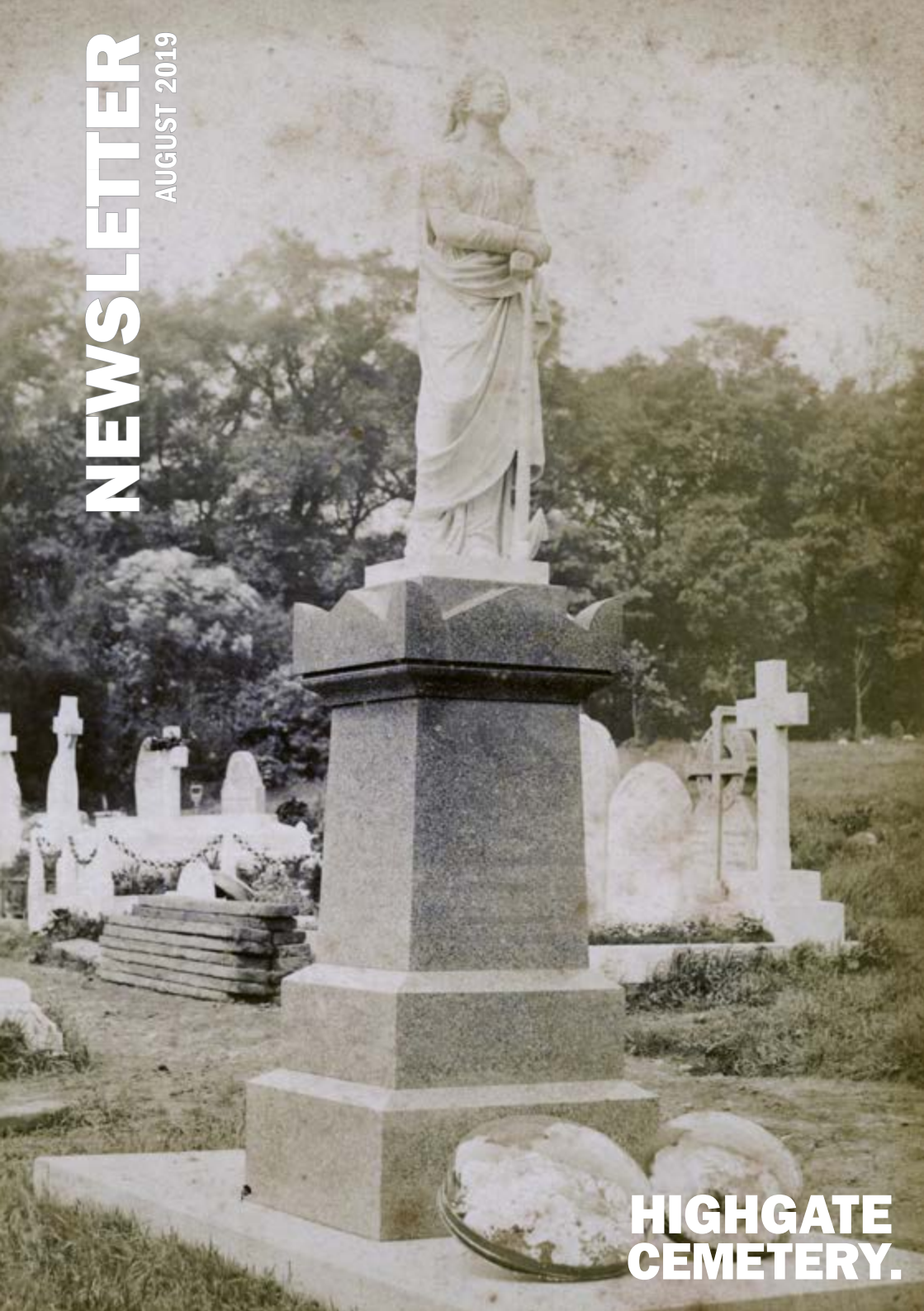


NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2019



**HIGHGATE
CEMETERY.**

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With thanks to

Martin Adeney, Lynda Cowan,

Leighton House Museum, Penny

Linnett, Robin Oakley, Stuart Orr,

Nick Powell, Lizzie Wells.

