

A Blue Plaque for nurse Anne Veronica Fletcher

by Liz Cook, Chair of the Friends of Spital Cemetery

On March 14th, 2018, to celebrate International Women's Day, The Friends of Spital Cemetery in Chesterfield held a service at the graveside of our one woman buried in a CWGC grave in Spital Cemetery (see image right). It was 100 years since Anne died at the age of 27. She had contacted TB while nursing at the East Leeds War Hospital (2nd Northern General Hospital). At the event in 2018 we talked loosely about getting her gravestone (the family chose to bury her in a family plot rather than get a CWGC stone) repaired and of getting a blue plaque put up on the house in Spital where she had lived. Fast forward two years and we are delighted with the progress that has been made on so many fronts, thanks to the generosity and hard work of a number of people.



Image courtesy of Liz Cook

Much of this started when, by pure chance, I met Sandra Taylor and her husband looking for Anne's grave in the cemetery. Sandra's interest, particularly in uncovering and celebrating the little known stories of the nurses who worked in WW1, is profound (see <http://www.rememberthefallen.co/>).

Through Sandra, we started a conversation with Andy Knowlson (Regional Manager, West) at the CWGC and Philip Shardlow at Croft

The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the NCF. All material by the editor unless otherwise attributed.

Castings (<https://www.croftcastsigns.co.uk>). Andy started the long process of trying to find any living relatives, so far without luck, but in the meantime has ordered a Gallipoli marker which will be placed within the curb sets at the foot of her grave. It will be legible, and accurately record her date of death. The family grave records the names of her parents and remembers her brother Charles who was killed on the Somme in 1916 but Anne's date of death is incorrect. The Gallipoli marker has been manufactured and is in transit this very moment from France. We hope in time to get the lead lettering repaired but we need to find a sponsor for this.

Success too with the blue plaque! Again, by chance, I met up with Tracey Green on the Gateway Path. We were planning our opening event and sat on one of the benches there drinking coffee in the sunshine. She had invited her aunt, Jean, to join us and when I mentioned our wish to get a blue plaque for Anne, but that we needed to find sponsorship, she suggested asking the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps Association as she had been a nurse with them. Philip gave us a brilliant quote to make the plaque and Sue McAteer, General Secretary of QARANC Association, secured funding from them.

Maria and Donato Totsi, who own the house in Spital Gardens, (image right) happily agreed to it going on their wall. Celebrating the service and sacrifice of a nurse, particularly now during the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, and hitting us unexpectedly at this time of extraordinary happenings in the world when we are so dependent on the skills and dedication of nurses (among others) in our NHS, seems very appropriate. So, fast forward to yesterday when the postman left this on my doorstep.



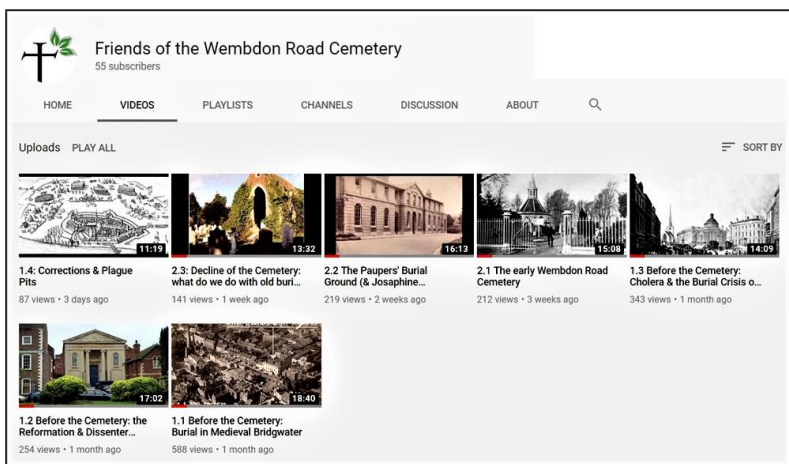
Image courtesy of Liz Cook

Of course, the unveiling ceremony will be delayed until we return, as we will do, to a more normal existence. In the meantime, if any of your readers might be interested in attending, do drop us a line and we will put your name on the guest list.

