even more important given the efforts being made to encourage

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greater visitor numbers to the cemetery as part of the current National Heritage Lottery Fund supported 'East Lodge: From Ruin to Revival' project. In response to our concerns, we have been told by officers that enquiries have been necessary to determine the facts and that we will receive a full response 'in the week beginning 29th July but nothing had happened by the 11th August'. Unfortunately, because of production deadlines, there will not be time to include that response in this issue of *FONC News*, but we will report fully in the next issue.

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**James Gunstone Chillingworth**  
**The Wine Merchant and... the Swedish Lifeboat**  
*by Ann Coley*

When manning the Publications and Enquiries Desk in the cemetery you never know quite what you might find out. At the July workday one of our members, Judith Harries, came by to see if we had any new publications she needed to add to her collection (I was happy to tell her that the excellent *Nunhead Notables* Volume 5 by Ron Woollacott and Michèle L Burford would be available shortly). In conversation she mentioned that recently in the cemetery she had come across a group of men in jackets with badges. Being curious she asked who they were! She was a bit surprised by the answer. This group had come to see the grave of James Gunstone Chillingworth who had gifted a fully equipped lifeboat to the King of Sweden in 1868. Judith pointed us towards [www.ianvisits.co.uk](http://www.ianvisits.co.uk) for further information.

James Chillingworth was a wine merchant and his firm supplied Queen Victoria as well as the King of Sweden and Norway and the King of Bavaria. No one seems to know why he had been in Sweden (assumedly on business), but he gave the lifeboat as 'acknowledgement for the universal kindness shown him during his recent visit to Stockholm and other parts, and for the courteous reception accorded him by his Majesty'. Lifeboats were not cheap, and this was a generous gift.

The Chillingworth family of wine merchants no longer exists, but should you be interested there are still bottles of their Port on sale on vintage wine websites. An 1890 vintage, bottled in 1893 will set you back



*The Chillingworth vault (left) and the Stearns mausoleum (right) in Nunhead Cemetery. The vault has a door at the front leading down into the interior. Mrs Stearns, the sister of James', was laid to rest in the family vault and later removed to the mausoleum. She and her son-in-law were the mausoleum's only occupants and they were removed in the 1930s and buried in a nearby earth grave. Photo: D & C Hurford*

£1,995 (perhaps better stick to Cockburns!).

I am not as familiar with the major monuments in the cemetery as I should be, but a quick look at Google gave us a picture that very clearly identified that the monument is next to the Stearns Mausoleum.

The mausoleum was built to receive the remains of Mrs Laura Stearns, the daughter of William Chillingworth of Radnor House, Twickenham, and sister of James Gunstone Chillingworth. (For more information about the Chillingworth family of wine merchants, see the article 'The story behind Nunhead's only Mausoleum' in *FONC News* No 141 (Autumn) 2018, pages 13 & 14, and No 142 (Winter) 2018/19, pages 10 to 12.)

And what of the lifeboat? It was originally named *William and Anne Chillingworth* (James's parents' names and in line with the naming of the

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other lifeboats) but in 1910 was renamed *Lifbat 416* when the Royal Swedish Pilot Board had a bit of a rationalisation and applied identification by numbers.

The design of *Lifbat 416*, which was self-draining, self-righting and unsinkable, was the result of a competition with the design being approved in 1851. Many boats of this type were built as it was the standard boat ordered by the Royal Naval Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The boats were built by Messrs Forrestt & Son of Limehouse. As part of this year's celebrations of 200 years of the founding of the RNLI, the Canal and River Trust arranged for a plaque to be installed in Limehouse Basin, close to the original site of the factory.

