

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEMETERY FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER No. 29

Spring 2012

Editor: Carol Stevenson

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Mrs Jean Pateman MBE

By Gwyneth Stokes



Photo: Nigel Sutton courtesy of The Telegraph

With the death of Jean Pateman, aged 90, the cemetery friends' movement loses its initiator and one of its most dedicated and enthusiastic supporters.

Her name is synonymous with north London's Highgate Cemetery and its survival and fame is recognised as due to her drive and energy.

Jean had moved to Highgate in 1957 with her husband John and three children where she founded the Highgate Society.

When the private cemetery closed in 1975 attracting vandalism, Jean became so concerned about the damage and neglect she set about organising petitions and public

meetings to establish a friends of the cemetery group.

These volunteers formed a charitable trust with Jean as the secretary; they purchased the cemetery for a nominal sum and began the slow business of restoration. Jean became chairman in 1985 until two years ago.

Because Highgate Cemetery Friends were probably the first such group, her help was sought in the 1980s by others worried about the state of their cemeteries and wishing to know what to do. Several of these came together for a meeting in the Patemans' sitting room and the idea of a national federation was born. Many members will have met Jean at AGMs or on a visit to Highgate.

Press obituaries to Jean Pateman which mention her charm and persuasive powers have also acknowledged her protective attitude in the cemetery which sometimes made feel visitors unwelcome. The BBC's Radio 4 Last Word programme included Jean Pateman on 2nd March, and American novelist Audrey Niffenegger in The Telegraph recalled overcoming Jean's reluctance to allow the writer to use Highgate Cemetery as a background; the self-styled 'dragon at the gate,' ended up as a friend and also a character in the novel Her Fearful Symmetry which was dedicated to her.

Over 400 people packed Jean's own parish church of St Michael, Highgate, for the Memorial Service where Gwyneth Stokes represented the NCF. Three grandchildren offered readings and reminiscences and friends Peter Knight and broadcaster John Waite gave their tributes.

A reception was held in the newly restored chapel in the magnificent Highgate Cemetery which will remain Jean Pateman's legacy.

NFCF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

hosted by

The Friends of the Rosary in Norwich on
Saturday, 16 June 2012

Any members who have not received details
please contact the NFCF secretary

Olympic events

With the Olympics coming to London this summer, cemeteries will be among the venues hosting cultural events for the many thousands of visitors.

'Hidden London' is a programme to encourage visitors to explore less well known aspects of London's culture and heritage. Most events will be in parks, but the Magnificent Seven cemeteries were also asked if they wished to participate.

The Hidden London events will take place 'after hours' with the assistance of the Museum of London and will be promoted by LOCOG (London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games). The lucky cemeteries have not yet been named, but a number of the Magnificent Seven are putting on their own Olympic themed events in the summer.

West Norwood Cemetery, with their many sports personalities (and also several people who helped fund the re-launch of the Games in Athens in 1896), are very keen to be involved. They will also be running a 'Curious' art trail in the month before the Games start, with two dozen artists producing pieces inspired by people buried in the cemetery.

Nunhead Cemetery will host an exhibition based on the winners' podium, from a week before to a week after the main Olympic Games which open on Friday 27th July.

Please send the editor reports of any events your cemetery holds this summer. It would be interesting too to hear how your visitor numbers are affected this summer – whether there are any events in your area or not.

New NCF website

The NCF website (www.cemeteryfriends.org.uk) has been redesigned and is worth a visit.

Only three groups so far have put their events on the Events and Walks page so far – please send John your events too.

Wanted - Editor

Do you fancy editing the National Federation of Cemetery Friends newsletter? We have two editions a year, and an excellent proof-reader so you need not worry about sending out an embarrassing spelling mistake (Fiends instead of Friends is a good one!).

If you are interested, please contact the Editor or the Secretary (contact details on the back page).

