

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2016



**HIGHGATE
CEMETERY.**

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With thanks to

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Hazlewood

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Cover photograph

This summer the Courtyard looked
splendid as we hosted 'A Very Small
Part of Architecture', an installation
commissioned by The Architecture
Foundation. See page 8.

*Photo: Sarah Duncan for the
Architecture Foundation*

Chairman's note



Summer this year stretched well into September. It meant that when people came to talk about grief, loss and commemoration during a series of events organised by The Architecture Foundation they were able to do so out in the Courtyard, under the stars, around an ethereal installation based on a design by one of the most famous architects of the twentieth century, Adolf Loos. The cemetery provided a very appropriate setting, as you will see from the photographs in this issue.

The Friends are about to embark on one of the most significant planning exercises in the history of the cemetery. In December we will instruct consultants to begin the task of preparing a conservation plan which will guide our future development. We know that Highgate Cemetery is important to people for many different reasons, and we want to make sure that we can preserve and enhance its specialness for the future.

The aim of the plan is first of all to understand and document the various significances of the cemetery – why it is valued, and by whom – as a place of burial, as a memorial landscape, as a quiet place for reflection, as a site of metropolitan importance for nature conservation, as a Grade 1 landscape registered for its cultural importance, and as a tourist attraction.

The plan will then look at the threats and opportunities related to each of these aspects and consider how we can best reconcile what may be thought of as conflicting demands – managing trees which are destroying monuments, dealing with increasing numbers of visitors while being a working cemetery, maintaining our role as a cemetery while faced with a shortage of burial space.

There is an enormous amount to consider and we look forward to involving Friends in the discussion during 2017.

With best wishes for the festive season

Ian Kelly, Chairman

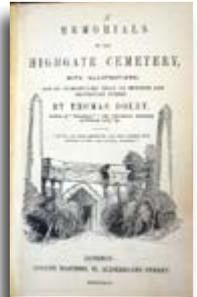


More from our first guidebook

In our previous issue we printed an extract from the first proper guide to Highgate Cemetery, *Memorials of the Highgate Cemetery*, written by Thomas Dolby and published in 1845. As it is very hard to find – there is not even a copy in the British Library – Friends will be interested to read this extract which describes the Egyptian Avenue, Lebanon Circle and the Terrace Catacombs as they were in 1845.

Dolby's book also included an 'Essay on epitaphs and gravestone poetry'. We will print some extracts in the next issue.

There are catacombs of different styles of construction in different parts of the Cemetery, the lowest being built into the northern bank of the cross road which forms the lower boundary of divisions J and K [the road we now call 'Cuttings Road']; the line of demarcation between consecrated and unconsecrated ground descending into the vertex of the private catacomb belonging to the family of Benjamin Hawes, Esq., M.P. for Lambeth. There are other catacombs in the unconsecrated portion of the Cemetery, the entrance to which is a little below Daniel's statuary works, and close to the Swain's Lane boundary wall.



Left Volunteers at work in 1980 securing the entrance gates to the Hawes vault in the Cuttings Catacombs. The gates were then bluish-green, the colour of patinated bronze, more appropriate than the black they have since been painted. *Photograph by Brent Elliott.*

Below The Lebanon Circle, 2016. *Photograph by Nick Powell.*

The Egyptian Avenue

Ascending by the centre carriage-way, the first entire range of consecrated catacombs commences under an Egyptian archway, flanked by two tall obelisks. Here is a line of sepulchral chambers, on the right and left, each having its iron door, and separate accommodations within, for from fifteen to twenty coffins; all being constructed of iron and the most durable materials used in masonry.

The Lebanon Circle

This covered avenue leads, at its upper end, into an open circle, about fifteen feet below the main level of the exterior rising ground, and the open space all around is more than sufficient for two carriages to meet and pass; having also a line of sepulchral chambers on each hand, that is, a concave and a convex line, all round the circle. The whole of this circle of catacombs is constructed in the Egyptian style; and though probably different from the pure models of Memphis and Heliopolis, the doorways and entablatures display many of the ancient characteristics of Egyptian architecture.