The December 2019 issue will be posted on 15 November 2019. Contributions are due by 10 October 2019.

Registered Office

Highgate Cemetery

Swain's Lane, London N6 6PJ

Telephone 020 8340 1834

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Charity Number 1058392

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Cover photograph

Monument to Augusta Annie Algar (1868–84). Photograph by J. H. Lee of 553 Holloway Road, London. Collection: Stephen Furniss.

The monument faces the main path in the East Cemetery, and is still there today. The trees in the background line Swain's Lane.

Chair's note



This is my first note since being chosen by the trustees as Chair of the Friends. As a long-time resident of Highgate, I have been in a position to appreciate the enormous achievement of generations of Friends in bringing the Cemetery from the derelict state in which it was abandoned by the London Cemetery Company in the seventies to the carefully managed burial ground and increasingly visited attraction which it now has become — number 30 on Trip Advisor's list of over 2,000 things to do in London.

It is a privilege and a responsibility to help to continue that work at a very exciting moment. Our Conservation Plan was completed earlier this year and we now have the task of implementing it, step by step. We have to think through the consequences of the decision to maintain the Cemetery both as a respectful burial place and a visitor attraction.

One of the keys is to find room for new burials as our available space diminishes. We have decided that the best way is to apply to make use of old and long abandoned graves. You will find details of how and why we propose to do that in this mailing. Please let us have your views.

And do please come and visit. This summer we opened the courtyard to the public for an exhibition about the cemetery's history and our plans. It was a popular move with our visitors and with local people, 170 of whom braved very damp weather on our special neighbours' evening.

And with some summer weather eventually arriving, the cemetery has been seen at its best with visitors and grave-owners commenting with approval on the flowering plants and memorial inscriptions which have been revealed as a result of the ivy and bramble clearance in the East.

Martin Adeney, Chair

IN THE
 DEAR MEMORY OF
 MY HUSBAND
GABRIELE ROSSETTI.
 BORN AT VESTO ARNONE
 IN THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES
 28th FEBRUARY 1783
 DIED IN LONDON 26th APRIL 1834.
 HIS WIFE
 MARY LAVINIA
 ALSO OF
FRANCES MARY LAVINIA.
 BORN AT VESTO ARNONE
 IN THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES
 28th FEBRUARY 1783
 DIED IN LONDON 26th APRIL 1834.
 ALSO OF
WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI.
 SON OF THE ABOVE
 BORN 26th SEPTEMBER 1828.
 DIED 3rd FEBRUARY 1910.
 HIS WIFE
 THE COLLECTION OF ITALIAN UNITS

**HAROLD FORD
 ROSSETTI**
 1863-1903 TO 3rd 1981

GEOFFREY WILLIAM ROSSETTI
 BORN 16th OCT 1902, DIED 28 DEC 1988
 "LOVE NEVER FAILS"
 AND OF
DORA BRANDRETH
 WIFE OF
GABRIEL ARTHUR ROSSETTI
 BORN 16 JUN 1863 — DIED 5 APRIL 1957
 THEIR WEDDING

A large, ornate cross-shaped gravestone with intricate carvings of a tree and figures. The text on the stone is mostly illegible due to weathering and distance.

The Rossetti and Brown graves

STUART ORR explains their interconnected histories

When people ask to see the Rossetti grave they are usually inspired by the story of Lizzie Siddal and her exhumation and less frequently by an interest in the poet, Christina Rossetti. However, this grave and the adjoining one have quite a few other points of interest. The two graves, both listed monuments, contain eleven burials from four generations of the Rossetti family.

