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FONC News

No 170 ~ Winter issue ~ Dec 2025 ~ Feb 2026

Journal of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery



Nunhead Cemetery: A fine group of monuments in the Beeches area. Photo: Ron Woollacott

INSIDE

Information for FONC Members *p.2*

Nunhead's East Lodge: From Ruin to Revival *p.3*

Nunhead Cemetery News No 60 *p.6*

FONC's Christmas Social and Carol Concert *p.9*

Memorials to the Dead in Parks *p.10*

London Epitaphs: Podcast review *p.12*

First World War soldiers who died at Dulwich Hospital & buried at Nunhead *p.13*

Re: Cherry laurel *p.16*

Winter walks in Nunhead Cemetery *p.17*

C G Clarke, Peckham's last Liberal MP *p.19*

Architects buried at Nunhead Part 1 *p.22*

Future visit to Tower Hamlets Cemetery and Park *p.24*

Tour Programme 2026 *p.25*

Diary Dates *p.26*

FONC Trustees and contacts *back page*

~ INFORMATION FOR FONC MEMBERS ~

Membership including your contact preferences: Membership of the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC) costs £2 UK (£10 overseas if paper copy of FONC News is requested), 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

FONC Membership: Please direct all membership enquiries to the Membership Secretary, Carol Stevenson. email: membership@fonc.org.uk

Further information about FONC and Nunhead Cemetery can be found on our excellent website managed by Simon Quill at www.fonc.org.uk

Cemetery Opening Times: 1st April to 30th September, 8.30am - 7.00pm; 1st October to 31st October, 8.30am - 5.00pm; 1st November to 28th February, 8.30am - 4.00pm; 1st March to 31st March, 8.30am - 5.00pm. *Times are subject to change.* See 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 or by post through the FONC website (www.fonc.org.uk). 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

FONC Meetings and Events: Meetings of the Trustees that take place on the fourth Monday of each month at 7.00pm and 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**

The Seasons Greetings to all our Readers

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

Contributors to this issue: Michèle Louise Burford; Nina Chantry; Ann Coley; Jane Hart; Jeff Hart; Cathy Mercer; Roy Vickery. *The editor and FONC Trustees do not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by the contributors.*

Editorial:

The months seem to whizz by and as soon as I finish editing this issue I shall be gathering articles for the next, so please start writing something now. This issue contains all the usual news, and it is good to know that FONC's new wood-clad cabin is now in place and in use. Work on the East Lodge is progressing well as reported by Jane Hart, and Jeff Hart keeps us up to date with work and activities concerning the cemetery. Cathy Mercer looks at trees as memorials, and invites us to join her on a visit to Tower Hamlets Cemetery and Park, and Ann Coley reviews the new Nunhead Cemetery podcasts. Other articles include one on Peckham's last Liberal MP and another on First World War soldiers buried at Nunhead Cemetery. Please try to join the Trustees and other members at FONC's Christmas Social and don't forget the Carol Concert.



**Nunhead's East Lodge:
From Ruin To Revival**
latest news by Jane Hart



On a lovely afternoon, Sunday the 7th of September, FONC Trustees and volunteers, together with Councillor Portia Mwanganye, Southwark Council's Cabinet member for Leisure, Parks & Young People, local Councillors Reggie Popoola and Gavin Edwards and Southwark Council officers gathered for the 'opening' of the new FONC cabin. Councillor Mwanganye did us the honour of 'cutting the ribbon' to declare the new cabin 'officially' open. The building comprises a kitchen/messroom for

continued on next page

FONC volunteers to grab a hot drink whilst undertaking practical activities in the cemetery; a storeroom for all FONC's practical work and other equipment and tools; and separate accessible and unisex toilets. The building is both functional as well as looking really attractive. The wood clad exterior, fitting effortlessly into the woodland location, has received lots of compliments from passing visitors. As FONC is responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of the building, unfortunately the public toilets will only be open when FONC volunteers are on site.



Cllr Mwangangye cuts the ribbon and officially opens the FONC cabin. Photo: Nina Chantry

Having decamped to the freight container during the cabin installation, we have now been able to empty this container (which has now been removed from site) and to fully move into the new cabin. New racking was purchased for the storage room to enable all the equipment/tools to be stored neatly and, more importantly, to be easily accessible. In addition, the opportunity was taken to upgrade the displays used for the pub-

lication and enquiry desk - with the purchase of two table top rotating postcard display stands and two new book stands. Pegboards will now be used to secure notices and information on the publication desk, hopefully stopping the need for stones to weigh these papers down in the wind!



The new look Publications and Information Desk in front of the cabin. Photo: Jane Hart

Rebuilding and under pinning the East Lodge

Regular visitors will have noticed the structural work on the East Lodge has been continuing with the removal of lots of London clay from below the structure to enable it to be underpinned with a great deal of concrete. Work has also started on reconstructing the building including rebuilding the bay on the south east side and rebuilding the chimneys. The structural work will take several months to complete but is currently scheduled for the end of April 2026. It is interesting to see the work as it progresses, even if the building is enclosed in netting to protect it from the elements. Paye, the contractor, is hoping to be able to arrange some hard hat tours of the building to enable visitors to see close

continued on next page

up the work that is being done once it is safe to allow visitors on the site. Please keep an eye on the onsite notice boards for further information. Work on cutting new stone will also take place on site so will be visible to visitors.