Two huge vultures are conspicuously placed over the entrance, and prepare the visitor to see the papyrus and lotus devices of the land which sent forth “her ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters;” as also beaked ornaments, scarabei, and winged dragons, which are here made to alternate with crosses and radiated crowns of glory. The inner, or convex circle, surrounds a solid and circular mass of earth, from forty to fifty feet in diameter; in the centre of which grows a high and wide-spreading cedar of Lebanon, which gives its name to this circle of sepulchres.



The Terrace Catacombs

Having ascended by broad flights of steps out of this circle at its uppermost extremity, the visitor attains a planted and decorated eminence, bounded on the north by the façade of another range of catacombs, in a semi-Gothic style; and running nearly east and west, to the length of about 320 feet. This long façade is relieved by a projection in the centre of about ten feet, and in length of about seventy-five; and by a range of buttresses of two stages, with their offsets, and terminating in gable heads, each having in its tympanum a trefoil in blank tracery. The back of this range of catacombs is built into the very summit of Highgate Hill, and consequently in close proximity to the foundation of the Church.

Inside the Terrace Catacombs

In this spacious house of the dead is a double range of sepulchres, a north and a south; divided into fifty-five compartments, of which twenty-nine are in the north side and twenty-six in the south, three being appropriated in the latter for three entrances. Each compartment is divided into five tiers, and each tier subdivided into spaces sufficient to admit a leaden coffin to be passed into it, foot foremost. The aperture is then closed up by a block of white marble or polished granite, cemented into its recess, with the name or initials of its tenant, or some token sufficient for the purposes of identity, inscribed on the outside.

When these silent abodes were visited for the purpose of collecting these brief particulars, some coffins were to be seen lying in their narrow cells, being not yet closed up; others were finally secured by gratings of iron fitted into their apertures, and some remained without any inscription on the blocking slab. The recesses along each side are about eight or nine feet from front to back, still leaving a clear space between the two ranges of piers about eight feet wide, which is continued the whole length of the structure; there being at each extremity a lofty opening secured with a grating of iron, by which air is admitted, coming down through another iron grating, placed horizontally on the exterior surface of the ground. The southern range of piers of course corresponds, in number and position, with the external buttresses, and both ranges give support to the terrace above, as well as prescribe their form and limits to the tenements within; and from their capitals springs a continuous line of diagonal arches, the vertex of which is about fourteen feet from the ground.

There is also a range of diminutive lights in the form of shields, with crossed daggers, in the

Right The view from the terrace in 1849. The eastern balustrade of the terrace can be seen on the left, and you can just make out St Paul's Cathedral. The steps leading up from the lower circle on the right were closed when the Beer Mausoleum was built there in the late 1870s. The stone parapet around the outer circle seems to have been the invention of the artist. From the *Illustrated London News*, 29 September 1849. FOHCT archives.