The first grave to be purchased was the one adjoining the Rossetti grave. Elisabeth, the first wife of the painter Ford Madox Brown, had died in Paris at the age of twenty-seven leaving a young daughter, Lucy. Her body was brought back to England for burial in Highgate Cemetery. Madox Brown designed the headstone and footstone. The headstone is in the form of a low Gothic cross with the sacred monogram (IHS) surrounded by a crown of thorns and decorated with bunches of grapes and ears of wheat. He also designed the alphabet used for the inscription

HERE LIETH YE
BODY OF ELISABETH
YE BELOVED WIFE OF
FORD MADOX BROWN ESQ
WHO DIED IN PARIS YE 5TH
DAY OF JUNE 1846 AGED 27.

The young painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti admired Madox Brown and in 1848 asked him to become his tutor. This relationship lasted only weeks, but they remained lifelong friends. The families must have become close as, when Dante Rossetti's father died in 1854, his widow bought the plot next to Elisabeth's grave.

Gabriele Pasquale Giuseppe Rossetti was born in Abruzzo, Italy, in 1783. He was a poet and scholar with a particular interest in the poet Dante. He named his eldest son Gabriel Charles Dante, but the future Pre-Raphaelite moved Dante to be his first name. Gabriele was a supporter of Italian reunification and was also a prominent member of the Italian secret society, the Carbonari. He is thought to be the inspiration for the Italian secret society member, Pesca, in Wilkie Collins's novel, *The Woman in White*. Gabriele was exiled from Italy in 1821 and a few years later ended up in London



Left The Rossetti family grave with the Ford Madox Brown grave on the right

Right Gabriele Rossetti



Left The Rossetti family grave in 1978

the headstone but on a sloping stone lying on the grave which is getting more and more difficult to read.

Dante Rossetti's younger brother, William Michael, was also a founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. However, he was not a painter. He edited the PRB's journal, *The Germ*. In 1874 he married Lucy Madox Brown and they had five children. One of these, Michael Ford Madox Brown died at the age of one and was buried at Highgate Cemetery in the grave of his grandmother, Elisabeth. His inscription uses the same alphabet designed by Ford Madox Brown, but it has become very difficult to read:

ALSO OF
 [?MICHAEL FORD] MADOX ROSSETTI
 GRANDSON OF THE ABOVE
 [?BORN] [...] APRIL 1881
 DIED JA[NU]ARY 1883
 AND IF [THOU] WILT REMEMBER.

The last line is from Christina Rossetti's poem, *When I am dead my dearest*. When William purchased the burial at Highgate, the clerk, for some unknown reason, recorded his name in the Burial Register rather than that of his son.

Gabriele's widow, Frances, was the next to be buried. Her name appears under that of her husband and includes a quote from Luke's Gospel, 'Friend go up higher'.

Christina died nine years later in 1894. The Poetry Foundation recently wrote of her, 'Christina Rossetti has often been called the greatest Victorian woman poet, but her poetry is increasingly being recognized as among the most beautiful and innovative of the period by either sex.'

Her details are recorded below those of Lizzie. There is a quote from Dante's *Inferno* (Canto 4, Line 100):

VOLSERSI A ME CON SALUTEVOL CENNO.

where he lived for the rest of his life. He married Frances Polidori, the daughter of another Italian exile. Her brother John was a close friend and physician of Lord Byron. He is also notable for having written the first English vampire novel called, simply, *The Vampyre*.

Gabriele died in 1854. (The memorial now wrongly records the year as 1851; this appears to have been altered sometime after 1978 as the photograph above shows the correct year). One of the Biblical quotes (Jeremiah 22:10) on the headstone reads,

HE SHALL RETURN NO MORE
 NOR SEE HIS NATIVE COUNTRY.

Lizzie Siddal was the next member of the family to die. Her name is not recorded on

In English this can be translated as, 'They turned to me with signs of greeting' and refers to the point where Dante and his guide in Hell, Virgil, encounter the great classical poets Homer, Horace, Ovid and Lucan who invite him to walk along with them, by implication recognising him as an equally great poet.

