

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2018



**HIGHGATE
CEMETERY.**

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Cover photograph

The WW1 memorial concert in the courtyard at Highgate Cemetery on 21 July 2018

Chair's note



The cover of this issue records the remarkable concert held in the courtyard on 21 July to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. It featured Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and *Armistice*, a commissioned piece by Orlando Gough, performed by Deutscher Chor London and an orchestra of players from the Keld Ensemble, Brent Symphony Orchestra, Kensington Symphony Orchestra and South East London Orchestra.

The new German Ambassador to the UK turned up for what was one of his first public engagements and the balmy weather made it such pleasure to sit outdoors and enjoy the excellent music. The event was part of the choir's 'Blessed are the Peacemakers' tour of the UK and Belgium which continues with concerts at Brussels, Canterbury, Coventry, Norwich and Liverpool cathedrals as well as at the Menin Gate in Ypres.

The *Ham and High* commented: 'The venue was inspired. To the right of the performers, a war memorial inscribed with the names of the dead from both wars offered a sombre but uplifting setting... Perhaps the success of the evening will inspire the Friends of Highgate Cemetery to consider a further programme of concerts.'

As well we might. One of the challenges we face is how to welcome more people and activities at Highgate Cemetery while still keeping what is special about the place. We must also consider how to deal with our self-set trees as they reach maturity and the romance in 'romantic decay' is lost. Our thoughts on these topics and many others are set out in our draft conservation plan, about which you can find out more on pages 12-13.

We would love to hear your thoughts.

Adam Cooke, Chair



News from Amsterdam's Die Nieuwe Ooster Cemetery

BRENT ELLIOTT finds much of interest for those on a visit to Amsterdam

'New Ooster', because before it was opened in 1894 there was already an Oosterbegraafplaats (Eastern Cemetery). That was cleared as part of the creation of the immense Oosterpark, landscaped by Leonard Anthony Springer; the graves were removed to a nearby plot of land which has now developed into the largest cemetery in Amsterdam. The Nieuwe Ooster is about thirty hectares in extent, boasting an arboretum of some 750 species of trees, with special collections of oaks and maples. It is now officially a national monument of the Netherlands.

The graves, therefore, go back to the nineteenth century, and for the most part show the normal range of Victorian styles, from portrait busts to weeping women. There are two monuments of particular interest. The first is that of Johannes Benedictus van Heutz (1851–1924), a military figure, and by modern standards a war criminal: he brought the quarter-century Aceh War in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) to an end by a mixture of

Above Monument to Johannes Benedictus van Heutz

Right, top to bottom Gerardus Frederik Westerman monument; Grave with sandblasted memorial including car; Outdoor columbaria; Garden for cremated remains

deception and massacre in the 1890s. There was once a monument to him in Amsterdam, but all references to him have been removed from it, and it is now known simply as the Dutch East Indies Monument. His name still remains on his private mausoleum, however, built of granite in a heavily muscular style with two guardians in ultra-heroic mode flanking the gate. And behold, like Highgate, the Nieuwe Ooster has a resident dog – in bronze rather than marble. Gerardus Frederik Westerman (1807–90) was one of the founders in 1838, and the first director, of the Amsterdam Zoo. The dog was cast by his son-in-law, J.J.F.Verdonck.

Among the more recent graves there are a number of features of interest. First, transparency: the use of glass, or more usually Perspex or related materials, for gateways or even for headstones. How long would an upright rectangular piece of Perspex with a name carved on it survive in an English cemetery? Secondly, new developments in the sandblasting of images, both on transparent surfaces and on shiny black stone. This is particularly noticeable in a series of Gypsy or Roma graves, which boast not only nearly life-size portraits of the incumbents, but details of their favourite possessions, from the guitar to the automobile. Several automobiles, in fact. Third, the use of brightly coloured ceramics as part of the decoration of the headstone.