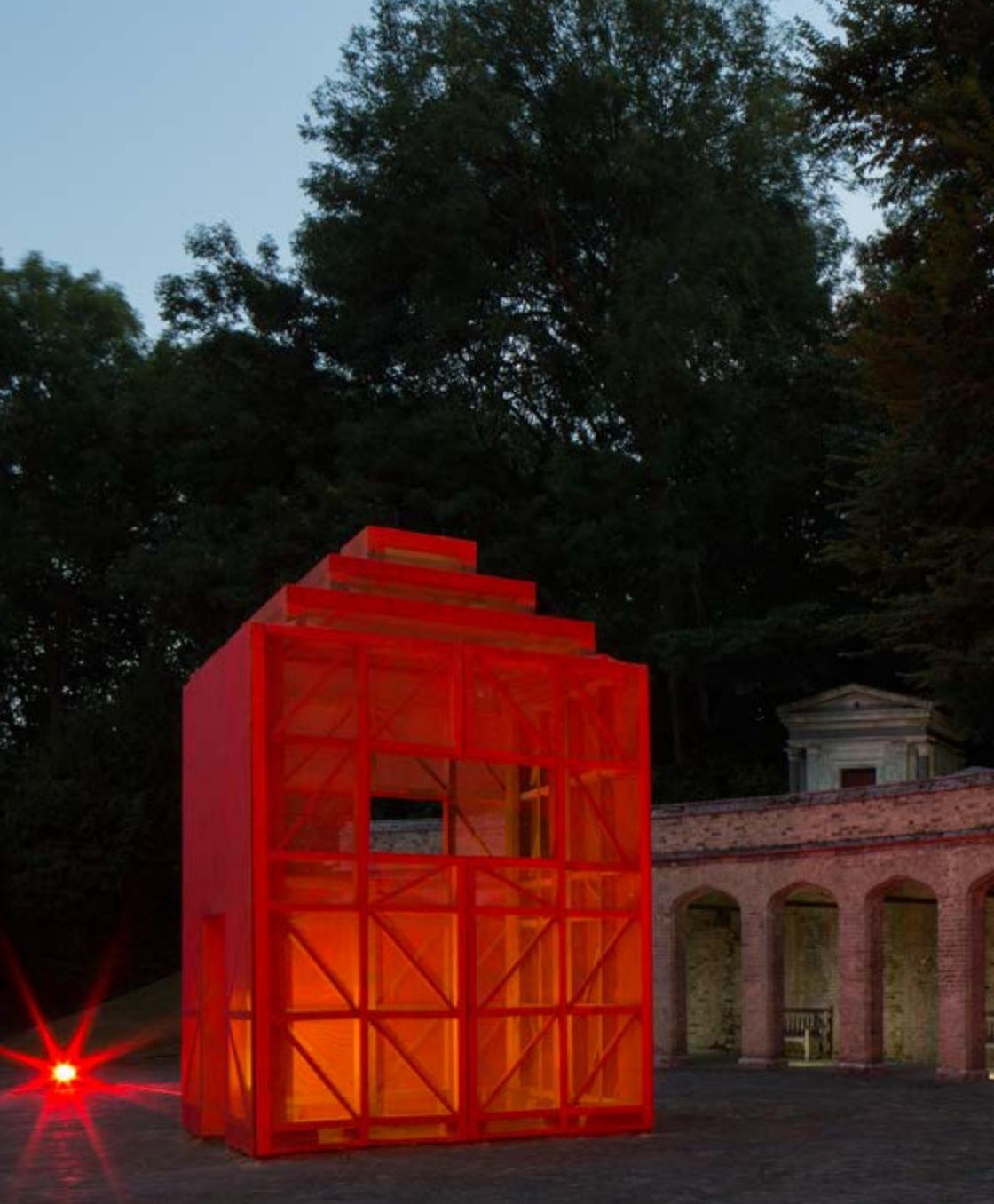
southern face of this edifice, at about eleven feet from the ground; and the three entrances (lofty Gothic doorways with label and soffit mouldings,) having their doors, or rather gates, formed of open iron work, the interior cannot be otherwise than light and airy. These entrances are kept securely locked, except during the time of an interment, or when visited for some particular purpose, when an attendant is deputed to accompany the party with the key, and he remains to make all secure when the purpose has been accomplished.

Over the top of these catacombs is the terrace before alluded to, and which is covered by Claridge's Seyssel Asphalte. In the spaces between the gable-headed terminations of the buttresses, which rise about six feet above the front of the terrace, is a fence of open and ornamental iron work, about four feet high.