Beneath this is a verse from Christina's poem, *The Lowest Place*:

GIVE ME THE LOWEST PLACE: OR IF FOR ME
THAT LOWEST PLACE TOO HIGH, MAKE ONE
MORE LOW
WHERE I MAY SIT AND SEE
MY GOD AND LOVE THEE SO.

This poem is referring to the same passage in Luke's Gospel used in her mother's inscription which Christina perhaps had selected.

William was the next be buried, in 1919. His inscription is on a stone inserted below that of his parents, elevating the headstone. It includes the words,

DIED ... HAVING SEEN THE
REALISATION OF ITALIAN UNITY.

Lucy, his wife, had died and was buried in Italy in 1894. Their four children who survived infancy included two girls, Olivia and Helen, and a boy, Gabriel Arthur Madox Rossetti, generally known as Arthur. It was a bohemian household and the children

were given a lot of freedom.

As young teenagers they started an anarchist magazine, *The Torch*. It was a serious journal which included articles by leading



anarchists including the Russian exile Prince Kropotkin and one by George Bernard Shaw on 'Why I am an Anarchist'. They also held a salon in the house for Kropotkin and other anarchists. When William got fed up with this, they moved publication elsewhere and they found a new sponsor, another leading anarchist, and Scottish medical doctor, Thomas Fauset McDonald. McDonald provided the bomb that prematurely exploded in Greenwich Park in 1894, killing the anarchist who was carrying it. Joseph Conrad's novel, *The Secret Agent*, was inspired by this incident and contains a character, the Professor, based on McDonald.

Olivia later married an Italian anarchist, Antonio Agresti, inspiring her father to dedicate one of his books to '...the young couple ...whose marriage has restored to Italian nationality a granddaughter of Gabriele Rossetti'. They moved to Italy. After her husband's death, Olivia's politics changed and she became a supporter of Mussolini and friend of Ezra Pound. She died in 1960.

Arthur tired of anarchism earlier than his sisters and became an electrical engineer. He died in 1938 and his ashes were placed in the Rossetti grave. His inscription appears below that of Christina. The ashes of his wife and two of his children are also in the grave. The last burial was in 2000 when the ashes of Harold Ford Rossetti's widow, Joan, were added.

Dante Rossetti's well-known comment, 'Let me not on any account be buried at Highgate...', may be the reason why his family buried him at Birchington, where he died, rather than in the family plot. But there is nonetheless a Highgate link: his monument at Birchington was designed by Ford Madox Brown. ■



Finding a foundling

LYNDA COWAN and LIZZIE WELLS uncover the story of one of those buried by the Foundling Hospital

On 13 November 1852 a desperate thirty-five-year-old woman took her baby son to wait at the gate of the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury. Once admitted, she completed a petition declaring herself to be the innocent victim of ‘a scoundrel’ who had ‘accomplished my ruin’. She appeared to be educated, respectable and contrite and, being related to one of the Foundling Society’s minor officials, she was also well-connected. One week later her child was admitted as a foundling and he and his mother would never know each other again.

The woman appears in the Foundling Hospital records under the assumed name of ‘Mary Dakin’ and her son was given the name Richard Sykes. His short life was to end in a London hospital and his mother outlived him by twenty-odd years. Dying a respectable and respected widow, she was buried on the other side of the world. He was to be nurtured, educated, apprenticed and eventually buried according to the rules of the institution. He would have no further contact with his mother.

Foundling babies were farmed out for

their earliest years and Richard would have returned to the Hospital when he was four or five years old. There the children were instructed in reading and writing; many of the boys played musical instruments and the girls were taught to sew. Every stage of their lives was supervised and recorded, the institution's responsibility extending until they were twenty-five years old.