After *Lifbat 416* was received and tested it was based in Skanor, south of Malmo. After eight years there it was assigned northwards to a new rescue station in Helsingborg on the West Coast of Sweden overlooking the narrow straits. The two places swapped boats a couple of times in the 1890s but after the final swap it stayed in Skanor until its final call in December 1939. It is thought that 80 lives were saved by *Lifbat 416* in its years of service. It was subsequently donated to the Museum of Falsterbo and was fully restored in the 1990s. It is still in a local museum, being taken out from time to time to demonstrate how lives were saved long before engines and GPS existed. *Lifbat 416* was shipped to Poole as part of the RNLI anniversary and then rowed to the Limehouse Basin in May 2024 to visit where she was built.

Information summarised from <https://www.roddarelaget.se/english> and <https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/historic-lifeboat-returns-to-london-as-rnli-marks-its-200th-anniversary-72494/>

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## **New FONC Trustees Wanted**

*writes Jeff Hart*

**F**ONC is directed and operated in all its functions by its Trustees. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, we as an entity, and Trustees as individuals, have a range of legal responsibilities to fulfil and have duties that must be carried out in accordance with Charity Commission

requirements. Further information in this regard can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do>. If you follow the link, what you will see might seem daunting. However, much of the information encapsulates common sense and principles that we would all wish to apply in our working and private lives. The existing FONC Trustees are looking to widen the base of skills and diversity available to it to continue to operate the Friends in the best way possible. We are sure that there are competent FONC members out there who may be willing to join us. At present, we are largely an older, white, middle-class, physically able group. So, we would welcome, in particular, those who better reflect the diversity of our local community and may also add to our skills base in IT, marketing, volunteer recruitment/supervision or fund-raising, If you would be willing to put yourself forward, or know someone else who might be interested, and would like to know more, please contact us at [volunteering@fonc.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@fonc.org.uk)

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## **More about the Burwash Family buried at Nunhead**

Malcolm Harris writes:

Following up my inquiries into the above family (see my article in the last issue of *FONC News*) I received a note from genealogist John J. Tunesi of Liongam MSc, FSA Scot, Hon FHS, QG, for which I am most grateful which is copied in full below with his consent:

I have made a quick scout around in the [Scriveners] Company's history that I have on my shelves at home and find that the Burwash family were certainly a family of scrivener notaries during the mid to late 19th Century. David was the son of a clockmaker in Clerkenwell, and he was articled to a Dutch notary, Arend Jacob Guitard on the 20th of March 1829. David became a Freeman of the Company qualified as a notary in 1836. Presently I am none too sure if he subsequently took the livery of the Company - I suspect not. That being said, looking at the list of Masters, he never became Master of the Company which would certainly mean that he never took the Companies' livery.

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David was baptised at the Parish Church of St James, Clerkenwell, Middlesex on the 15th of October 1797. His parents were Thomas and Ann Burwash. Ann was most probably the Ann Crosskell who married a Thomas Burwash at the Parish Church of St Brides, Fleet Street, City of London on the 5th of October 1794.

David firstly married Ann Chambers (died during the March quarter of 1851 within the Registration District of Camberwell, Co. Surrey) at the Parish Church of St John, Hackney, Co. Middlesex on the 20th of March 1819.

After Ann's death, David married Mary Lucina Mitchell at Camden Church, Camberwell, Surrey on the 18th of December 1851. At the time of his marriage to Mary, he was living at The Park, Peckham, Surrey.

Although he was made free of the Scriveners' Company, I suspect his mother company in the City of London (that is first company he joined) was the Clothworkers' Company as stated upon the Freedom of the City of London Admission Papers for one of his sons, Edwin Augustus Burwash on becoming a Freeman of the City and also like his father a member of the Clothworkers' Company. All David's three sons were members of his notarial practice, and they were 1) Edwin Augustus Burwash (died 24th February 1875), 2) Sydney Burwash (died 24th February 1879) and 3) Frederick David Burwash (died 11th August 1879). All three sons were members of the Scriveners' Company.

After his death, David's will was proved for probate on the 7th October 1876.