The view from this terrace, on a fine day, is magnificent. From this place is also to be gained the best general view of the Cemetery, the extent of which is said to be little more than twenty-one acres; but from the extraordinary variety of the ground, and the taste and judgement displayed in laying out and adorning it, the generality, even of those who are accustomed to make estimates of land from cursory surveys, leave the Cemetery under an impression that its extent is greater than it really is. So much may be accomplished by the art concisely commended by the poet :-

He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds! ■

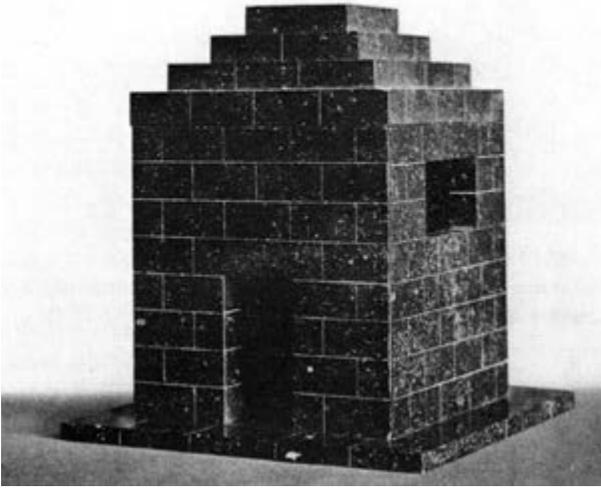
Left The label of Claridge's Seyssel Asphalte Company from the roof of the Terrace Catacombs. The great Isambard Kingdom Brunel was consulting engineer to the company which was founded in 1838, the same year the Terrace Catacombs were built.
FOHCT archives.



Good grief

An installation by Sam Jacob Studio commissioned by the Architecture Foundation





Right Model of the Dvořák Mausoleum designed by Adolf Loos. It was to be made of blocks of Swedish black granite, rising to a height of about six metres. The stepped roof loosely inspired by the mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the interior was to have had frescoes by Oskar Kokoschka.

Kokoschka was besotted with Gustav Mahler's widow, Alma, whose daughter Anna is buried in Highgate Cemetery East.

Good grief

An ethereal mausoleum in the Courtyard provided the setting for a series of discussions about grief and loss in architecture

The West Cemetery recently played host to 'A Very Small Part of Architecture', an installation by Sam Jacob Studio. It was commissioned by the Architecture Foundation, a charity which campaigns for a better built environment.

The installation was based on a 1921 design by the famous modernist Austrian architect, Adolf Loos, for art historian Max Dvořák. Intended to be made of Swedish granite, the mausoleum was never built, but the image of Loos's design has haunted architectural culture ever since. The heavy dark form was recreated at full size in the Courtyard using a lightweight timber frame and scaffold net, and coloured with light.

Jacob said it was 'a different kind of memorial. Not one dedicated to a person, an event, or a moment in time, not designed to remember the past, but instead to imagine other possibilities, altered presents and alternative futures'. The name came from Loos's statement that: 'Only a very small part of architecture belongs to the realm of art: the tomb and the monument.'

Over three nights in early September several hundred people came to discuss grief and loss in architecture in a very appropriate setting under the stars. The solidity and reality of the Goldhammer sepulchre rising at the end of the Courtyard provided a telling contrast. ■

Five cemetery cafés

Berlin's cemetery café is in the former morgue. At Arnos Vale cemetery in Bristol it is attached to the chapel. At the City of London Cemetery the café is part of the gatehouse, while at Glasnevin in Dublin and Springvale, Melbourne, the cafés are in smart new buildings. They offer comfort not just for the bereaved, but also for local people and tourists who seek tranquility.



The Café Strauss at the Friedrichwerderscher Friedhof cemetery in **Berlin** opened in 2013 (www.cafestraussberlin.de). Located inside the walls of the cemetery, which is still in operation, the building was originally a mortuary where the dead were laid out for three days to avoid premature burial. Visitors can see headstones and family tombs from their seats and apparently there has been an upsurge of interest in grave sites close by.

England has its cemetery cafés too. Kate's Kitchen at Arnos Vale in **Bristol** serves locals, grave owners and tourists seven days a week (www.kateskitchenbristol.co.uk/kates-kitchen-at-arnos-vale). It is the first working cemetery in the country to win the Visit England Quality Marque, awarded to attractions that meet national standards for visitor experience. Revenue from the café helps support the work of the charity which runs the cemetery. At the City of **London** Cemetery the Gatehouse Café right by the main entrance has been operating for over ten years. As the cemetery receives over one

million visitors a year it is often busy with grave owners.