When he was fourteen Richard Sykes was indentured to a boot and shoe maker. The apprenticeship was not a success and two years later he was bound to Royden & Sons, Liverpool ship builders. He is listed among the crew of 'The Clifford', his rating being 'boy'. In later records he is designated 'sailor' or 'mariner'.

On at least two occasions when on dry land Richard stayed for short periods in the Homerton Workhouse. Many of their entries, under the heading Discharges, have the words 'Given Up to Mother'. Richard's discharge description reads 'Own Request' and, in 1872, the sad words 'Destitute, ill' complete his entry. He died in St Bartholomew's Hospital of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-two.

The Foundling Hospital had purchased thirteen graves in the West side of Highgate Cemetery. Seven of their plots are in the area behind the Atcheler memorial, each having the standard dimensions of 2'6" x 6'6". Richard Sykes's grave was dug to a depth of nineteen feet and he lies in the company of sixteen other beneficiaries of the Foundling Hospital, the youngest of whom was three years old. The names of all the occupants appear on the headstones or ledger stones which mark the graves.

And what became of Richard's mother?

Early in her pregnancy, she had resigned her position as governess to the family of the rector of St Mark's Church in Myddleton



Above The Mills Family grave in Bolton Street Cemetery, Wellington. The slab would have stood originally as a headstone.

Square. In her petition she expressed the intention of getting a similar post in Hertford and, after her child had been received into the Foundling Hospital, she resumed her given name, Priscilla Vennell. Within a few years she had travelled to New Zealand to keep house for her brother George, who was prospering as an auctioneer in the recently established town of Wellington.

She was forty-three when she married Charles Mills, a fifty-nine-year-old widower and professional contractor. He died three years later 'leaving no issue'. Priscilla died, aged seventy-eight, at her sister-in-law's house in Abel Smith Street, Wellington, an area now described as 'heritage'. Her obituary in a local paper described her as being 'of a most lovable disposition' and one whose 'charity was exercised in a quiet, unobtrusive manner which greatly endeared her to the recipients of her bounty'.

She lies in Charles Mills's family plot in Bolton Street Cemetery, the oldest cemetery in Wellington. It was founded in 1840 on a steep hillside and visitors are now shown around on guided tours. ■

Liza Lehmann: A forgotten woman composer

who was memorialised, as **ROBIN OAKLEY** discovers, by a forgotten woman sculptor

Highgate Cemetery hosts the graves of several distinguished Victorian women musicians including the singers Charlotte Sainton-Dolby and Euphrosyne Parepa, who married the opera impresario Carl Rosa. All three are buried in the West Cemetery. Another singer and composer, now barely remembered but very well-known in her time, was Liza Lehmann (1862–1918) who is buried in the East Cemetery.

Liza Lehmann grew up in a musical and artistic family, living initially in Rome. Her father was the German painter Rudolf Lehmann (also buried here). Liszt was a family friend, and she stayed with Clara Schumann in Frankfurt while studying Robert Schumann's songs. She began

her career as a concert singer, her teachers including Jenny Lind, the 'Swedish Nightingale'. After marriage she gave up performing and turned to composition, specialising in vocal works. She composed song-cycles, parlour songs, and songs for children, as

well as songs with chamber and orchestral accompaniment.

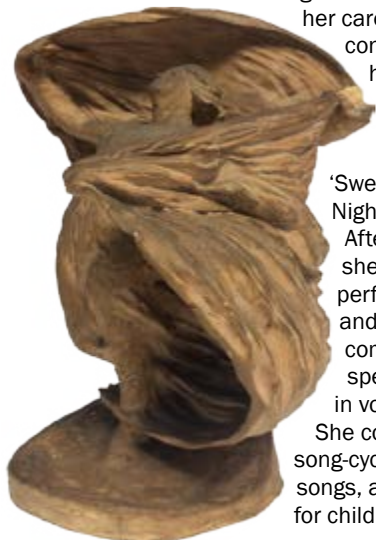
Her compositions were widely performed during her lifetime. Her best-known composition remains the song-cycle *In a Persian Garden*, based on FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Songs from it such as 'Moon of my Delight' were recorded by many famous singers including John MacCormack and Mario Lanza.