25th anniversary for Friends of Brompton Cemetery

Friends of Brompton Cemetery have celebrated their twenty fifth anniversary. Formed in response to the problems caused by toxic herbicides being used in the cemetery, the swathes of wildflowers that now bloom every year are just one testament to their success.

Currently they are fighting against the redevelopment of the Seagrave Road development plan which would have a line of large housing blocks overlooking the cemetery.

The Courtoy Mausoleum has been restored with funding from the Friends and help from the Courtoy family.

Repairs at West Norwood

Following the theft of metal (reported in Newsletter 28) the railings of the cemetery have been repaired. The Friends now have permission to carry out monument repairs, and the John Hughes memorial has been restored. The adjacent Cypka Ptashinsky Hughes headstone was also tidied up, and further restorations are planned. The World Monument Fund have been approached and have expressed an interest in helping with the repairs to the Greek Necropolis.

A tree blew over near the new memorial garden damaging an original memorial. There are still concerns over the state of the roadway, but the cemetery railings have now been repaired.

On 26th November the Greek chapel was the setting for a play to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the burning down of the Crystal Palace

Nunhead Cemetery News

Nunhead Cemetery has been awarded a Blue Plaque 'voted by the people'. To avoid damaging the listed wall piers, this has been mounted on an existing brick structure close to the railings in the East Lodge grounds.

A Woodlands Wonders exhibition in September included the publication of a Tree Trail leaflet and there are plans to train a number of new guides. Another treat for visitors at special events is the installation of low level lighting in the crypt.

A list of activities for 2012 shows that it will be a very busy year for cemetery activities, with a number of specialist tours and an Olympic themed exhibition. Groups other than the Friends are also increasingly showing an interest in using the cemetery as a venue, with an outdoor film screening taking place for a second year. Several hundred people turned up to see a free showing of *The Ladykillers* on a dark but dry September evening.

In August the 100th anniversary of the death of the Walworth Scouts will be marked, and there are hopes that the site marking those killed in the First World War will be restored in time for a Remembrance Day opening.

Proposal from Platform-7

The NCF Committee have been approached by outdoor live events company Platform-7, who are interested in putting on 'Up the line' Remembrance events in cemeteries. They aim to liaise with a participating cemetery's friends to find out details of their important / interesting war-related graves, and then put on an evening event with a number of mainly local artists acting, performing dance or reading poetry. The event is free to the Friends and the only thing required of them on the day is providing marshals. So far Platform-7 have put on events at London's Brockley and Margate Cemeteries, and three more events are being considered for 2012.

This proposal will be discussed at the AGM on 16th June. However if any members are interested and want more information, please contact John McKiernan at johnm@platform-7.com

Broad Monument restored

Margravine Cemetery, west London suffered an attack by vandals on one of its three listed monuments during the summer. The two-meter high bronze monument to George Broad was pushed over and there were concerns that it would be taken by metal thieves. George Broad was the owner of the Hammersmith foundry which cast the statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus, and his monument was designed by Aristide Fabbrucci.

Funeral directors and monumental masons JH Kenyon generously funded the restoration of the monument to its plinth, where it has been securely bolted to prevent further attacks.



George Broad's great great grand-daughter Shirley Watters (front) and NCF's Robert Stephenson (centre) join staff and friends by the restored monument.

Cemetery Friends Twinning

Friends of Stanton Road Cemetery, Ilkeston and Friends of Northwood Cemetery, Isle of Wight, have entered in to an informal twinning arrangement.

Brookwood Cemetery

When the owner of Brookwood Cemetery, Ramadan Guney, died in 2006 the future ownership of the Cemetery was thrown into doubt. The Brookwood Cemetery Society (BCS) were unwilling to encourage publicity and opposed this Newsletter's reporting anything to the extent of placing a denunciation on their website and leaving the NFCF.

However it is a shame to hide the colourful events of the past few years, and the facts contained here have been checked against publicly available documents.