In order to provide a water supply to the East Lodge and to upgrade the supply line to the cabin, an application for Listed Building consent was made so that the pipe could go under the Linden Grove west pedestrian gate. The laying of supply pipes to the East Lodge and cabin in appropriate trenches in the cemetery will precede a start date for this full connection to the street supply which is dependent on Thames Water. It may be necessary to close the Linden Grove entrance for a short time whilst this work is carried out.

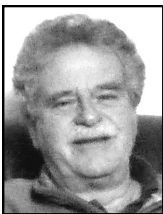
Wellbeing walks and ‘wild woodland’ sessions for children

Catrin, the Outreach and Development Manager, has been further developing an activity programme for the cemetery. Following the successful piloting of two wellbeing walks, these walks will now continue on a monthly basis. Although free to attend, participants can find details of how to book places on site flyers and on the Southwark Council website.

To engage a younger audience in the cemetery two ‘wild woodland adventurer’ sessions were held on Saturday the 1st of November with one session aimed at children under five and one aimed at children of six and above. These sessions involving crafting with nature, exploring the woodland of the cemetery and storytelling were really engaging with all the children really enraptured by their experience.

Nunhead Cemetery News No.60

by Jeff Hart, FONC Co-ordinator



Fungi foray for Nunhead

The Southwark Council fungi foray walk for beginners held at Nunhead Cemetery on the 27th of September was attended by more than two dozen participants. Unfortunately, recent very dry weather conditions meant that many fungi species had yet to fruit, so spotting specimens was rather challenging! However, it was great to renew acquaintances with walk leader Clifford Davy and

eight species were found in the undergrowth. The foray was also noticed by a group of scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, working on the taxonomy and history of a species of mushroom, *Ganoderma lucidum*. They believe that Nunhead Cemetery is a very important site as the species was first found and described nearby on Peckham Rye Common in 1781! and was recorded in the cemetery in 1989. They are trying to find out if the species still persists in the area and hopefully to collect a new sample.



Ganoderma lucidum. Public domain

Re-roofing the Anglican chapel?

As anticipated in the last issue of *FONC News*, Southwark Council have now circulated a brief, agreed with FONC, to invite tenders to carry out a feasibility study and to propose and cost suitable re-roofing schemes for Nunhead's ruined Anglican chapel. The tender has now been awarded to Roger Mears Architects, the design team for the current works on the East Lodge. The contract value is £5,000 and a first kick-off meeting in which FONC participated took place on the 29th of October to discuss possible roofing options.

It's a scream!

FONC's second bat walk of the year in the cemetery on the 4th of September, led by Dr Iain Boulton, was a great success with about 100 people attending! As always, bats were seen and heard in profusion. Generous donations by our visitors were shared equally between FONC and the London Bat Group.

The annual Peckham and Nunhead Free Film Festival showing at the cemetery on the 6th of September was, as usual, fully subscribed by an audience of 300, with a number of later arrivals having to be turned away. The film shown was the 2024 version of *Nosferatu*. The film included plenty of screaming which was reported to police by a concerned neighbour who did not realise the film was being shown. As a result, two police vehicles screeched up to the Linden Grove gates and three investigating constables were surprised and amused when they saw the audience sitting quietly watching the film!

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The way forward

Every six months the FONC Trustees review and update our Strategy Document, which identifies a wide range of issues that need to be addressed by the charity. This identifies work to be done, how it is to be done and sets target dates for completion. The most recent version of the Plan (now version 6) is available on our website for members to see. If you think anything has been missed, do please let the Co-ordinator know.

Open House/Heritage Open Days weekend visitors brave the rain

Unfortunately, the afternoons of the 13th and 14th of September saw some heavy downpours of rain affecting the tours of the cemetery and the crypt visits. Nevertheless, attendance was still good and our stoical visitors enjoyed a wide range of homemade refreshments as well as updates on the progress of the East Lodge restoration. The event also served as a 'dry' run for using the facilities of the new FONC Cabin! Together with sales of publications and memberships, nearly £600 was raised for FONC funds.

New Nature Strategy for London

Public consultation for the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been undertaken by the Greater London Authority which ran to the 29th of October. This will be an important document which will affect how London's local authorities address biodiversity and open spaces for the future. We are fortunate that Southwark Council already recognises the great importance of, and contribution that the cemetery makes, in regard to regenerating the natural environment both locally and to London as a whole. FONC Trustees have submitted comments on the Strategy.

Two apologies

We apologise to members who may have received the last issue of *FONC News* a little later than usual. This was caused by an unfortunate delay at the printers. We do hope that you didn't miss any FONC events as a result. We also had to cancel at the last minute the planned Black History month tour of the cemetery as a result of the unavailability of the tour guide due to serious family illness.