She also composed stage works including the musical comedy *Sergeant Brue* (the first show by a woman composer to be performed on Broadway), and the opera *Everyman*, premiered by the Beecham Opera Company in 1916.

She twice toured America, acting as accompanist in recitals of her own works. She was Professor of Singing at the Guildhall School of Music and the first President of the Society of Women Musicians founded in 1911.

After her death her work was largely forgotten except among professional singers. However, with the revival of interest in women composers, her compositions can now be heard in recitals again. A selection of her exquisite and once-familiar songs set to poems by writers such as Shelley, Christina Rossetti (another Cemetery resident), Robert Louis Stevenson and Lewis Carroll is available on a Naxos CD.

Liza Lehmann's husband was the musician and painter Herbert Bedford (1867–1945), who shares the grave. Her grandsons are the composer David Bedford and the conductor



Above Muriel Perrin's maquette of the first design



Above The Lehmann grave in the East Cemetery

Steuart Bedford — who plays the piano on the recording mentioned above.

Her monument bears no visible inscription, though whether there was one that has now worn off is unclear. The family grave was purchased for the ashes of her son, Rudolf, who died of pneumonia during military training in 1916. It is only identifiable by name from the separate war-grave to her son in front.

What is remarkable about the grave, however, is the sculpted angel standing on it. This is no stock Victorian angel, but (as her autobiography testifies) a specially commissioned carving by the young artist and sculptor, Muriel Perrin, who sadly died in the flu epidemic of 1919 aged only twenty-nine. Despite being weather-worn, the angel still retains its elegant and demure features, holding a lyre in its left hand, maybe in recognition of the Lehmann family's musical prowess.

This sculpture appears to be one of only two large-scale works by Muriel Perrin to have survived. The other is a delightful angel in St George's Chapel at St Peter's Church at Bushey Heath, near the Perrin family's country home. After her death Muriel's mother, Ida Perrin, herself a prominent watercolourist and member of London art circles, donated money to the Leighton House Museum in Kensington to establish a new Perrin Wing in memory of her daughter. Further examples of Muriel Perrin's artistic work are held in the archives of the Museum.

These include a wonderful maquette of her original design for the grave (*far left*; image kindly provided by Leighton House), highly expressive and with billowing drapery in the style of the actress and dancer Loie Fuller. Presumably this was considered too radical or impractical for the cemetery, though it shows what a remarkable artist Muriel Perrin might have become. ■

Keeping Highgate Cemetery alive

It is over 180 years since the first burial at Highgate Cemetery. But within the next few years the space available will significantly diminish. We would like Highgate to continue as a working cemetery and not become simply a tourist attraction.

Providing a place of burial is the best way to preserve its special character and prevent its decline. With their loved ones continuing to be buried here, future generations would value Highgate Cemetery as a spiritual landscape, different in character from other open spaces such as parks.