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## Open Day May 2024

The annual Open Day in May was attended by approximately 5,350 people, a new record. This was Trustee Teresa Neary's first year as the Open Day organiser and she made an excellent fist of it. The horse drawn hearse was a popular attraction as were the Morris Dancers and as always, our Mr Bugman, who encourages children to look for insects to identify. The choirs performing in the chapel were enjoyed, as were the several tours of the cemetery and visits to the crypt. FONC's publications stall did well, and our plant stall volunteers and home bakers came up

trumps again. We also added a number of new stalls and attractions to the event thus delighting the large numbers of visitors and to the obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment of the day.



*Visitors queuing patiently at the refreshment tent. Photos: Ron Woollacott*



*Open Day 2024: Jane Hart, Minutes Secretary and Volunteering Co-ordinator (left) with former Trustee Gwyneth Stokes.*

## **The Perpignan Air Disaster of 1963**

### ***British holidaymakers perish in plane crash***

*by Michèle Louise Burford and Ron Woollacott*

**T**he Oxlades of New Cross and the Days of Bermondsey were among 36 British tourists looking forward to spending a late summer holiday on Spain's sunny Costa Brava. All had paid between £35 and £40 for a 12-day 'all-in' package holiday through the agents of Lyons Tours United of Colne, Lancashire. Lyons Tours had chartered a twin-engined Vickers Viking, a short-range airliner for the holiday, operated by the French company Airnautic of Boulevard Haussmann, Paris. On arrival at Perpignan the holidaymakers were due to travel about 30 miles by motor coach and across the French border to the Spanish coast.

The regular four-hour non-stop night-flight to Perpignan Airport took off from Gatwick at 9.20pm on Thursday 11th September 1963, but just after midnight the control staff at Perpignan lost all contact with the airliner. The aircraft was just a few miles from approaching the Spanish border when just as it was about to land, it was swept off course during a violent thunderstorm of strong winds and lashing rain. As a consequence the aircraft crashed into the mist-shrouded peak of Pic de la Roquette, known to the people of the Pyrenees as 'the airliner cemetery'. On striking the peak the Vickers Viking exploded and burst into flames, just five minutes before it was due to land at the airport, and all on board were killed.

The pilot's last message to airport control was: 'the storm has put the radio compass out of action.' The wreckage of the aircraft was located about 30 miles southwest of Perpignan, and the rescue teams had a dangerous task climbing to the disaster area in the appalling weather.

The airliner had crashed close to the village of Vernet-les-Bains, where several residents claimed that they had heard the sound of a plane during the storm. Madame Marcel Marchand, wife of a forester, and one of 179 residents in the village, said the storm began at about midnight and it had kept her awake. She said the sky was lit up by great flashes of lightning

and then suddenly there was a terrific explosion. The loud noise did not wake her husband, however, and some of the people that heard the noise did not think it was a plane, although an aircraft had been heard circling overhead.

On the following day, Friday, 13th September, torrential rain and a flooded river prevented attempts by the rescue teams to bring the bodies down from the crash scene. Hours later they were carried down to the steepest part of the Canigou Massif where the plane had crashed, and French soldiers loaded them into army trucks and drove down a muddy track to a bridge. Unfortunately, the bridge over which the cortege was meant to pass had been swept away by the flood, and overnight the soldiers stood guard over the bodies that were lying in the trucks.

On Saturday the 14th September engineers used a nylon cable to transport the bodies across the swollen river, which were sent across by breeches buoy. The progress of the rescue team was watched by William Hickson, the British Consul in Marseilles. The bodies were then carried to the chapel at Prades, on the French side of the Pyrenees, to await identification. Lyons Tours had made special arrangements for the bodies to be sent back to Britain for burial. The continuing bad weather delayed the arrival at Prades of the French civil aviation officials whose task was to investigate the cause of the disaster. They had flown from Paris but were unable to land at Perpignan due to the weather, and were diverted to Montpellier.