Under British law Diane Holliday (as mother of Ramadan's youngest son) would inherit a portion of his assets which included Brookwood Cemetery. The children of his first marriage contested this on the basis that the law of North Cyprus, where Mr Guney was born, should be applied. The Court ruled otherwise and an appeal was lodged, but in 2010 the Court decreed that the ownership of Brookwood Cemetery should go to Diane Holliday. Erkin Guney has also been refused his defence costs of approaching £90,000. He has entered another appeal which is due to be heard in July 2012.

Erkin Guney was accused of plotting to have Diane Holliday killed, but was cleared of the charges of attempted murder in 2009.

A claim was then made that Ramadan Guney had been murdered, leading to his exhumation. In August 2011 the Surrey coroner ruled that Ramadan Guney had died of natural causes (ischemic heart disease).

Erkin Guney raised an e-petition to appeal against the Court decision favouring Diane Holliday, with the support of the chair of the Brookwood Cemetery Society, John Clarke.

It has been reported by a member of the BCS that the members felt the Society should take an impartial position and John Clarke has now resigned. If this means the BCS are willing to rejoin the NFCF, then they will be welcomed back.

We hope for a resolution of this case so that Brookwood Cemetery can move smoothly to a calmer, if less colourful, period in its history.

ASCE Report

By John Moffat

The ASCE's annual conference took place in Vienna on 22-24th September 2011. A total of 115 delegates attended from 16 countries, present from the UK were myself and my partner Anne Brannick from Flaybrick, Birkenhead, as well as Henry and Gillian Will from Ford Park Cemetery, Plymouth. Despite having fallen in Vienna and sustaining facial injuries, Henry displayed commendable fortitude and still delivered his lecture on Ford Park Cemetery.

Significantly the Dublin cemetery of Glasnevin was present for the first time. This cemetery has undergone one of the largest cemetery restoration projects in Europe, complete with a high-tech visitor centre.

Elections were held to decide the Presidency and the Steering Group for the next four years. Lidija Plibersek from Slovenia was elected President and John Moffat was returned to the Steering Group to represent the UK.

The European Routes project continues to progress and now encompasses 63 cemeteries in 50 cities and 20 countries. Work has started on a promotional book and a design has been completed for a plaque which will serve to identify those cemeteries which are part of the Route.

Delegates enjoyed a tour of the 450 acre Central Cemetery. Amongst its three million incumbents are Beethoven, Brahms and Strauss.



Lidija Plibersek (centre) with steering group. (John Moffat far right.)

Correction

In Newsletter 28 we said that the restoration of Alfred Tysoe's grave in Layton Cemetery, Blackpool was complete, Sylmay Eaves of the Friends has pointed out that they are still waiting for the cross to be done.

War Memorials in Cemeteries

Members who have war memorials (not war graves) in their cemeteries may be interested in a campaign set up by the War Memorial Trust to identify a war memorials officer at every local authority across the UK. By the end of last year over 245 had registered, including town and parish councils and you may like to check on their website (www.warmemorials.org/wmo-england) whether your local authority has one. With the support of the Trust's conservation officers, newsletters, conferences etc the war memorials officer can undertake a range of activities and be aware of any relevant funding or projects.

A current project is In Memoriam 2014, a joint enterprise of the Trust and the SmartWater Foundation, which aims to protect the metal elements of memorials by marking them with the forensic liquid SmartWater. It is being offered free of charge. Full details on www.inmemoriam2014.org

Cashless Scrap Metal Trade: Private Members' Bill

Thanks to those members who responded to the NCF secretary's email by signing the petition for an amendment to the Scrap Metal Merchants Act 1964, which would prohibit cash transactions. Since then a Private Members Bill introduced by Graham Jones was rejected by the government (according to scrap-ex.com) but 'they intend to keep looking at the issue and introduce its own legislation in due course.'