The Lockdown and the Friends of the Wembdon Road Cemetery

forwarded by Dr Miles Kerr-Peterson, Chairman of the Friends

As with all the groups associated with the National Federation of Cemetery Friends, the 2020 Coronavirus lockdown presented extraordinary challenges to the work of the Friends of the Wembdon Road Cemetery. Obviously, all working parties were immediately cancelled, as were all our talks and guided walks, and a planned exhibition to celebrate ten years of the Friends in the local Blake Museum. Like many other groups, all we could do was to make the most of a bad situation. If the supporters of the Friends could not come to us, we would need to find ways to go to them.



*The Friends of Wembdon Road homepage on YouTube
Image courtesy of Dr Miles Kerr-Peterson*

With the public talks already written and material for the exhibition largely gathered already, it was not too difficult to still utilise all this work. We were able to create a series of short videos, which were then published on YouTube. With limited equipment, these videos could only hope to be of a passable quality, but nevertheless, they have proved surprisingly popular with the local community. We have found these videos to be an exceptionally good way of engaging the general public with the work of the Friends, as well as the history of the cemetery and their town. In many ways we wish we had done something like this sooner: the number

of views of each video far exceed the numbers we could ever hope to achieve in a single talk or walk, and we have found these reach an audience that would not be aware of our work. In a way they have also given access to the cemetery and its stories to a large number of folk who would never get the chance otherwise, especially those with disabilities or those with Bridgwater ancestors who live hundreds of miles away overseas.

You can view our videos for yourself here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUCerzE4qf3fS6QzmfF6arg> - or search for 'Friends of the Wembdon Road Cemetery'. We would encourage other Friends groups to try the same – we are happy to hear from any groups wishing to find out more.

Publications

On the laying out, planting, and managing of cemeteries; and on the improvement of churchyards. With sixty engravings

This is an enlarged facsimile of John Claudius Loudon's seminal work on cemeteries published in 1843. Produced in a limited, numbered edition it includes an Introductory Essay and Bibliography by James Stevens Curl, a Foreword by Ian Dungavell and an Index compiled by Auriol Griffith-Jones plus Loudon's obituary of 1844 published in *The Gardener's Magazine*.

St Michael's Kirkyard, Dumfries: a Presbyterian Valhalla

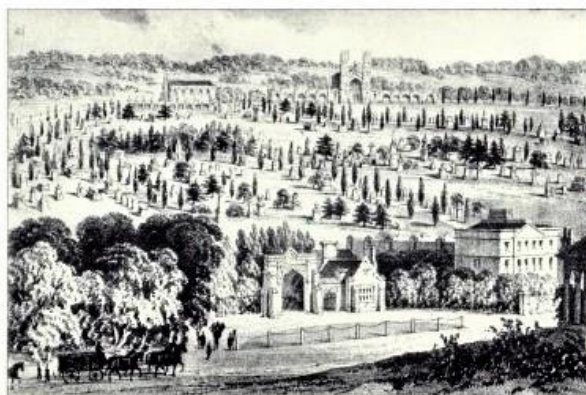
by James Stevens Curl

A pre-publication subscription offer. It is proposed to bring out another volume, as a limited, numbered edition with around 100 illustrations produced to a high standard; designed, printed, and bound by the same team which produced the Loudon edition. It will be indexed by Auriol Griffith-Jones, have a Foreword by Roger Bowdler and an Epilogue by the debunker of Rosslyn mythology, Robert L. D. Cooper.

More information on the publications is available in the following pages.