Welcome to the Christmas Season with our members Christmas Social and the Nunhead Cemetery Carol Concert

Our now annual Carol Concert at the Anglican chapel will be held on Saturday the 13th of December, so please do come along and join us! Refreshments will be available from 3.00pm and the singing will start at 4.00pm, finishing at about 5.15pm. Please note that this is after the official closing time of the cemetery, so access and egress at the Linden Grove gates will be monitored. We will be adding to the free refreshments by providing hot chocolate for the children as well as the non-alcoholic mulled wine. Although the chapel will be open to visitors, the concert will take place in front of the chapel to avoid potentially dangerous overcrowding. We expect to have a local choir to help provide a little expertise to the singing but all voices will be very welcome!

The FONC Christmas Social is intended to be both a thank you and a celebration of all our members and volunteers who contribute so much to making FONC a welcoming and successful charity. Last year we had a bigger turn-out than ever and, as a result, we will be again holding the FONC social at El Vermut wine bar, located opposite Nunhead Green, on Tuesday the 9th of December from 7.00pm. We will be providing refreshments (thank you to our regular bakers but do bring something along if you are able!) but alcoholic drinks are on a buy-your-own basis. There will be no business meeting but our ever-popular eclectic Christmas raffle, where everyone is a winner, will be run (some say endlessly!). Friends and family are also welcome. Do please join us to meet and chat with fellow volunteers, as well as the Trustees.

Cathy Mercer writes: I took a small group of friends from Brent u3a to this year's Nunhead Cemetery Open Day in May and they loved it! They all joined tours of the cemetery and did lots of shopping at the stalls. We got there early, as I know it gets busy, and I suggested leaving at 2.30pm or 3.40pm. However, they all said that they wanted to stay to the end, because there was so much going on and they were enjoying it so much! High praise indeed. Well done FONC!

Memorials to the Dead in Parks

by Cathy Mercer

There has always been a bit of a blur between parks and cemeteries; Victorian cemeteries were laid out for people to sedately enjoy, as well as to commemorate the dead, and public parks have always had memorial benches for people to sit on.

However, I'm sure that these days there are more memorials in public parks and even on the streets - not just benches but also memorial trees and even groves of 'memorial' trees. I think most people would agree that this is a very good thing. After all, it means people are paying for increased facilities and so saving stretched councils much need money.

The use of trees as memorials is especially interesting as it seems to be new. Perhaps it's spread from the crematoria, where people often have memorial rose bushes or other plants. I well remember my father having a fuchsia planted in memory of his Aunt Minnie in Golders Green Crematorium, which we used to visit every year as children. Aunt Minnie often had my father to stay after his mother died and it was a small way to say thank you and remember her.

In our local park, Gladstone Park in Dollis Hill, some of these memorial trees seem to be carefully tended by family and friends - see the delightful oak planted in memory of 'a dear mother, wife and grandmother' (figure 1). I often see a man who is probably the husband of the lady memorialised watering and pruning this tree.



Fig 1: *A young oak tree planted as a memorial in Gladstone Park.* Photo: Cathy Mercer

Nearby, a much older and much larger oak tree seems to have been adopted as a memorial by the family of a young man who died at a tragi-

cally young age in 2015. The oak tree is so large that it must be at least 100 years old and clearly pre-dates him, but the tree has a memorial plaque and colourful ribbons and flowers, creating a bright, cheerful effect (figure 2). This brings joy to the park and also creates a special link



Fig 2: *A mature oak tree adopted as a memorial in Gladstone Park.*

Photo: Cathy Mercer

between the commemorators and the park, linking the park closely to the community: the adopted tree has become part of the family.

Quite a few trees in Gladstone Park are memorial trees but without plaques. There is also a small copse of trees, a memorial wood, mostly with plaques, in a sunny corner of the park commemorating people (figure 3).

Boroughs, of course, make a charge to cover their costs for planting a tree and for a plaque but this is much lower than the cost of a memorial bench and a fraction of the cost of a full funerary monument in a cemetery.

I am also very pleased that our Borough is allowing people to pay for the restoration of a park bench along with a memorial plaque. This is cheaper than a new memorial bench and also less liable to theft - there has been a spate of thefts of memorial benches in local parks.

This trend to memorialise people outside cemeteries is not new but seems to be growing and is an excellent way not only of helping to finance parks but also in involving communities in the park. And it has to be good news for trees.

Long may it last!

Fig 3: *Memorial wood in Gladstone Park.*



Photo: Cathy Mercer

London Epitaphs – Stories from Nunhead Cemetery

Podcast review by Ann Coley

In our autumn edition of *FONC News* we carried the exciting news that Tempest Productions had produced a series of podcasts about Nunhead Cemetery and some of its occupants.

It took me a while to remember to listen to these, but now I have found them:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/5XBynWLO3bU9TE3uWEUSps> (the link is also on the first page of the FONC website <https://www.fonc.org.uk/>). The link will take you to 'The History Kiosk' on Spotify - there is no need to log in or set up an account, you can just choose the episode you want to listen to and press play.

For those unfamiliar with the technology, I just clicked the link on the FONC website on my laptop, which bought up the list of episodes, then selected the episode I wanted to listen to. The episode list shows the latest first so you might need to 'click for more episodes' at the bottom of the list to get the first couple of episodes to show.