In 2005, part of the central section of the cemetery was redeveloped for the deposit of cremated remains. There are some formal gardens, where the ashes can be buried with plaques: a grass garden, a flower garden, and a water garden (which was frozen on the day of my visit), all of these in parallel rectangular plots of land.



Adjacent to these is the columbarium complex, which from a distance looks like a long interrupted wall of grey, scored by oblique lines. The Dutch evidently are still addicted to the brutalism notorious in their 1960s housing estates; the surface of these buildings is shiny zinc, the shapes of the individual units trendily non-perpendicular, but inside each of the structures the walls which house the niches for urns are all resolutely white terrazzo. Go to the architects' website for illustrations and explanations: <http://www.karresenbrands.nl/project/columbarium-de-nieuwe-ooster>.

A little further on, and there are some freestanding walls with scattered niches for urns, looking by comparison almost homely and inviting. Building works are continuing in parts of the cemetery: the most recent development is a section for Islamic graves.

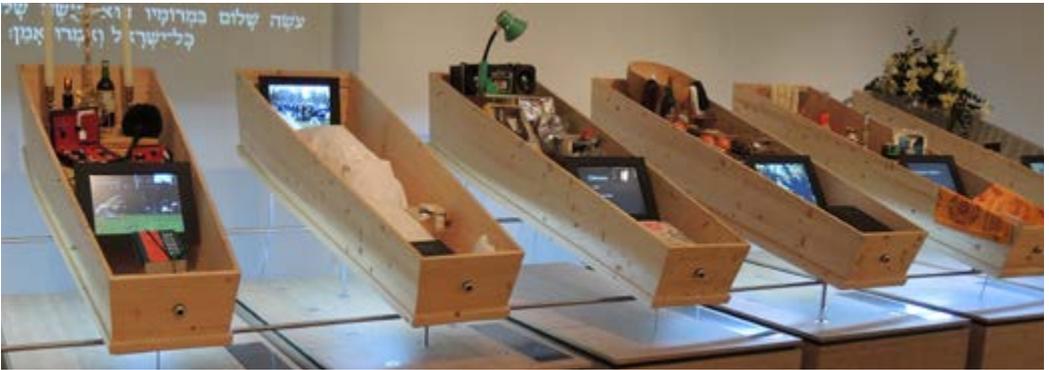
But there is a further feature of great interest at the Nieuwe Ooster. About a decade ago, a funerary museum was established there, in an unobtrusive, low-slung building of glass and metal, under the title Museum Tot Zover (Museum of Death So Far, or Death Up to Now). Billed as the 'Dutch Funeral Museum', it is dedicated to the ways Dutch people approach the

inevitability of death, now and in the past.

The building also offers a small cafe and bookshop. When I was there, there was a temporary exhibition devoted to the subject of people who die without families and have to be buried out of public funds – not many people, but enough to provoke sentiment and a display of monitors, to satisfy the technology-hungry. A second room contained a very interesting display of burial customs in different religions and parts of the world, consisting of coffin-shaped boxes occupied by lay figures showing in what postures bodies were laid (flat on back? on the side, with legs bent?), and what sort of things were placed in the coffins, in different cultures. As this was in the Netherlands, the range of cultures was Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Surinam Creole, Chinese, not to mention the modern trendy agnostic with a copy of Tolkien in the coffin. There was also a display of model cars, providing the history of hearses in the Netherlands.

Onward to the core collections, occupying two rooms. One display offered a selection of undertakers' equipment from different periods of the last century and a half, ranging from the cosmetics used to touch up the features to the saws and syringes





Left The Museum Tot Zover

This page Exhibits include coffins demonstrating burial practices; funerary objects; model hearses and undertakers' equipment



used in the more hefty work. Deathbed photographs, funeral photographs, official documents, mourning jewellery (especially jet), mourning clothes, pictures made from loved ones' hair fill the remaining glass cases.