## **The Casualties**

The 36 British holidaymakers who died were: Gertrude C'Allceta, aged 45, and her daughter, aged 25, both of Liverpool; Mr Austin of Kimberley, Notts; Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Cort of Nelson, Lancashire; John Day, aged 35, and his wife Mildred, aged 34, of Bermondsey; Walter Fitch, aged 38, and his wife Jean, aged 38, of Newthorpe, Notts; Mr G Gaunt of Mapperley, Notts; Miss Carol Gorman of Loughton, Essex; Patricia Goulds, aged 19, of Dartford, Kent; Mr A Goy of Fiskerton, Notts; Miss Linda Hensher of Loughton, Essex; Catherine Keating, aged

*continued on next page*

33, of Liverpool; Peter Naylor and his wife Mary of Sheffield, Yorks; Janet Norris, aged 18, of East Ham, London; Joseph Oxlade, aged 60, and his wife Violet, aged 54, of Queen's Road, New Cross, London, and their two sons Edward Ernest Oxlade, aged 27, and Alan Charles Gifford, aged 27; Henry Potter and his wife Barbara of Harrow, Middlesex; Mr and Mrs Ronald Powell of Nine Elms, London; Arthur Roberts, aged 41, and his wife Annie, aged 43, of Leeds, Yorks; Gerald Samson, aged 35, of Wilford, Notts; Jennifer Sola, aged 20, of London; Celeste Tarrant, aged 19, of Dartford, Kent; Alan Turner, aged 23, and his wife Diane, aged 22, of Great Barr, Birmingham; Margaret Turner, aged 18, of Loughton, Essex; and tragic honeymooners, David Wyvill, aged 20, and his bride Rita, aged 21, of Filey, Yorks.

The French air crew who lost their lives were: the pilot Captain Max Du Noyer; First Officer Leopold Marold; Navigator Emile Jamin; and air hostess Muriel Tiberghain.



*The Perpignan air crash of 1963.  
The grave of the Oxlade/Day family in 2024. Photo: Ron Woollacott*

The Queen sent a message to the Minister of Aviation asking him to convey an expression of sincere sympathy from her and Prince Philip to the relatives of those who had lost their lives.

Six victims of the air disaster were buried at Nunhead Cemetery on the 24th September 1963. They were: Joseph James Oxlade and his wife Violet Elizabeth, their sons Edward Ernest Oxlade and Alan Charles Gifford, Mrs Oxlade's son by her first husband, all of Queen's Road, New Cross, together with Mr and Mrs Oxlade's niece, Mildred Day, and her husband John Henry Day, of St James's Road, Bermondsey. *Grave No 44509, Square 28.*

**Sources:** Burial records; Monumental inscription in Nunhead Cemetery; *Liverpool Echo*, 12th September 1963; *Daily Mirror*, 13th September 1963, 14th September 1963; *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 13th September 1963; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 14th September 1963.

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*The following article was sent to the editor some time ago by a FONC member, whose name is not known.*

## Fear of Premature Burial

A magazine called *The Burial Reformer* was issued in Britain from 1905 to 1914, specifically to press for improvement in burial customs. Renamed *The Perils of Premature Burial* shortly after its launch, the magazine exposed such cases as the 'Accrington Sensation' of January 1905, when a certain Mrs Holden, aged 29, was laid out as dead and prepared for entombment; the undertaker noticed a slight movement whilst completing his task, and revived the woman, who survived.

The magazine published a limerick which was popular at the time of the controversy:

There was a young man at Nunhead  
Who awoke in a coffin of lead  
'It is easy enough,'  
He remarked in a huff,  
'But I wasn't aware I was dead.'

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## Obituary



**Simon Mercer, FONC Member 0337**

It is with much sadness that we learned of the death of Simon Mercer who passed away on Monday 8th July 2024. Simon was a member of FONC for nearly 39 years. He became a member in November 1985 and served as our efficient Honorary Membership Secretary for around 35 years until he became seriously ill in December 2023. Simon not only maintained immaculate membership records he also printed the address labels for mailing *FONC News* to members and provided the distribution lists for the local delivery of the journal. For the past two years, rather than trust the unreliable Royal Mail, he has personally delivered the labels and lists to the Editor at Nunhead despite living at Dollis Hill on the other side of London.