LIMITED AVAILABILITY

*On the Laying Out, Planting,
and Managing of Cemeteries;
and on the Improvement of Churchyards.
With Sixty Engravings*



by J.C. Loudon

with Introductory Essay and Bibliography by James Stevens Curl
Foreword by Ian Dungavell, and Index by Auriol Griffith-Jones

This finely bound, hardback, enlarged facsimile edition of Loudon's seminal work on cemeteries has recently been produced in a numbered edition, limited to 225 copies. A small number will be available to serious collectors at post-publication prices. This new edition of Loudon's 1843 work is printed on good paper, with an enlarged font, and includes a new, annotated, illustrated Introductory Essay on Loudon's involvement with cemeteries by Professor Curl, with Bibliography, a colour portrait of Loudon, a facsimile of Loudon's Obituary of 1844, a List of Subscribers, and an Index compiled by Auriol Griffith-Jones.

LEFT: The South Metropolitan Cemetery, Norwood, Surrey. 'Planted in the Cemetery Style'. This shows what was essentially the panoramic view of the cemetery produced for promotional purposes, as amended by Loudon to show what he regarded as more appropriate planting for the layout. From Loudon (1843) opposite 69 (Collection JSC).

RIGHT: Portrait in oils, 76.2 x 63.5 cms, of John Claudius Loudon, painted 1840-41, by John Linnell (1792-1882), who lived at 38 Porchester Terrace, Bayswater, so was a near-neighbour of the Loudons, who lived at 3 Porchester Terrace. The portrait was exhibited at The Royal Academy in 1883, No. 25 (By kind permission of The Linnean Society of London, Standard No. C29975. Copy no. P1950).

John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), Scots agriculturist, encyclopædist, landscape-gardener, horticulturist, architect, influential critic, and polymath, 'conducted' *The Gardener's Magazine* from 1826, in which he published numerous articles on cemeteries, and these he collected and brought out in his 1843 book, the most exhaustive tome ever written on the subject, and a mine of information, which includes detailed ideas for landscaping cemeteries that were widely followed. Loudon's concept of the cemetery as a landscape-garden/arboretum, with all plants clearly labelled, was part of his belief in mass-education and improvement of tone in society, and he argued that once cemeteries were full they should become places of contemplation and quietness, with the monuments conserved rather than swept away. He produced designs for three cemeteries: Histon Road, Cambridge; Bath Abbey; and Old Southampton (all 1842-3); as well as influencing the planting of many more.

James Stevens Curl has studied funerary architecture and landscapes for some 63 years: among his published works are *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (1972 and 2004), *A Celebration of Death* (1980), *Funerary Monuments & Memorials in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh* (2013), and studies of funerary monuments by Sir Francis Chantrey and others. He contributed to, and edited, the major study of the General Cemetery of All Souls, Kensal Green, London (2001).

Stock is limited. The cost per copy is **£80.00** to include postage and packing within the United Kingdom only. For postage to Europe please add £6.00, and for postage outside Europe please add £10.00.

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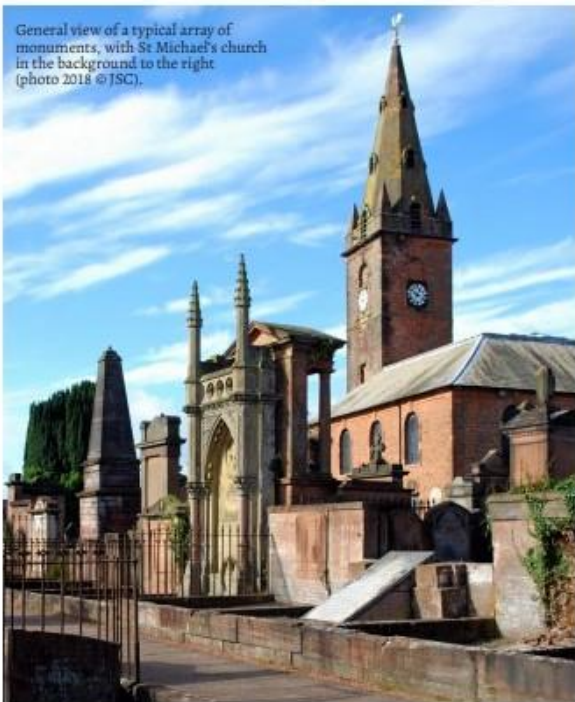
St Michael's Kirkyard, Dumfries