The museum may be small, but it is perfectly formed, and can provide a model for a similar venture in England. Do not miss it if you are paying a visit to Amsterdam! ■

Emma Martin: Early feminist and free thinker

ROBIN OAKLEY investigates the story of an outspoken campaigner



Highgate Cemetery hosts the graves of a number of early women radicals and reformers from the Victorian era. Some of these are well-known, such as the novelist George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans, 1819-80) and the socialist activist Eleanor Marx (1855-98), daughter of Karl Marx. Others are less well-known, such as Ernestine Rose (1810-92), the Polish-born suffragist and anti-slavery campaigner who was mainly active in America, and the writer and freethinker Sophia Dobson Collet (1822-94), aunt of the better-known social economist Clara Collet, both active here in Britain.

Another early feminist and freethinker who is largely forgotten is Emma Martin (1812-51), who is buried in the dissenters' section of the West Cemetery close to Sophia Dobson Collet. Today her grave is hidden by shrubbery away from the main paths, but it lies high above the Cuttings Road with its grand range of catacombs and originally must have had a fine view out across London.

Emma's short life encompasses a remarkable transition from a conventional religious upbringing to becoming an outspoken campaigner for secularism, socialism and women's rights. Born in Bristol, she had a middle-class background and acquired a strong Christian faith. At age seventeen she joined a Calvinist wing of the Baptist Church, and for the next twelve years worked busily for the Christian cause, while also marrying Isaac Luther Martin, a fellow-Baptist with whom she had three children.

Over time, however, she became increasingly dissatisfied with the status ascribed to women within the family and community, and began speaking out on this. Then in 1839 she attended a meeting of the Owenite socialists (followers of Robert Owen, the utopian philanthropist and freethinker), and

found herself attracted to many of their ideas, particularly on women's equality.

At first she maintained her Christian beliefs and engaged the socialists in public debates on religion. However, her Christian convictions were weakening, and when in 1839 her husband Isaac moved to London, she left him and joined the Owenites, becoming one of their best-known and most forthright public speakers and pamphleteers. She lectured all round the country, and was reported to attract audiences of up to three thousand. She was obliged to raise her children on slender means, and had to leave them with friends when conducting speaking tours.

Her outspoken atheism and opposition to patriarchy aroused much opposition, even within the Owenite movement, and she teamed up with another leading socialist, George Jacob Holyoake, to support fellow atheists and freethinkers who were being charged with blasphemy. On women's rights, she believed strongly in the role of education although, like other Owenites, she also believed that true equality would not come about until a propertyless communal society had been established.

In 1845 she began living in a common-law relationship with an engineer, Joshua Hopkins, with whom she had a fourth child. Soon after, she withdrew from being an activist in the Owenite movement. Instead she trained as a midwife, practising from her home in Covent Garden, as well as teaching midwifery and gynaecology. However, her career in this field was tragically cut short, and she died of tuberculosis in 1851, aged thirty-nine.

George Jacob Holyoake (buried in the East Cemetery behind George Eliot) gave her funeral oration, and set up subscriptions for her gravestone which is



inscribed simply 'Emma Martin: Advocate of Free Thought'. Harriet Martineau, the writer and early social theorist (whose brother James is also buried in the East Cemetery), was among the contributors. Her partner Joshua Hopkins (d.1852) is buried in the grave with her. So too is Holyoake's first wife Eleanor (d.1884), who has a separate small stone placed in front of Emma's. ■

*Note: The information about Emma Martin's life is drawn mainly from the writings of Barbara Taylor, whose book *Eve and the New Jerusalem* was recently reissued by Virago (2016).*

Buried in the first grave

STUART ORR looks into the story of the Jackson family, occupants of grave number one

Elizabeth Jackson is remembered today for having been buried in grave number one at Highgate Cemetery, just six days after it opened in 1839, aged only thirty-eight. Her husband and his second wife followed her in 1854. But how did they die? Unfortunately causes of death are not recorded in the cemetery registers, so some little research was required to find out.

Her death certificate reveals that Elizabeth died of consumption — tuberculosis — on 16 May 1839 at 25 Little Windmill Street in Soho, now Lexington Street. She was buried ten days later. In January that year she had had a daughter, also named Elizabeth but sadly, the baby died of ‘inflammation of the chest’ just over six weeks before her mother.