At the time of writing there are eight episodes of between 15 and 25 minutes with two more to come:

(1) Introduction - the making of a Burial Ground (2) The Leysdown Tragedy (3) Jenny Hill (4) The Donkins (5) Elizabeth Peacock (6) The Scottish Martyrs (7) The Beckwiths (8) Soldiers of Nunhead

Having listened to four of these podcasts, now I can report that they are easy to listen to, engaging, and a great way to gain some more information about the 'Notables' buried in the cemetery. There is enough time devoted to each subject to really tell the story, dare I say it, more than you get on one of our excellent tours. Whilst we are hoping that the podcasts will bring Nunhead Cemetery to the attention of people who have yet to visit (or have never heard of us) it is an enjoyable way to extend the knowledge of those of us more familiar with the place.

As the nights draw in, I enthusiastically encourage you to have a listen to one of the episodes. I will be surprised if you don't then find you want to listen to more of them.

First World War Servicemen who died in Dulwich Hospital and were interred at Nunhead Cemetery

Compiled by Ron Woollacott

Dulwich Hospital in south-east London was built in 1885/7 as a workhouse infirmary by St Saviour's Union, Southwark. In November 1915 the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) took over the infirmary and it was re-named the Southwark Military Hospital. The existing staff was retained and supplemented with nurses from the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) and RAMC personnel. The number of beds was increased and tents were erected in the grounds as sleeping accommodation for patients. The hospital received a large proportion of Empire troops including Australians, South Africans and Canadians. In April 1919 the hospital was returned to St Saviour's Union. Of more than 12,500 soldiers treated at the hospital, only 119 died.

A War Memorial was erected in front of the hospital to commemorate those troops who had died there. The hospital was renamed Dulwich Hospital by the London County Council in 1930. Of the 119 soldiers commemorated on the monument, 21 were interred at Nunhead Cemetery as follows:



First World War memorial in the grounds of the Tessa Jowell Centre the site of Dulwich Hospital.

Photo: War Memorials Trust

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1. Lance/Corporal Leonard Francis Baker, 1385, 23rd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Died of wounds received at Delville Wood on the 14th August 1916, aged 20. Son of Herbert Edward Baker, of 97 Kennington Park Road, London. *Grave No 32449 Square 89.*
2. Private Albert Catcheside, 25477, 'B' Company, 12th Battalion Durham Light Infantry. Died of wounds on the 1st March 1917, aged 32. Son of John and Ann Elizabeth Catcheside of Gateshead. *Grave No 32729 Square 89.*
3. Private J G Cato, 13535, 6th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. Died of wounds on the 30th May 1917, aged 26. Son of Albert and Arabella Cato, of London, and husband of Mrs E Cato, of 10 Rahere Street, Goswell Road, London, E C. *Grave No 32761 Square 89.*
4. Driver John Dawson, 55175, 9th Battery, 5th 'C' Reserve Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. Died on the 1st May 1916, aged 29. Son of Catherine Dawson, of 440, 12th Avenue East, Vancouver, British Columbia, and the late Donald Dawson. *Grave No 32326 Square 89.*
5. Corporal Alfred John Galpin, 43216, 10th Battalion, Essex Regiment. Died on the 18th October 1916. Husband of J F Wood (formerly Galpin), of Newman's Farm, Paddock Wood, Kent. *Grave No 32488 Square 89.*
6. Driver Richard Charles Haines, T4/084203, No 1 Company, Royal Army Service Corps. Died of phthisis on the 19th May 1916, aged 39. Son of Elizabeth and the late Richard Charles Haines of London. Husband of Edith Maud Haines, of 47 Harley Road, Great Yarmouth. *Grave No 32351 Square 89.*
7. Private L Harding, 8092, Depot, King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Died on the 29th May 1916, aged 36. Son of M and Mary Harding, of Woolwich, London. Also served in the Boar War. *Grave No 32355 Square 89.*
8. Driver A Hine, 925397. 'A' Battery, 280th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. Died on the 7th September 1917, aged 22. Son of Thomas George and Frances Hine, of 24 Union Street, Clapham, London. *Grave No 32948 Square 153.*
9. Lance Corporal Robert Kirkwood, 19049. 'C' Company, 12th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles. Died on the 21st March 1916, aged 24. Son of Nathaniel and Margaret Jane Kirkwood of Kells, Ballymena, Co Antrim, Northern Ireland. *Grave No 32276 Square 89.*
10. Driver Arthur Lyons, TI/SR/270. No 1 Company, Royal Army Service Corps. Died on the 14th May 1916, aged 42. Son of William and Mary Lyons, of Cirencester, Gloucestershire. *Grave No 32351 Square 89.*