A Presbyterian Valhalla

by JAMES STEVENS CURL

The burial-ground attached to St Michael's and South parish church, Dumfries, in south-west Scotland, has existed as a place of interment for at least a millennium. Of extraordinarily high density—probably containing no fewer than eighty thousand burials—it is embellished with an amazing array of funerary monuments and tombstones, some of superb architectural quality, and many of astonishing size and grandeur considering the relatively small area it occupies. In terms of its scale and architectural character, St Michael's kirkyard is unique among provincial churchyards within the United Kingdom: this book describes its historical importance and aesthetic qualities, illustrating some of its finest monuments, and drawing on a remarkable cache of original architectural drawings by Walter Newall held by the Dumfries and Galloway Archive Service, Ewart Library, in Dumfries itself. The kirkyard also houses the handsome Neo-Classical mausoleum of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns, almost an exact contemporary of his fellow-Freemason, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, so the book will also contain investigations into aspects of how the tomb and monument commemorating Burns respond to the man, his poetry, and his times.

General view of a typical array of monuments, with St Michael's church in the background to the right (photo 2018 © JSC).



FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS of the **Nerfl Press's** handsome facsimile edition of **J. C. Loudon's** great book on **Cemeteries**, published in 2019, it is proposed to bring out another volume, also a **Limited, Numbered Edition**, casebound, with around 100 illustrations, many in colour, all produced to a very high standard, designed, printed, and bound by the same team which produced the Loudon tome. It will be indexed by **Auriol Griffith-Jones**, have a **Foreword** by the expert on monuments and memorials, **Roger Bowdler**, and an Epilogue by the debunker of Rosslyn mythology, **Robert L. D. Cooper**.

Subscriptions are invited to raise sufficient funds so that this important project can be realised. **Names of Subscribers** will be printed within the book if desired.



The Burns mausoleum, from a postcard of 1905, showing the sculpture within by Peter Turnerelli (1774-1839) featuring Burns at his plough (image courtesy of © the Dumfries Museum, BUR/239).

James Stevens Curl has studied funerary architecture and landscapes for some 64 years: among his published works are *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (1972 and 2004), *A Celebration of Death* (1980), *Funerary Monuments & Memorials in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh* (2013), and studies of funerary monuments by Sir Francis Chantrey and others. He contributed to, and edited, the major study of the General Cemetery of All Souls, Kensal Green, London (2001).

Subscriptions must be received by me no later than **1 November 2020**. The cost per copy will be **£40.00** to include postage and packing within the United Kingdom only. For postage outside the UK please add £10.00, and for postage outside Europe please add £20.00. Copies will be sent out to subscribers as soon as the book is available, estimated as February 2021. After 1 November the price per copy will be £60.00, so subscribers will get a fine copy at less than cost.

To subscribe please fill in the form below, printing clearly to avoid any errors of interpretation.

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If insufficient subscriptions are obtained to enable to the project to proceed, all monies will be returned.

New Members and Associates

The following groups have recently joined the NCFCF

Friends of Hindley Cemetery, Wigan

When Hindley Cemetery was opened in 1879 it was divided into denominational sections and had three chapels: Roman Catholic, Church of England and nonconformist. By around 1953 all the chapels needed repairs. It was decided that the nonconformist chapel was the soundest of the three. This was then to be used as a undenominational chapel as decided by local clergy at the time. The other two chapels were demolished, and the nonconformist chapel was repaired and renamed The Hindley Cemetery Chapel. Although the cemetery is still open for burials, sadly this chapel has been closed for over 15 years and is again in need of repair. In October 2019 the Friends of Hindley Cemetery was formed with the group's ultimate goal of getting their beautiful chapel repaired and reopened to the community. They are currently working with the owners, Wigan Council, to achieve this after a local construction company came forward offering to donate labour and materials in memory of the owners' mother who is buried in the cemetery.