While often invisible to the majority of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, Simon did many things in the background that helped keep things running smoothly. In addition to looking after the Membership, his other duties included managing the online publication sales, online donations, gift-aid claims, and also provided advice and support on GDPR and to the Treasurer. Simon was a mild-mannered and self-effacing gentleman, and for many years assisted at the Publications and Enquiry Desk at our annual Open Day. We miss him. Our thoughts at this sad time are with Cathy, his wife.

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### ~~~ DIARY DATES ~~~

#### **GENERAL GUIDED TOURS OF THE CEMETERY**

*These 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 AUTUMN 2024**

All tours start promptly at 2.00 pm on Sunday afternoons except Open House and Heritage Open Days Weekend, or as shown below marked

thus\*. For 2.00pm tours only meet your guide/s for the afternoon at the flint circle just inside the main cemetery gates in Linden Grove.

**\* BAT SIGHTING WALK:** *Thursday 5th September at 7.00pm*

**CEMETERY SYMBOLS TOUR:** *Sunday 13th October*

**\* OPEN HOUSE AND HERITAGE OPEN DAYS:** General tours, crypt and chapel visits. *Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th September from 1.00pm to 5.00pm as part of Open House*

**WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR:** *Sunday 15th September*

**\* MONTH OF THE DEAD TOUR:** *Saturday 12th October (Pre-bookings only).* To book please visit: [www.londonmonthofthedeath.com/tickets](http://www.londonmonthofthedeath.com/tickets)

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH TOUR:** *Sunday 20th October*

**FIRST WORLD WAR WALK:** *Sunday 10th November*

**WOODLAND TRAIL TOUR:** *Sunday 8th December*

### **ALL SOULS SERVICE 2024**

*Sunday afternoon 3rd November at 2.00pm.* Please meet inside the cemetery at the FONC cabin near the Scottish Martyrs monument.

### **REMEMBRANCE DAY 2024**

*Sunday morning 10th November at 10.45pm.* Please assemble at the CWGC monument and screen wall near the Limesford Road entrance.

### **PRACTICAL WORKDAYS IN THE CEMETERY**

*These 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, MI Co-ordinator at [foncinscriptions@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.fonc.org.uk) and notice boards in Nunhead Cemetery.*

## FONC TRUSTEES

*Chairman:* **Jeremy Partington** - 07909 561654

*Vice-Chairman:* **Carol Stevenson** - email: [practicalwork@fonc.org.uk](mailto:practicalwork@fonc.org.uk)

*FONC Co-ordinator:* **Jeff Hart OBE** - 020 8694 6079 email: [fonc@btconnect.com](mailto:fonc@btconnect.com)

*Minutes Secretary and Volunteering Co-ordinator:*

**Jane Hart** - email: [volunteering@fonc.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@fonc.org.uk)

*Hon Treasurer:* **Ann Coley** - email: [treasurer@fonc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@fonc.org.uk)

*Hon Membership Secretary:* **Carol Stevenson** - email: [membership@fonc.org.uk](mailto:membership@fonc.org.uk)

*Monument Inscription Recording Co-ordinator:*

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

*FONC News Editor:* **Ron Woollacott MBE, FRSA** -

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

*Other Trustees:* **Oliver Lomer, Charles Newman, Keith Turpin**

\*\*\*\*\*

*Voluntary Practical Work Co-ordinator:* **Tim Stevenson** -

email: [practicalwork@fonc.org.uk](mailto:practicalwork@fonc.org.uk)

*FONC News Hand-delivery Co-ordinator:* **Nicola Dunn** - 020 8314 0361

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*Webmaster:* **Simon Quill**

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](mailto:editorfonc@hotmail.com)

***The deadline for letters and articles for the next issue is 19th October 2024***

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## Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)



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

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

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

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

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

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

Printed by Catford Print Centre, [www.catfordprint.co.uk](http://www.catfordprint.co.uk)

and published by the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery, LONDON, SE15 3RT

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