11. Private Edward Michael Madden, 371. 22nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Died of heart strain on the 1st September 1916, age 20. Son of Harriet Emma Madden, of 40 Westcroft Square, Hammersmith, and the late Walter Herbert Madden. *Grave No 32457 Square 89.*
12. Private Henry John Mead, 16835. 8th Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry. Died of wounds on the 2nd December 1916, age 37. Son of Walter and Harriet Mead, and husband of Edith Mead, of Somerset Bridge, Bridgwater, Somerset. Native of Bridgwater. *Grave No 32488 Square 89.*
13. Private John Minshall, 3/7050. 1st Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment. Died on the 2nd February 1917. Brother of Frank Minshall, of 23 Sytch Place, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent. *Grave No 32646 Square 89.*
14. Private S Orr, 11099. 4th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Died on the 10th August 1916. *Grave 32449 Square 89.*
15. Gunner J P Owens, L/13258. 'C' Battery, 162nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. Died on the 24th May 1916. *Grave No 32355 Square 89.*
16. Corporal W Preston, 120. 3rd Regiment, South African Infantry. Died on the 26th April 1917. *Grave No 32824 Square 52.*
17. Private W Stewart, 156. 1st/3rd Battalion, Scottish Horse. Died on the 6th May 1916. *Grave No 32351 Square 89.*
18. Private Joseph Harry Taylor, 705. 17th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Died on the 28th April 1916, aged 39. Son of William and Susan Taylor, of Colveston Mundford, Norfolk. *Grave No 32326 Square 89.*
19. Private William Jackson Taylor, 494644. 13th Kensington Battalion, London Regiment. Died on the 15th February 1919, aged 32. Son of Theophilus Taylor. *Grave No 9714 Square 23.*
20. Private James Austin Thompson, 2576. 2nd Battalion, British West Indies Regiment. Died of pneumonia on the 14th July 1916, aged 19. Son of John C and Laurana Thompson, of Wemyss Bight, Eleuthera, Bahamas, BWI. *Grave No 32417 Square 89.*
21. Private John Westby, 8214. 'D' Company, Lincolnshire Regiment. Died on the 8th July 1916, aged 39. Son of the late Jane Woodruff (formerly Westby). Native of Adlington, Lancashire. *Grave No 32417 Square 89.*

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Note:

Of the 21 soldiers listed above 18 are interred in the First World War British Servicemen's plot in square 89 containing over 260 burials. Corporal W Preston of the South African Infantry is buried in the Commonwealth Soldiers plot in square 52 with other South African soldiers, Canadians, New Zealanders, and one Australian. Private William Jackson Taylor is buried in a common grave in square 23, and Driver A Hine is buried in a common grave in square 153.

Dulwich Hospital was closed down and the East Wing demolished in 2008 and the Tessa Jowell Centre was built on the site. The memorial has been re-sited within the grounds. Part of the old hospital building that was kept is now used by the adjoining school.

Re: Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)

In the last issue of *FONC News* No 169, botanist Roy Vickery contributed an interesting article on cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), which plant can often be found in cemeteries.

The article prompted Marion Woodville to write to Roy Vickery as follows: "I enjoyed reading your article on Laurel in the latest *FONC News*. Thank you also for taking the time to contribute, as quality content from experts like yourself adds enormously to the interest and credibility of the newsletter. However, I did wonder, when you talked about the change in the leaves of the laurel over (an unspecified) period, what you meant by '*presumably as a result of climate change*'.

As I am sure you will agree, the climate is changing constantly and has done so for millennia. I am no expert but I am pretty sure that a change 'in recent times', in the context of tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years, is simply anecdotal and unlikely to be scientifically significant. I completely understand that a brief and light hearted article cannot cover the complexities, but with so much misinformation about it is important to use words accurately, especially on a subject that has become so divisive and politicised. That aside, thank you for contributing on an interesting topic."

Roy Vickery replied as follows: "Thanks for your feedback on my laurel article. I can't lay my hands on the magazine at present, but I've looked at the original typescript. I make no comment there about the

leaves changing, but comment that the fruits have become more fleshier and succulent recently, possibly as a result of climate change.

I am always reluctant to attribute any change in vegetation to climate change, as I believe there are all sorts of other complex things happening.

However, in the case of laurel fruits, they have undoubtedly become fleshier during my (b.1947) lifetime, and I think that where the shrub is native it has always had more succulent fruits, but due to the British climate being unsuitable in the past they have remained rather small and flesh-less until the last 20 or so years. I hope this clarifies things.”

Marion Woodville responded as follows: “Thank you for your prompt response, so early in the morning! You're quite right, your article refers to the fruits, not the leaves. Thanks for clarifying.

You are also correct to be cautious about the complex causes that affect both climate and weather. So many, particularly in the media, blandly attribute virtually anything - usually bad - that happens in the natural world (and sometimes outside it) to ‘climate change’. And it's good to hear that the species appears to be flourishing, whatever the cause.”

Winter Walk in Nunhead Cemetery

by Ann Coley

As the nights draw in, and the temperatures drop the desire to do something creative in the evenings grows. This year I am busy finishing a baby blanket designed to look like Lego blocks... and I need to get it finished quickly now to give me time to make three or four new decorations for the Nunhead Cemetery Winter Walk.

If this subject feels familiar to you it is because I wrote an article last year to describe how in 2021, when Covid was still stalking the streets*, I was challenged to knit a ‘Christmas jumper’ for the tree outside our house. That got such a good reaction that the following year I made 24 different things and put one up in my street each day (with the original jumper going up on Christmas Day). I didn’t quite know what to do with these after that, so for the last couple of years some of them have formed

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Frog. Photo: Ann Coley

I expect the walk to be well in place by the time of Carol Singing event on the 13th of December and it will come down early in the new year.