Notes from Burial and Cremation Advisory Group

The terms of reference for the group were amended at the meeting last November to include cremation issues, and the title is now the Burial and Cremation Advisory Group (BCAG)

Main item was the re-use of graves issue, when the new chairman, Judith Bernstein, reported that Ministry of Justice ministers, following a request from the Prime Minister's office to look for other options, had decided this was not the right time to take it forward. Group members worried about the shortage of burial space expressed serious concern and disappointment and the chairman said she would convey this to the ministers.

Dr Julie Rugg, Cemetery Research Group, University of York, gave a presentation on some of the key findings from a large-scale research project on churchyards and cemeteries in rural North Yorkshire. The research examined the history of how the culture of burial had changed from 1850 to the present day and looked at over 347 Churchyards, cemeteries and burial grounds. The research highlighted how the Church of England had dealt with the increasing demand for burial space by extending their churchyards rather than managing grave space more effectively.

Arnos Vale News

Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, was presented an Angel Award at a high profile event at London's Palace Theatre last year. These English Heritage awards, co-funded by Andrew Lloyd Webber celebrate the work of individuals or groups who have saved a significant historic building or place that was at risk of being lost. The cemetery shared the heritage category with the deconsecrated St Stephen's Church, Hampstead. Joyce Smith received the award on behalf of the Friends and can be seen in a film of the ceremony on the Angel Awards section of the website www.english-heritage.org.uk

Doors Open Day Sept 2011 was a big success and had a medical theme to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Dr William Budd, a pioneer of health improvements in Bristol.

Publications

Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments

This new publication from English Heritage is intended for anyone interested in or responsible for the conservation of monuments, memorials and sculptural elements within a churchyard, burial ground or cemetery. It provides guidance and best practice on the assessment, planning and implementation of conservation work to monuments, as well as legal frameworks and statutory duties. It should be read in conjunction with both *Paradise Preserved* (published by English Heritage and Natural England 2007) and *Managing the Safety of Burial Ground Memorials* (Ministry of Justice 2009). For free download see

www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/caring-historic-graveyard-cemetery-monuments

Tower Hamlets Celebratory Booklet

Marking last year's anniversaries of 21 years for the Friends and 170 for the cemetery, the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park have published a Celebratory Booklet. Its illustrated combination of articles general cemetery and local history, wildlife issues and Friends' reminiscences makes interesting reading and could be of interest to all cemetery friends.

Price £2.99, contact: thcemeterypark@yahoo.co.uk

West Norwood Cemetery's Greek Necropolis

Colin R Fenn and James Slattery-Kavanagh

The Greek Necropolis has always presented a problem for those of us not blessed with a classical education since the monumental inscriptions are often written in Greek. Even English Heritage were confused as to the identity of one listed tomb with the result that West Norwood has gained an extra listed monument by default (there are now 19 that are listed Grade II or II*). This is a clear and concise guide to many of the notable monuments in the Greek section, and give much background information as to the history of the necropolis itself and of the Greek community that created it.

Price £2.50, go to www.fownc.org for details.

Monuments rediscovered at Highland Road Cemetery

Highland Road Cemetery, Southsea made the news when workers clearing shrubbery found previously unknown headstones, not on the Memorials Register first taken in 1976.

Pat Coakley, chairman of The Friends of Highland Road Cemetery, said: 'It's always exciting to find a new grave and a story about someone buried there. It was not surprising that we found these headstones. The bushes had reached a stage where they were so overgrown that we expected there must be something under there. We'll probably find a lot more as the work nears completion.'

The garden work to refurbish the cemetery started in December last year, and is being carried out by contractors for Portsmouth City Council.

New Members

Friends of Stockport Cemeteries

The group was established in 2003 as a response to the laying down of headstones in Stockport's cemeteries. Since then the group has worked closely with Stockport Council to make improvements to all cemeteries and closed churchyards in Stockport and play an active role in determining future plans.

They are also instrumental in obtaining funding to help bring about improvements to the cemeteries. Projects have included maintenance of the cemeteries with local youth groups and tidying of Commonwealth War Grave Commission headstones with Air Training Corps cadets.