Contact: Kerry Garforth, friendsofhindleycemetery@yahoo.com

Friends of Wainsgate Chapel, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire

Wainsgate is situated on the hillside above Hebden Bridge, 290m above sea level.

The first Baptist chapel was built in 1750, and, following two rebuildings, the current chapel and the adjoining two-storey Sunday school were completed in 1891. The original graveyard was extended in 1905. The redundant chapel is now owned by the Historic Chapels Trust and the day-to-day administration of the buildings and burial ground is carried out by the Friends of Wainsgate.



Image courtesy of the Friends of Wainsgate



Image courtesy of the Friends of Wainsgate Chapel

For the past few years, the Friends have concentrated on the chapel and Sunday school, which is now thriving with artists' studios, dance events and concerts. They are now concentrating on the burial ground, both as a working graveyard, open to all religious and non-religious traditions, and a valuable local history resource. The Rev Dr John Fawcett (1740 - 1817), second minister at

Wainsgate and composer of the Baptist hymn 'Blest be the Tie that Binds our Hearts in Christian Love' is buried at Wainsgate.

Contact: Chris Barnett: chrisbobbins@gmail.com

Friends of Haslingden Cemetery, Lancashire

Haslingden Cemetery a six-acre site, opened in 1902, is a working cemetery owned by Rossendale Borough Council. There is a small chapel.

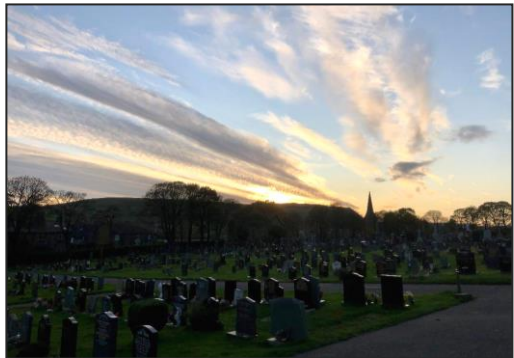


Image courtesy of the Friends of Haslingden Cemetery

This group, originally Save Haslingden Cemetery, was formed in their fight to ensure that the cemetery remained a peaceful area for relatives to visit their loved ones' memorials. The newly

formed Friends of Haslingden Cemetery is now committed to its long-term future and will work with the council to ensure that it continues for years to come.

Website: <https://fohc.org.uk/>

Facebook: [Friends of Haslingden Cemetery](#)

Contact: Andrew Taylor: andrewfohc@gmail.com

Friends of Maldon Cemetery, Essex

The Friends were formed with the aim of working in partnership with Maldon District Council in the restoration, development, improvement, and promotion of Maldon Cemetery. At their launching meeting in the cemetery's chapel Cllr Stephen Nunn gave the historical background to the cemetery, and the neighbouring Friends of Heybridge Cemetery shared their experiences of starting a group. As that meeting took place at the end of February the group's plans for 'hands on' activities have had to be postponed but the cemetery is open, and they are keeping in touch by Facebook. Maldon Cemetery is the largest of the council's working sites and includes a Woodland Burial area.

Facebook: [@friendsofmaldoncemetery](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofmaldoncemetery)

Contact: Carlie Mayes: friendsofmaldoncemetery@gmail.com

Friends of Woodside, Paisley, Renfrewshire

Paisley Woodside Cemetery was laid out in 1845 to a design drawn up by Stewart Murray, curator of Glasgow Botanic Gardens. Situated on a low hilltop position, the 20 acre 'garden cemetery' was inspired by the 1832 Glasgow Necropolis which in turn had followed Pere la Chaise in Paris in 1804. A crematorium was added in 1938. Paisley Cemetery Company, the owners, are planning to set up a group of Friends for this attractive cemetery with its combination of mature trees and large ornate monumental sculptures and the opportunity for excellent views. Historic monuments include commemorations to Covenanters and radicals executed for their beliefs.