All items will be visible from main paths, although some are quite small, so will be harder to spot. Once they are in place maps will go up in the notice boards, on the FONC website, and perhaps on Instagram. Let me know if you like them, or if you have any suggestions for next year. Send e-mails to:

treasurer@fonc.org.uk

I hope you enjoy your winter walks. * I know Covid is still rife, but many variants and inoculations later it doesn't carry the same fear for most of us.

the basis of a winter walk in the cemetery.

By popular request (!) they will be making an appearance this year. Each year I make a few new ones and swap out some of the ones that don't suit the cemetery so well - for example last year three little frogs were hung on the pond fence, and three rosebuds on the fence at one of the Commonwealth war grave sites. I try to keep the number around 25, and whilst most will be familiar to anyone who saw them last year some will be in different places and there will definitely be three or four new ones.



Autumn Leaves. Photo: Ann Coley

Alderman Charles Goddard Clarke JP, MP (1849-1908)

Peckham's last Liberal MP

by Ron Woollacott and Michèle Louise Burford

Charles Goddard Clarke was born at Aldersgate Street in the City of London on the 10th of May 1849, the son of Richard Clarke of Peckham, Surrey and Mary *nee* Millard. In the 1851 census the family was living in Leicester, and his father was described as a coal agent and his mother a school mistress. In the 1861 census their address was 85 Clarence Street, Liverpool, Lancashire. Charles was educated at Liverpool and left school early, beginning his business career at the age of 13 with an uncle in Peckham. In the 1871 census he was living with his widowed mother at 54 Marlborough Road, Peckham.

Charles was a devoted Baptist and in 1873 he married Rebecca, the daughter of Henry Potter a prominent Peckham Baptist. Rebecca was a member of Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle at the Elephant and Castle, and he too became a member of the Tabernacle and took a keen interest in its work for 34 years.

His father-in-law Henry Potter was a botanical druggist and Charles became a partner in the firm in 1875 and the firm was renamed Potter & Clarke, wholesale and export botanic druggists and herbalists with addresses in London and Manchester.

Charles was also active in local and national politics and served as a Vestryman on the old Camberwell Parish Vestry, forerunner of the Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell, as Vice-Chairman of several committees including the Finance Committee in 1893-4. He also served as the London County Council (LCC) Member for Peckham from 1898 to 1907. He was appointed an Alderman in the newly constituted Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell in 1900 and was elected Mayor of Camberwell in 1902-3.

A Liberal in politics, he unsuccessfully contested Dulwich in 1895 and the Mile End Division of Tower Hamlets in 1900. He was eventually elected MP for the Peckham Division of Camberwell in the Liberal landslide of 1906, beating Sir Frederick Banbury (1850-1936), the sitting Con-

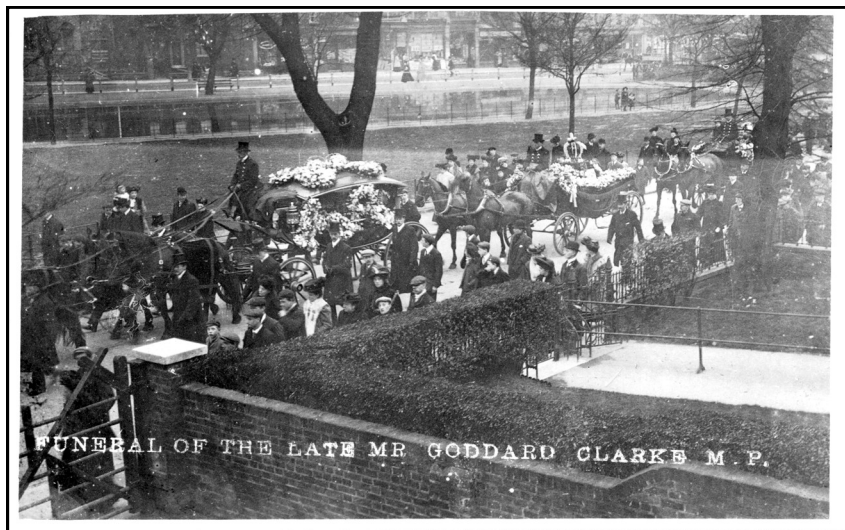
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servative MP by 2,000 votes.

Charles Goddard Clarke resided in Peckham for 42 years before removing to his last residence, South Lodge, Champion Hill, Camberwell, where he died of pneumonia on Saturday night, 7th of March 1908, aged 58. The funeral service was held in Rye Lane Baptist Church, Peckham, and the funeral arrangements were carried out by May of Peckham. Later that month a memorial service was held at the Crown Theatre, High Street, Peckham, attended by over 4,000 people.

Tragically, the tall polished grey granite column erected on his grave, came crashing down during the great wind storm of October 1987, and smashed the headstone on his father-in-law's grave.

Granite column and urn (column brought down during the great storm in October 1987). **Grave 16685 Square 100** (unconsecrated). **Sources:** MI; Burial records; Census returns 1881-1891; *Vestry of Camberwell 37th Annual Report 1892/3, 1903; Daily Telegraph, 9 March 1908; Southwark and Bermondsey Recorder, 28 March 1908; Kelly's Handbook to the Official and Titled Classes, 1908; Peter S Baker, The Acorn that Grew into an Oak, 1948, pp.6,9; Who Was Who 1897-1915 Vol I 1967; Ron Woollacott, Nunhead Notables 1984, revised 2002, p.36; John D Beasley, Who Was Who in Peckham, 1985, p.41.*



Postcard of the funeral cortege at Peckham Rye.