Willow Grove Cemetery is a closed cemetery of 17 acres, providing a mature haven for wildlife with the monuments giving an insight into Stockport's history. Accompanied heritage trail walks are arranged. Leaflets are available for unaccompanied trails and teachers' resources prepared for schoolchildren' visits.

Web sites are www.friendsofstockportcemeteries.co.uk and www.willowgrove.org.uk

Contact secretary 0161 439 5963 / sheilarobins2000@yahoo.co.uk

Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery, Leeds

Lawnswood Cemetery (67 acres) is in north-west Leeds, Yorkshire. At its centre is a romantic 10-acre Victorian wooded cemetery opened in 1875 with an entrance lodge and chapels in the middle.

A crematorium was added in 1905. This core, plus a 1933 columbarium and its setting are included in the English Heritage's list of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest. All buildings mentioned are Grade II listed.

Since then the cemetery has expanded and now encompasses different styles of burial grounds and gardens of remembrance. It closed to new burials (apart from those in the green burial area) in 2006 but remains a popular venue for cremations. It has many historically important memorials and is a haven for wildlife.

The Friends of Lawnswood were formed in October 2011 to try to help improve standards of maintenance throughout the cemetery.

Contact details: Email: friendsoflawnswoodcemetery@yahoo.co.uk or write to The Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery, c/o Lawnswood Cemetery, Otley Rd, Adel, Leeds LS16 6AH or follow them on Facebook

Members News

(not reported elsewhere)

Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham

Six memorials have been restored with funding from the Brandwood Ward Community Chest

Darwen Cemetery, Lancashire

140 people turned up for the Halloween walk.

The Friends helped with a saw when a large tree limb fell and blocked the main path.

Highgate Cemetery, London

Monument restoration has moved from the West of the Cemetery to the Moon Path in the East, with the 'Lux Perpetua' being replaced on the Crossland tomb and six other monuments restored; and the chapel restoration is complete and will be officially opened in May. For the new stained glass window high in the north wall the Friends have commissioned an original work of art from Helen Whittaker of Barley Studio in York. The cost of this window is being met by trustee Penny Linnett in memory of her family.

The restoration of the South Lodge is also complete.

Houghton Hillside Cemetery, Co Durham

The Friends held another successful Open Day.

They have plans to start the restoration of the grave of Rector Grey, who played an important role in the opening of the cemetery.

London Road Cemetery, Coventry

The repairs to the London Road main wall have been completed.

Margravine Cemetery, London

A big notice-board has been put up and is proving useful in publicising events and survey results such as the monthly bird survey.

Mausolea and Monuments Trust

The Trust report good progress with the plans to save the Hope Mausoleum in Deepdene, near Dorking, with over £75000 pledged and given, and a bid submitted to the HLF.

New Zealand Historic Cemeteries

The restoration of the Larnach Tomb in Northern Cemetery, Dunedin, has been celebrated.

Northwood Cemetery, IoW

The Friends have become a Registered Charity (no: 1143917). Work on the east Chapel continues, and they hope that it will be complete for the beginning of May.

Southampton Old Cemetery

The volunteers have had donations of tools from Bulldog Tools Co and a petrol mower from Hampshire Garden Machinery.

Stanton Road Cemetery, Ilkeston

An Education Pack for schools and a Walk Leaflet, have been completed.

Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, London

The Friends have received a London Tree and Woodland Award in recognition of their stewardship of London's third largest park. Throughout the year the Friends carried out woodland management projects thanks to a £5,000 grant from Groundwork London. They also completed Business Plan.

Woodbury Park Cemetery, Tunbridge Wells

The Friends have a short video posted <http://vimeo.com/32971718>

Let us know

Please keep sending the newsletter editor and the webmaster your news stories and events. You get publicity for your events, a place to trumpet your successes, and a chance to air your woes.

We get the articles to fill and update our pages.

Contact details for both of us are on the back page.

NFCF contact details

A list of members is available from the Secretary

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<http://cemeteryfriends.org.uk>

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