The Tower Café at Glasnevin Cemetery in **Dublin** is open from 9am to 6pm seven days a week, and can seat up to seventy people (www.glasnevinmuseum.ie/cafe). It is busy not only with grave owners but with the many people who come to visit the cemetery museum and take the guided tours, some of the reasons the cemetery is ranked by TripAdvisor at no. 2 of things to do in Dublin.

Café Vita et Flores at Springvale Botanical Cemetery in **Melbourne**, Australia (opened 1901 as 'The Necropolis'), is not only fully licensed, it also caters for weddings and functions (cafevita.org.au). Described as a 'a visionary urban café-florist concept', it boasts of being a 'great place to relax, read the papers, gather with family and friends, enjoy a quick bite or a long lunch and bring the children in to play', all within a fully operational cemetery. ■

Top left Café Strauss, Berlin

Below Café Vita et Flores, Melbourne





Judith Yuille

Sydney 1923 - Shropshire 2016

Judy Yuille was working in her garden one sunny day in the mid-1970s when Susan Cox, her next-door neighbour, appeared and said, 'something must be done about Highgate Cemetery' and that she and Judith should do it.

Judy became a founder member of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery and later Vice-Chairman. She organised and led the weekly wildlife restoration and habitat creation working parties, conducted tours of the West Cemetery and wrote the guidebook on Karl Marx which, having been reprinted several times, is still sold to this day.

She also 'did Strathcona'. This was in the days when the Strathcona mausoleum, just inside the entrance to the East Cemetery, was the icy base for selling tickets and camera passes to visitors.

When the Friends undertook the arduous task of paving the courtyard in the 1980s, Judy also rolled up her sleeves and helped with the work alongside many other volunteers.

She was one of those without whom we would not have the cemetery today and she is still remembered with great fondness. ■



Bruce Russell

Glasgow 1944 - London 2016

Bruce Russell, who died at the start of this year, was not the sort of man to take it easy in retirement.

As a Trustee of Highgate Cemetery he brought the knowledge of his professional career in civil engineering to bear on various cemetery developments such as resurfacing paths in the West Cemetery and the construction of a new burial area, called 'The Mound', in the East.

We were fortunate to have such an eminent volunteer: having worked for Taylor Woodrow almost all of his working life, he ended up as a main board director and Chairman of Taylor Woodrow International. He had been involved in projects all round the world, from Romania to Sierra Leone, and from Kosovo to Kuala Lumpur.

When the firm bowed out of international work in 2000 he took early retirement and threw himself into supporting other Highgate institutions such as Highgate School, the HLSI, and the Highgate Newtown Community Centre. He was also involved with the Institution of Civil Engineers and Emeritus Professor at Guildford University. ■



George Osborne's ancestor sets up Marx's cemetery

Highgate Cemetery is world-famous as the resting place of Karl Marx. But who knew that former Conservative chancellor George Osborne is descended from the architect who founded the cemetery?

by Ian Dungavell

Father of socialism Karl Marx and former Conservative chancellor George Osborne are an odd pairing connected, unexpectedly, by Highgate Cemetery. For without Osborne's great-great-great-grandfather Stephen Geary (1797-1854), founder of the London Cemetery Company and architect of Highgate Cemetery, Marx may well have ended up somewhere else altogether.

Geary's daughter Ann (1832-1923) married into the Osborne baronetcy of Ballentaylor in County Tipperary, Ireland. Her husband, Charles Osborne (1816-71), was the son of Sir Henry, the 11th Baronet. Their child Francis (1856-1948) became the 15th Baronet, and the title passed down to his son George (1894-1960) and then on to Sir Peter Osborne (b. 1943), the 17th Baronet, and known as co-founder of Osborne & Little, the wallpaper-and-fabrics company. His son George (b. 1971) is heir apparent.