Postcard postmarked 'Peckham SDSO 1.15pm Apr 6, 1908'. It was addressed to Miss L Potter, 55 Kings Road, Peckham. The message reads: 'Dear Lily, Hope you will like this card, love from Edie.' From the postcard collection of RW & MLB.



Goddard Clarke monument before and after the storm damage of 1987.

Photos: Ron Woollacott



Ar-

Architects buried at Nunhead Cemetery (Part 1)

Further information about each of the architects listed below will be found in the relevant volume of FONC's *Nunhead Notables* as shown at the end of each entry.

ARNTZ, Robert Richard (1815-1882) AICE, FSA. Architect and surveyor to Westminster Board of Works. Founder and President of the Surveyors' Club. One of his earliest architectural commissions was to decorate St John's Church, Westminster. His works include rebuilding Monmouth Church steeple; the conversion of Cromwell House, Highgate as a convalescent home for sick children; the Gothic buildings of the United Westminster Schools, Palace Street, Westminster (1876), and New United Westminster alms-houses, Rochester Row, Westminster (1882). Grave 3187 Square 77. *Nunhead Notables* vol 3.

BELCHER, John (1819-1890) FRIBA. Architect responsible for designing many buildings in the City of London and mansions throughout the country. A Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, he also served on its Council. He designed the first building for the Royal Insurance Company in Lombard Street, City of London (1856), and a later building for the same company (1866), and in partnership with his son, John Belcher junior, the Mappin and Webb building in Poultry (1870) sadly destroyed in 1994, and the Catholic Apostolic Church, Camberwell (1874). Grave No 18113 Square 92. *More Nunhead Notables*.

COLLIS, James (1806-86). Architect and surveyor. He exhibited at the Royal Academy 1836-1839. His works include 'The Kembler Tavern' at Bow Street (1837) since demolished. Author of *The Builders Portfolio of Street Architecture* (1837), and *Remarks on Street Architecture* (1838). District Surveyor of Charlton, Lee and Kidbrooke, Kent from 1844 until his death in 1886. Grave No 13359 Square 78. *More Nunhead Notables*.

EEDLE, Frederick (1857-1922). Architect specialising in the design of public houses including, 'The Dover Castle', Little Surrey Street, Southwark (1888); 'The Railway Hotel', Putney (1888); and 'The Larkhall Tavern', Clapham (1889), and in partnership with the architect Sydney

Herbert Meyers, 'Loughborough Park Tavern', Lambeth, (1898), demolished c.1978; and 'The Angel', Islington (1899-1903). Grave No 13904 Square 90. *Nunhead Notables* Vol.6.

ELKINGTON, George (1824-1897) FRIBA. Architect and surveyor. A pupil of George Porter (c.1796-1856). His buildings include Epsom Medical College (1862), and in partnership with his son, Lewisham Town Hall (1876), Penge Vestry Hall (1879), and Bermondsey Vestry Hall (1882). Other works carried out by the partnership were Rotherhithe Public Baths, Richmond Public Baths and the London Leather Centre, Bermondsey. Grave No 19219 Square 139. *Nunhead Notables* Vol I.

FIELDING, Rodolph (1835-1901). A great-grandson of Henry Fielding, the author of *The History of Tom Jones* 1749. Virtually nothing is known about his work. In 1861 he was one of more than a dozen architects who submitted designs for a new town hall in Northampton. At Kirkcaldy in 1872 he exhibited a perspective architectural drawing of the interior of a chapel to be built at the Earl of Glasgow's residence at Crawford Priory. Grave No 25676 Square 136. *Nunhead Notables* Vol 6.

HEWITT, Samuel (1826-1877). Architect and surveyor who established his practise at 101 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury before 1851. He is known to have carried out work at Steeles Road, Haverstock Hill (1874); repairs to eight houses on Bridge Road, Battersea (1875); and the partial rebuilding of 7 New Compton Street, Soho. The architect Sir Ernest George (1839-1922) was his pupil from 1856 to 1860, and went on to win the Royal Academy Gold Medal in his final year. Grave No 14467 Square 114. *Nunhead Notables* Vol 4.

HOWELL, James (1787-1866) Architect and surveyor was a nephew and pupil of William Pilkington (1758-1848). He was President of the Surveyors' Club in 1832 and 1849. He designed Southwick House, Hampshire for Thomas Thistlethwayte (1841), and between 1856 and 1858 several houses in Vincent Square, Westminster; offices for the Equitable Gas Company at Pimlico; and stables in Regent Street (now Regency Street), Westminster. Grave No 3137 Square 77. *Nunhead Notables* Vol I.

to be continued

Future event: FONC visit to Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park on Saturday 25th April 2026

Invitation from Cathy Mercer

Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park is a Victorian Cemetery in London's East End. Opened in 1841, it is one of London's Magnificent Seven, the first cemeteries opened to deal with the overflowing church yards and burial grounds. Now it is a haven of green in a built-up part of London.