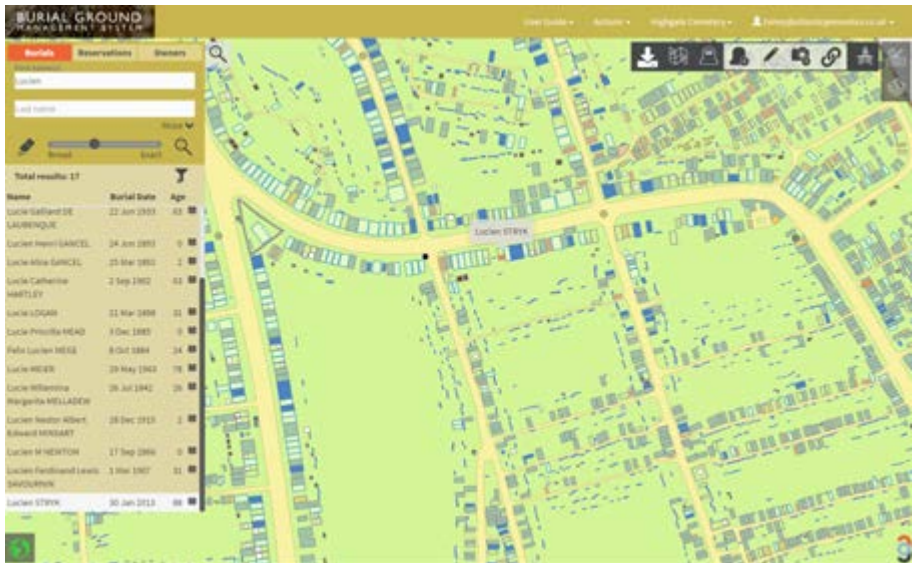
By taking back long-abandoned graves, the future of the Cemetery can be assured. Where graves are no longer wanted by their historic owners, they could be made available for the present generation.

Naturally there would be many safeguards to preserve the interests of grave owners and their families, and to protect the heritage. But there is much scope for Highgate Cemetery to accommodate more burials with minimal impact on the wonderful landscape.

We call the process 'grave renewal'. We have enclosed a booklet with this newsletter which explains our indicative proposals for how it might work, and is subject to further change and refinement. Other London cemeteries already have similar powers, so the precedent is well-established. To implement it here, Highgate Cemetery needs a supplementary Act of Parliament which we intend to seek in November.

Please do read *Keeping Highgate Cemetery alive*. We would love to hear what you think. You can tell us most easily by completing the online form at highgatecemetery.org/renewal or by emailing us at renewal@highgatecemetery.org. ■





Our new 'Burial Ground Management System'

Work is proceeding apace on our new 'Burial Ground Management System', a digital map and database which will eventually replace the paper record system used since the Cemetery opened in 1839.

The work is being done by Atlantic Geomatics, a specialist survey company regulated by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

The first stage is to produce an accurate map of the Cemetery, not just the locations of memorials and roads, but also trees, benches, bins and other infrastructure. Backpack mounted scanners are used for the survey and the data is then added to the online map. The illustration above shows work-in-progress in the East Cemetery with

the positions of memorials nearest the paths mapped out. The large green areas are just awaiting the scan data to be added.

The next stage is to join our burial and grave owner data to the grave position records – every single one is done manually. This is underway. When complete, the location of any grave in the Cemetery will be highlighted instantaneously! The historic registers have been scanned and the relevant pages will pop up when required. The historic plans will be visible as an underlay beneath the new mapping.

There is still much more to do, including the mapping of the West Cemetery. We will keep you posted as we go! ■

News roundup

Marx vandalism

Following the attack in February, the marble tablet in the centre of the memorial has been removed and is awaiting repair, subject to specialist advice. In the meantime we have put in place a photographic replica (*below*) which, while obvious close up, is good enough to fool from a few yards away. The Marx Grave Trust are considering whether CCTV would deter any future attackers.

Your membership online

If we have your email address registered on our database, you are now able to manage your membership online. Simply by logging on, members will be able to print their own membership cards, check the status of

their membership, and renew if necessary. You don't need a password as you validate through an email link. Easy! See: <https://highgatecemetery.org/help/join>.

London Month of the Dead



Once again in October 2019 Antique Beat and A Curious

Invitation will be hosting *The London Month of the Dead*, a series of different events investigating the capital's relationship with its deceased residents. Previous years' events have included taxidermy workshops, walking tours and private views and talks on subjects ranging from public dissection and body snatching to reincarnation and funereal folklore. Brompton, Highgate, Kensal Green, Abney Park, Nunhead and Tower Hamlets cemeteries have all been involved. For more information visit <https://londonmonthofthedeath.com>.