Stephen Geary is not particularly well-known today. He was a serial cemetery entrepreneur, setting up the companies which founded Brompton, Brighton and Gravesend cemeteries as well as Highgate and Nunhead. He was also responsible for a much-derided monument of King George IV which gave its name to the area we now know as King's Cross.

At the time of his daughter's death in 1923, Geary was remembered as being 'associated with Brunel and other notable civil engineers in the early days of the last century'. This is interesting as the Brunel connection is recorded nowhere else, but I have long suspected that the great Brunel was involved with the construction of the Terrace Catacombs at Highgate. ■

News roundup

Hilary Deeble-Rogers retires

We were very sad to bid farewell to Hilary Deeble-Rogers when she retired at the start of November after almost 15 years at Highgate. Hilary is well-known to members for the friendly and efficient way in which she handled membership administration. While working as our memorials adviser she also guided many grave owners through the process of commissioning a memorial which was not only a fitting commemoration of a loved one but also an appropriate and artistic addition to the cemetery. We wish her all the best.

New Fulton umbrellas

Having noticed the poor state of our courtesy umbrellas in the West Cemetery, Nigel Fulton, CEO of Fulton Umbrellas, came to the rescue. He has donated two dozen very smart 'Huntsman Tweed' pattern walking umbrellas for the use of visitors. We hope they will resist the urge to make off with them! You can see the current range at www.fultonumbrellas.com.

Pocklington mausoleum repairs

Work has finished on repairs to the Pocklington mausoleum, the second of the two pink granite mausolea just inside the gate of the East Cemetery. Although built of massive slabs of granite, some settlement had occurred which had led to a big crack in the roof. The building has been cleaned and repointed with a flexible

waterproof mastic on the roof which should now keep it nice and dry. The vibrant art deco style mosaic floor is an astonishingly contemporary touch in an otherwise rather traditional building.

Don Thackeray

We were very sad to learn of the death of volunteer Don Thackeray who was buried at the cemetery at the end of October. He entertained visitors by speaking just as they expected an Englishman to, with rounded vowels and proper enunciation. A regular guardian of the 'East Hut' for many years, he was buried right opposite it.

Highgate Library collection

Highgate Library on Chester Road (the bottom of the East Cemetery) has just celebrated its 110th birthday and to mark the occasion the Friends of Highgate Library have unveiled a new specialist local history collection. In support, the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust has placed a number of our books there on long term loan so that our members, volunteers and other library users can consult them.

The books relate to Highgate and other London cemeteries, the Victorian way of death and to 19th century burial practice in general. The library also provides access to other sources which are very useful for cemetery research, such as the *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Who Was Who*, and the Ancestry database.

Goldhammer sepulchre

Progress has been slightly slower than expected on the new Goldhammer sepulchre next to the South Lodge, but it will be complete externally by the end of the year. The delay was for a good reason – the time taken to hand-carve details of the beautiful Carrara marble sarcophagus inside. This has just been completed and the roof will follow very shortly.

New volunteering manager, Elle Hazlewood

Our volunteers are already singing the praises of our new volunteering manager, Elle Hazlewood. Elle started as a staff member in the middle of August, but she had already been a volunteer tour guide and so knew the cemetery well. Elle will be ramping up our volunteer recruitment and so if you have been thinking of helping us in this way, don't waste any time in emailing her at elle@highgatecemetery.org.

2016 AGM minutes

Draft minutes of this year's AGM have been published on our website at highgatecemetery.org/about/AGM. Members are invited to submit any proposed corrections to the minutes by 30 November 2016 to ian@highgatecemetery.org. A final draft with accepted corrections will be published in December, after which no further alterations will be made until the 2017 Annual General Meeting.