Her husband George, a bootmaker, remarried and his new wife Grace joined him at 25 Little Windmill Street. The house has not survived but we can get an idea of what it looked like from the eighteenth and



early nineteenth-century houses almost opposite (nos. 43-53, pictured). According to W. R. Winterton’s article, ‘The Soho cholera epidemic 1854’ in *History of Medicine* (1980), at that time, the once fashionable Soho houses were ‘much decayed’ and, ‘every

house had a cesspool which was rarely emptied and it was only the overflow which drained into the sewers’.

Number 25, like most Soho houses, was in multi-occupancy. At the time of the 1851 census, there were at least six others in the house in three separate units, all adult males were bootmakers, or similar.

Three years later, in 1853, one of the regular cholera epidemics hit Soho. During the summer of 1854, ‘...the death rate rose until at the end of August and beginning of September the numbers reached a dramatic peak’. His death certificate reveals that on 4 September, George died of the disease after suffering for two days. Six days later, Grace died. The doctor gave the cause of Grace’s death as ‘Fever induced by excessive fatigue and exposed to an atmosphere impregnated with decomposing animal matter’.

Their house was just a short distance south of the famous Broad Street pump that Dr John Snow linked to the source of the 1854 cholera outbreak. He did this by marking all cholera deaths on a map of Soho. He put two marks on 25 Little Windmill Street.

Why and how did George, a humble bootmaker living in one of the poorest parts of London, decide to bury his wife in the new garden cemetery at Highgate? The Cemetery fee alone was five guineas (over £400 in today’s money value). And on top of that would be the cost of the funeral and headstone.

We may never know. ■

Visit to Tunbridge Wells cemeteries

We definitely recommend a visit next time you are in the town

In April, a group of Highgate Cemetery Friends and volunteers was treated to an excellent day of cemetery visits hosted by the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery (opened 1849, closed 1934; www.fwpc.org.uk) and the Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery (opened 1873; foftwc.wix.com).

Both cemeteries were fascinating and atmospheric, with the Friends groups important for their conservation and interpretation. Of particular interest for us was the gravestone of Rachel Beer (1858-1927), daughter-in-law of Julius Beer, *below*, who, having been declared of unsound mind, spent the rest of her life in a large house in Tunbridge Wells. She never got the burial she may have once expected in the large mausoleum at Highgate Cemetery.



Among the many other interesting memorials at both cemeteries was this glorious mosaic ledger stone to the Snelgrove family (of Marshall & Snelgrove), *above* — unusual as mosaics were rarely used on graves no doubt due to concerns about durability. Some restoration work is now required and donors are sought! If you would like to help we can put you in touch.

We look forward to welcoming both Friends' groups to Highgate next year. ■



Your opportunity to comment on the conservation plan

The draft conservation plan for Highgate Cemetery is now ready for your comments. The plan has been prepared by a leading multi-disciplinary consultancy, Alan Baxter Ltd, and so it benefits from their considerable knowledge and experience. We consulted members, volunteers and the public about what the plan might include in an exhibition at the cemetery and online last year and the draft plan responds to that consultation.

The resulting document sets out the history and significance of this special place, and explains how we propose to look after it in the future. You can read it online at www.highgatecemetery.org/news. It is best experienced as an electronic document, but printed copies should be available for consultation:

- at Highgate Library, 1 Shepherds Hill, London N6 5QJ
- at the HLSI, Pond Square (HLSI members only)
- at Highgate Library, Chester Rd, London N19 5DH
- at Lauderdale House, Waterloo Park, Highgate Hill, London N6 5HG

Before visiting, please check our website for confirmation.