Website: www.paisleycemetery.co.uk

Contact: Katrina Johnston: katrinajohnston@woodsidecrematoria.co.uk

Perth and Kinross Council

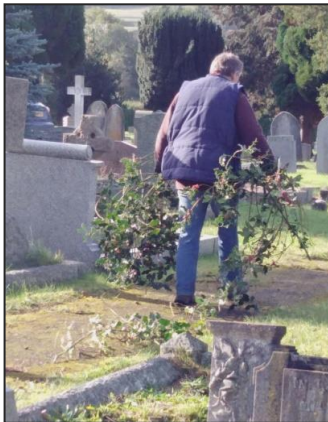
Also, from Scotland, Perth and Kinross Council, has joined as an associate with the aim of attracting community support for its many cemeteries. They had made contact with a number of local communities to discuss opportunities for involvement when Covid -19 called a halt to activities. The council team say they are looking forward to resuming when possible as they have over 160 burial grounds in the area with plenty of scope for improvement. Perth and Kinross becomes the NFCF's most northerly member.

Contact: William Greig: wgreig@pkc.gov.uk

Graveyard Gardeners: how Somerset volunteers have adapted

by Project Leader, Rachel Edgecombe

The Graveyard Gardeners, from Wellington, Somerset, combine two cemetery interests in a project which is improving the appearance of Rockwell Green Cemetery. With the support of Taunton Dene Council and community organisations, we recruited volunteers to help restore and maintain the neglected graves in the old part of the cemetery. Volunteers can 'adopt' a grave, find out about the life of the person on the memorial, and garden around their place of burial: thus, continuing their memory. When launched the project sparked a huge community interest and featured on local news and BBC TV.



Since we joined the NCF last year, the Coronavirus has arrived and so many of our activities have come to a halt, but the Graveyard Gardeners have adapted to these challenging times. We have made use of our 'Talking Bench' to offer distanced conversation to those in the community who are experiencing loneliness due to the lockdown. We have arranged meetings with people who have contacted via the phone and arranged a time when we could bring a coffee and have a chat.

We have still been tending our plots but on a more individual basis while on our prescribed Boris Johnson walks! We have recently scattered lots of wildseeds that were sourced from Seed of Hope, Glastonbury. They

do not require a huge amount of tending so that was a safe way of doing things but unfortunately the council have had to apologise for strimming some wildflowers our members had lovingly planted earlier.

We had a substantial donation from a local business, and this has sustained us over the last few months, and we have bought a community shed to store tools and planting materials in. We are now a little over 200 members strong and have an active online community as well as people tending, and our social media presence is quite healthy. I am currently writing an appeal to the supermarkets in the area for the unsold flowers to be donated. We received a lot donated after Valentine's Day and would love it to become a regular thing.



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*Flowers Planted by Sheila
Stone in the cemetery*

In the future our new member, cemetery historian Nicole Stanfield, will be helping the group form a local history trail where visitors can learn about the lives of our former residents. We are looking to digitalise this so people can access it via mobile devices, as well as having paper copies available.

We find the lockdown has brought many more people to the cemetery to appreciate the quiet and consequently more interest in the group.

All images courtesy of Rachel Edgecombe

Contact: GraveyardGardenersWellington@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheGraveyardGardeners/>

Instagram: The.Graveyard.Gardener

Members News

A selection of news and events from Members newsletters and websites

Beckett Street Cemetery, Leeds

The Friends last year received recognition of their community work by a certificate of thanks for their 'outstanding contribution' which Sylvia Hodges and Secretary Lynda Kitching accepted at a civic celebration for small groups and charities in Leeds. Lynda, who is an NCFE committee member, in a separate award, was nominated for 'Volunteer of the Year' for her work with Parks and Countryside over many years and received the council's Award for Excellence.

Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery, Worthing

A large tree in the south western corner of the cemetery was brought down during February's Storm Ciara. Whilst no graves were disturbed, the fallen tree caused severe damage to the flint and brick perimeter wall. Adur and Worthing Council responded quickly to the situation arranging for removal of the tree and for the restoration of the wall which used the original flints recovered from the damaged wall. The work was completed by the end of February.

Newtown Road Cemetery, Newbury

On VE Day Friday 8th May, a small group of the Friends (whilst observing social distancing) gathered at the cemetery to remember the casualties of WW2 who are buried there. Poppy crosses were laid on the graves and a two-minute silence was observed at 11.00am. A write up on the event appeared in the local press on 14th May.

Northwood Cemetery, Cowes, Isle of Wight

In March, a Monterey Pine which had stood in the cemetery grounds for the better part of a 150 years fell. As a consequence, several graves were surface disturbed, and some stone memorials were damaged.

The tree was one of two planted within the grounds which over the years, had come to be regarded as a beautiful feature of the Cemetery. The Trustees intend to plant a Monterey Pine sapling in its place for future generations to enjoy

Nunhead Cemetery, SE London

One of the last FONC events to take place before the Covid-19 restrictions was a tour to mark International Women's Day on 8th March. Trustee Jane Hart led an enthusiastic group through the cemetery when the lives of some 15 women were recalled: including a suffragist, missionary, teachers and authors. This will now be an annual fixture in the Friends' programme of free tours.

Old Folkestone Cemetery, Folkstone

The Friends have created a virtual cemetery plan on their website (see: <http://www.fofc.uk/virtual-cemetery-plans/>). Information on the location of significant burial plots is being added to the plan along with links to an Ancestry and a Find A Grave reference plus access to a current picture of the headstone if one is available.

The SMS Grosser Kurfürst memorial which stands in the grounds of the Cemetery has been awarded listed building status Grade II by Historic England. The memorial was erected in honour of the crew of the German battleship SMS Grosser Kurfürst, the ship sank off Folkestone in May 1878 during a peacetime naval exercise. Many of the 284 men who died were buried in the cemetery. The wreck of the battleship has been granted government protection.

St Peter's, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire

The Friends have launched a new website to promote their Rectory Lane Cemetery project. Features of the new website include a fully searchable burials database - a valuable tool for people who are researching their family history; an interactive map linked to military burials in the cemetery and an interactive town map showing locations in and around Berkhamsted that have connections with people buried in the cemetery.

The website is focused on community involvement and visitors to the site are encouraged to post "in memoriam" messages to commemorate a loved one buried in the cemetery. Visitors to the cemetery will be able to access information on burials held on the website via their mobile phone. See: www.rectorylanecemetery.org.uk

NFCF contact details

Chairman

Robert Stephenson
North Lodge East Wing, Brompton Cemetery, Old Brompton Road, London, SW5 9JE
(020 7351 1689)
chairman@cemeteryfriends.com

Vice Chairman

Colin Fenn
20 Selsdon Road, London, SE27 0PG (020 8670 4146)
vicechairman@cemeteryfriends.com

Secretary

Gwyneth Stokes,
42 Chestnut Grove, South Croydon, CR2 7LH (020 8651 5090)
secretary@cemeteryfriends.com

Treasurer

Melvyn Hawkins
7 Coley Grove, Little Haywood, Staffs, ST18 0UW
treasurer@cemeteryfriends.com

Newsletter Editor

Ann Wilkinson
129 Siddal Lane, Siddal, Halifax, HX3 9JS
editor@cemeteryfriends.com

National Cemeteries Week

Emer Seamark
ncw@cemeteryfriends.com

Website

Includes contacts for Members and Associates
<https://www.cemeteryfriends.com>

Webmaster

James Slattery-Kavanagh (0871 703 2210)
webmaster@cemeteryfriends.com

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