2017 Annual General Meeting

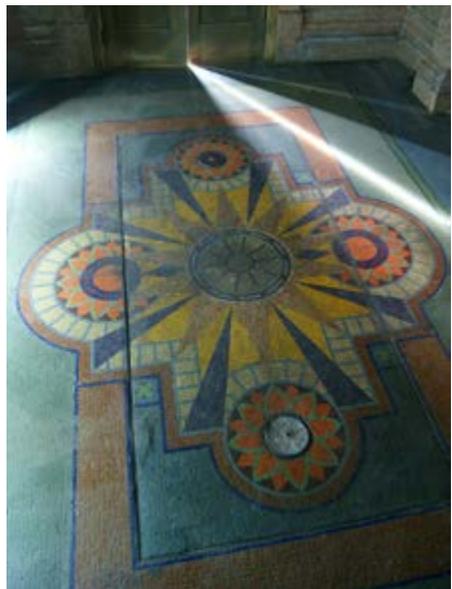
A date for your diary: Wednesday 26 April 2017 at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, Pond Square. As the introduction of a guest speaker was a popular innovation last year, we will be doing that again in 2017. Full details will be sent in the next mailing.

Become a trustee!

We are expecting to have three vacancies to fill for new trustees at the 2017 AGM. The Friends follow the recommended practice of the Charity Commission in conducting a skills audit of the present board and then advertising for new trustees with particular skills and experience. Keep an eye out on our website in December for the call for nominations and to find out this year's categories.

Christmas and New Year opening hours

The festive season is traditionally very busy. The cemetery will be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Last admission before Christmas will be 3.30pm on Christmas Eve, Saturday 24 December, and the cemetery will close at 4pm sharp. Tours of the West Cemetery will run on the Boxing Day holiday, 27 December, and on New Year's Day, but should be booked on our website.



Above The astonishing mosaic floor of the Pocklington Mausoleum.

Photo: Nick Powell

'Magnificent Seven' news

Some of the goings-on at our sister cemeteries

ABNEY PARK

Guided tours first Sunday of every month at 2.30pm. Free.

The AGM for Friends is on 23 November. Winter Open Day: Saturday 10 December. www.abneypark.org

BROMPTON

In November the major £6 million plus restoration of the whole cemetery funded by the HLF will begin to take physical form. Also about to start is the re-cutting of the inscription on a large panel from the Rochfort family chest tomb, which will be recarved near a main thoroughfare so that the public can see.

Guided tour on Sunday 27 November at 2pm £6. For later dates see brompton-cemetery.org.uk.

KENSAL GREEN

There is an interesting article on the Kensal Green website (news section) about the repatriation of the body of Gladys Winifred Fowler, who will be interred in her family's plot in the Loyalist Cemetery of Hammondvale, New Brunswick, Canada, on 15 November, over 92 years after her death



in a London hotel room. Her coffin was deposited in the catacomb beneath the Anglican chapel, in a packing case ready for transportation, but for some unknown reason

she was never collected. It took research started in 2008 by the chairman of the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery, Barry Smith, to identify her and start the lengthy process of repatriation.

Guided tours at 2pm first and third Sunday in November, December, January and February. £7 www.kensalgreen.co.uk

WEST NORWOOD

Saturday 19 November 2016
AGM and Lecture on *Brixton Windmill* by Jean Kerrigan

Saturday 18 February 2017. Lecture: *Cemeteries of South London* by Brian Parsons

Saturday 18 March 2017 Lecture: *Frank Talfourd* by Professor Michael Slater

Saturday 21 October 2017 AGM and Lecture: *Sir Horace Jones* by Dr Jennifer Freeman

Saturday 18 November 2017 Lecture: *The Music Hall Guild of Great Britain and America* by Matthew Neil

Guided tours first Sunday of every month at 2.30pm from April to October, and at 11am from November to March. www.fownc.org.

NUNHEAD

Guided tours last Sunday of every month at 2.15pm and last up to two hours.

The December tour will be on Boxing Day Monday 26 December. Free. Full programme see www.fonc.org.uk.

TOWER HAMLETS

Guided tours third Sunday of every month at 2pm. Free. See www.fothcp.org for full events programme.

Left Gladys Winifred Fowler