There are three main strands to the proposals:

Trees, monuments and buildings will be better looked after

Trees of the right species in the right places and in good health will make it easier, and safer, to appreciate the quality of our historic landscape. Furthermore, not only will they be less likely to damage memorials, this will be better for biodiversity too. In addition, we would like to reveal many of the memorials currently hidden by ivy, and to restore the more important of them so that future generations will be able to appreciate them as we do. We would also like to return our chapel and its setting to its proper appearance, especially by reinstating the chapel's lost cupola, pinnacles and finials.

The cemetery will continue to function as an active burial ground

A closed cemetery is a dead cemetery, so we will investigate how we can continue to provide for the burial needs of current and future generations. This might involve reclaiming grave space which has never been used, or is no longer wanted, or creating additional spaces for cremated remains in columbaria and attractive garden settings. All of this can be knitted in carefully and respectfully to our wonderful historic environment.

Visiting will be easier, and more rewarding

We are keen to improve the visitor experience, from sharing our acquired knowledge of the Cemetery and who is buried here, to helping people find their way around better on site. We propose to explore the opening of the West Cemetery for free-flow visitors in addition to our excellent guided tours. We would also like to provide better displays and interpretive material, as well as the creature comforts everyone expects nowadays: some food, drink and adequate toilets.

All this can be done while preserving the essential character of the place. We believe that evolution rather than revolution is the way forward. Once the conservation plan has been adopted, we could well decide to appoint a Conservation Project Manager to drive things forward. We anticipate that we may also need help from the Heritage Lottery Fund and private donors, as well as a new Act of Parliament if we are to manage our burial space more effectively.

Before we start work on these projects, we would like to hear your thoughts on this draft conservation plan. If you would like to comment, please email info@highgatecemetery.org or write to Conservation Plan, Highgate Cemetery, Swain's Lane, London N6 6PJ. It would help enormously if you could refer to specific pages. Please make sure your comments reach us by *30 September 2018*. ■

News roundup

London Month of the Dead events

London Month of the Dead, a series of events investigating the capital's relationship with its deceased residents, is back in October 2018. We are hosting two special LMOD events in the chapel:

Tuesday 2 October 2018 from 7:30 pm

Lecture: *The Future of Death: Extending human lifespans & the possibility of immortality* with John Troyer

Since the beginning of history, humans have attempted to prolong their existence on this Earth. It is only with the advent of modern science that these life-extension goals begin to seem achievable. Dr John Troyer, Director of the Centre for Death and Society at the University of Bath, will explore the current research in radical life extension as well as the politics and bioethics of having a body that might never 'die'. Tickets £12.

Thursday 18 October 2018 from 7pm

Death Cafe – *Discussing mortality with tea and cake* with Suzette Field

Western society has long outsourced conversations about death to doctors, nurses, priests, and undertakers, and as a result we have lost the ability comfortably to discuss the most profound and significant event we will all have to face. This is a free event devoted to discussing all aspects of mortality over light refreshments.

Booking required for all events at londonmonthofthedeath.com.



Christina Rossetti at the Watts Gallery

Christina Rossetti, who is buried in Highgate Cemetery West, is one of the greatest of English Victorian poets (pictured above in a drawing by her brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti). The works of art brought together in this exhibition include some of her own intriguing and virtually unknown drawings, and stunning portraits dating from all periods of her life. Also considered is the enduring appeal of her verse to visual artists from the 1850s to the present day. At Watts Gallery from 13 November 2018 to 17 March 2019.

www.wattsgallery.org.uk.

New operations manager starts

We are thrilled to welcome Lucy Thompson, our new Operations Manager, who joins us on 3 September. Lucy comes fresh from Turner's House museum in Twickenham where she was House Director and a trustee. She oversaw the crucial operational and strategic set up of opening the house to the public in summer 2017. Before that, Lucy was Operations Manager at the Manchester Jewish Museum. There is much for her to do at Highgate and we look forward to working with her.

Fabulous beasts... where are they found?