Like Nunhead Cemetery, Tower Hamlets Cemetery is in one of the poorer parts of London. This means that even the best known of the incumbents are of local fame or were famous mainly in their day. The original two chapels survived five bombings in the Second World War and there are some fine monuments. There are also 279 Commonwealth War Graves and burials from the Bethnal Green Tragedy.

In 2025 Tower Hamlets Cemetery was listed in *Metro* newspaper as one of London's best places for bluebells and so I thought that it would make a great place for our 2026 FONC visit. The cemetery is an award-winning Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and, to emphasise the important impact that the cemetery makes to life and nature in a heavily built-up part of London, its official name is now Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. For more details see www.fothcp.org

The cemetery is now owned by Tower Hamlets Council and managed by the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park (FOTHCP). We are grateful to FOTHCP for offering to give us a guided tour to the cemetery's history and wild life. The tour is free but there will be a collection in aid of FOTHCP. There will also be light refreshments at the end, again for a small donation.

So, whether you are a history buff or a fan of bluebells, this is a trip for you!

Meet me at the ticket barriers at Mile End Station on the Central Line. We can walk together to Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park which is about five minutes' walk away. If you come by car, there are no parking restrictions on Saturdays on Southern Grove.

You can also make your own way to the meeting point for groups, which is the red brick Cemetery Park Lodge, straight ahead of you when you enter the cemetery via Southern Grove. The address is Cemetery

Park Lodge, Southern Grove, London, E3 4PX.

To sign up for this trip and to learn our meeting time, please email cathymercer@myyahoo.com or text on 07943 925 224. Or ring 020 8452 5239. These trips are always popular, so please book early to ensure a place. We do hope you'll be able to join us.

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery TOUR PROGRAMME 2026

All tours start promptly at 2.00pm on a Sunday (except Open Day and Open House or as indicated in italics below).

January 18th Cemetery Symbols tour

January 25th General tour

February 8th Music Hall tour

February 22nd General tour

March 8th Woodland Trail tour

March 15th International Women's Day tour

March 22nd at 2.15pm; 3.00pm; 3.45pm Crypt & chapel visits

March 26th Thursday, at 6.40pm Bat sighting walk

March 29th General tour

April 11th Saturday 6.45am Spring bird watch

April 12th Nunhead and the Military tour

April 19th Cemetery Symbols tour

April 26th General tour

May 10th Second World War tour

May 16th Saturday from 11.00am to 5.00pm Annual Open Day: general tours; crypt/chapel visits

May 24th at 2.15pm; 3.00pm; 3.45pm Crypt & chapel visits

May 31st (Bank Holiday weekend) General tour

June 14th Woodland Trail tour

continued on next page

June 21st Waterloo anniversary event

June 28th General tour

July 12th Cemetery Symbols tour

July 19th at 2.15pm: 3.00pm; 3:45 Crypt and chapel visits

July 26th General tour

August 8th Saturday, at 6.45am Summer bird watch

August 16th Woodland Trail tour

August 23rd Music Hall tour

August 30th (Bank Holiday weekend) General tour

September Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th from 1.00pm to 5.00pm Open House and Heritage Open Days: general tours; crypt, chapel visits (tbc)

September Thursday, 17th at 7.10pm Bat sighting walk

September 27th General tour

October Saturday 10th (tbc) Two x Month of the Dead tours (pre-bookings only)

October 12th at 2.15pm: 3.00 pm; 3.45pm Crypt and chapel visits

October 18th Black History Month tour

October 25th General tour

November 8th First World War walk

November 15th Cemetery Symbols tour

November 22nd Woodland Trail tour

November 29th General tour

December 13th Nunhead and the Military tour

December 27th General tour

*** DIARY DATES ***

GENERAL GUIDED TOURS OF THE CEMETERY

These take place on the last Sunday in every month starting at 2.00pm. Meet near the flint circle just inside the 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.

In addition to the monthly General Guided tours of the cemetery the following specialist tours and events will also take place:

- ▶ Saturday 13th December at 4.00pm: **Carol Concert.** Gather outside the Anglican chapel. Refreshments will be available from 3.00pm.
- ▶ Sunday 14th December at 2.00pm: **Military Connections tour.** Meet at the flint circle just inside the Linden Grove entrance.
- ▶ Sunday January 18th 2026 at 2.00pm: **Cemetery Symbols tour.** Meet at the flint circle just inside the Linden Grove 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 and 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 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.*

**** Christmas Social at El Vermut wine bar ****

**FONC's Christmas social will be held at El Vermut wine bar
28 Nunhead Green, London SE15 on Tuesday 9th
December 2025 from 7.00pm.**

Refreshments will be provided but alcoholic drinks are on a buy-your-own basis. There will be no business meeting, but our ever popular eclectic Christmas raffle will be run. *See page 9 for further information.*

FONC TRUSTEES

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

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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

The deadline for letters and articles for the next issue is 20th January 2026

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)



Friends of Nunhead Cemetery - Established 1981

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No 1178763

A member of the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE).
A founder member of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (NFCF).
FONC is a recipient of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Birthday Award
for Environmental Improvements (National Commendation) 1998.

FONC's website address is: www.fonc.org.uk

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