Valhalla tours

During the long summer evenings on Wednesdays in June and July, we offered a number of new one-off tours devised by guides eager to branch out from the confines of the regular public offering. Under the brand 'Valhalla tours', they proved exceptionally popular and so we plan to repeat the event next year. If you would be interested to prepare a one-off tour, please get in touch with Nick Powell. This year's tours were: *Extraordinary*,





Above The Great Gardens of Death exhibition in the courtyard

Entertainers, Exhumed by Peter Mills; *In the Shadow of the Valley of Death* by Russ Howells; *Women: Lost and Found* by Rowan

Lennon; *Knocking on Death's Doors* by Ian Dungavell; *Paths Less Travelled* by Stuart Orr; *Immigrants – the good, the bad and the fabulously rich* by Ben Nathan; *Dead Arty* by Andrew Yeo; *Death By Any Other Name* by Richard Kuhn; and *The Numismafia: connected by coins, medals and banknotes* by Henry Flynn.

Highgate Festival courtyard exhibition

For a week in July we threw open the courtyard to welcome visitors to see our free exhibition, *Highgate Cemetery: A great garden of death*, which was set up in the Colonnade. The exhibition was very popular, but so was the mere fact of having the main gate open: grave owners could let themselves in to the Cemetery to visit

easily. We put up some temporary barriers to stop tourists straying further in to the Cemetery which worked very well.

We need you!

We are particularly looking for volunteer visitor assistants and tour guides. No regular commitment is required – we will be happy to see you when we need you! For information see <https://highgatecemetery.org/help/Volunteer> or email nikki@highgatecemetery.org.

Safeguarding

We want to provide a safe environment for any child, young person or adult visiting or working at Highgate Cemetery. Our safeguarding policy, which can be found on our website, should help us do this. Any safeguarding concerns should be reported to Lucy Thompson, our Operations Manager, or directly to the emergency services if someone is in danger. ■

Historic cemeteries news

What's on at our sister cemeteries

ABNEY PARK

Tours and special events are advertised on their website. Details: www.abneypark.org

BROMPTON

Regular **guided tours** start 2pm in the Meeting Place, North Lodge. £8 donation. 8, 22 September; 13, 27 October; 10, 24 November.

14 Sep: Catacombs tour

8 Dec 2.15pm: Christmas Carol Concert in the Chapel.

Full details see brompton-cemetery.org.uk.

KENSAL GREEN

10 Sep 7.30pm. Talk: The fear of being buried alive, by Robert Stephenson.

Guided tours normally at 2pm every Sunday afternoon from March to October; first and third Sunday of the month from November to February. 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. No need to book. www.kensalgreen.co.uk

WEST NORWOOD

Guided tours first Sunday of the month at 2.30pm from April to October; 11am from November to March. Tours start at the Cemetery Main Gate, Norwood Road, SE27 and last about 90 minutes.

Talks start at 2.30pm at Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way (off

Norwood Road), SE27. £1 donation.

19 Oct: AGM and Talk: The Cubitts and the River Thames, by Chris Everett

16 Nov: Talk: Cherishing history, nurturing wildlife, by Kath Church.

www.fownc.org

NUNHEAD

Guided tours last Sunday of the month at 2.15pm for up to two hours. Free.

8 Sep, 8 Dec: Woodland trees walk.

11 Aug: Music Hall artistes

21-22 Sep: London Open House weekend. Tours throughout the afternoon.

13 Oct: Cemetery symbols tour

10 Nov: Great War Veterans tour

Full programme see www.fonc.org.uk.

TOWER HAMLETS

Guided tours third Sunday of the month at 2pm. Free. Many other events relate to nature, such as birds, insects, and trees.

For the full programme see www.fothcp.org

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEMETERY FRIENDS

NFCF represents groups of volunteers interested in conserving cemeteries large and small. A list of members is published on their website at <https://www.cemeteryfriends.com/members>. When you are travelling around the country do check it to find a cemetery worth visiting nearby!