We read on the *Empire* website of the excitement surrounding the next instalment of the J K Rowling *Fantastic Beasts* series, *The Crimes Of Grindelwald*. The plot is – as you would expect – a tightly guarded secret, but apparently it involves Newt heading to Paris on the hunt for the evil Grindelwald. According to *Empire*, Highgate Cemetery is used to represent part of the Parisian catacombs. We avoid commenting on any filming which may or may not have taken place at the Cemetery, but even we had to watch the new trailer which Warner Brothers released at Comic-Con in San Diego on 21 July, such is the excitement surrounding the film. The trailer is at https://youtu.be/c5KZGa_0bPE and you can make up your own mind. The film will be released in the UK on 16 November.

Now open at 10am every day

Since the beginning of March, Highgate Cemetery East has been open earlier at the weekends. The new hours are from 10am to 5pm seven days a week. Much easier to remember! We go back to closing at 4pm from 1 November. The Cemetery is closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. See our website for more information. ■



Dr Janet Wolf

remembered by Jackie Knight

Janet (1938–2018) was a Protector at the Cemetery from 2008 until she resigned in 2016. She was the daughter of a diplomat and was born in Mauritius. After spending the war years in Canada she was sent to the UK, aged 11, to attend boarding school. She progressed through university to a doctorate and an academic career in optical physics, and was a senior research fellow at the City University.

Janet married an eminent hydrologist, Professor Peter Wolf. It was when he died in 2007, and his ashes were interred at the cemetery, that Janet was approached to become a Protector.

Following Peter's death, it was to Janet's credit that she continued to engage fully in life. She loved the company of others and continued to make new friends, travel and learn, and was a great supporter of the Athenaeum Club.

She hated injustice and her work ethic was relentless when it came to arguing a cause, or defending or seeking justice for a friend. ■

Historic cemeteries news

What's on at our sister cemeteries

ABNEY PARK

Guided tours first Sunday of every month at 2pm. Free, but £5 suggested donation. Abney Park hosts a wide variety of events throughout the year, from walks and talks to theatrical and music performances, and art exhibitions. www.abneypark.org

BROMPTON

Saturday **topical tours** mostly start at the Meeting Place, North Lodge. £5 donation. 25 August 2pm: *Medical People*, by Professor Timothy Peters; 8 September 2pm: *Artistic Connections*, by Robert Stephenson; 15 September 11am to 4:30pm, half-hourly *Catacomb tours* start near the Chapel; 15 September 2pm: *Symbols*, by Carole Tyrrell. 22 September 2pm: *Architecture*, by Nigel Thorne, free. 29 September 11.30am: *Wildflowers*, by Roy Vickery; 6 October 11am: *Brompton Garden Cemetery Tour*, led by Andy Williams.

Lecture Sunday 16 September 2pm: *The Magnificent Seven Cemeteries of London*, by Peter Matthews. Chapel. Free, but donations welcome.

London Open House Weekend Sunday 23 September, 12noon to 5pm: Chapel open with exhibition. Free cemetery tours at 2pm from the Chapel.

Regular **guided tours** start in the Meeting Place, North Lodge. £8 donation. 2pm on Sundays 5, 12, 19, 26 August; 9, 23 September; 14, 28 October; 11, 25

November. Full details see brompton-cemetery.org.uk.

KENSAL GREEN

Guided tours normally at 2pm every Sunday afternoon from the beginning of March to the end of October. Tours begin at the Anglican Chapel in the centre of the grounds, and finish around two hours later at the Dissenters' Chapel, £7 suggested donation. www.kensalgreen.co.uk

WEST NORWOOD

Guided tours first Sunday of every month at 11am from November to March. Tours start at the Cemetery Main Gate, Norwood Road, SE27. The tours last about 90 minutes.

Talks start at 2.30pm at Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way (off Norwood Road), SE27. £1 donation Saturday 20 October. AGM and Lecture: *William Wright DD* by Samuel Wright Saturday 17 November. *A Year in the Life of a Bee Keeper*. Talk by Jean Azzopardi www.fownc.org

NUNHEAD

Guided tours last Sunday of every month at 2.15pm and last up to two hours. Free. Full programme see www.fonc.org.uk.

TOWER HAMLETS

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