

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES 1 JUNE 2020 – 31 MAY 2021

1. MEMBERSHIP

FONC membership fell from 770 to 706 this year perhaps reflecting disruption resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. We recruited 67 new members but lost 131. We have 7 overseas members. Members paying by bank standing order increased to 51% of the membership. Gift Aid declarations have been signed by 30% of members resulting in repayments from H M Revenue & Customs of £950 for the period 1 November 2018 to 31 March 2020.

2. CONTINUING IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Covid-19 continued to impact both FONC and the cemetery throughout the year. Many FONC activities on site were cancelled and Trustees' meetings became 'virtual'. It also became very difficult to plan for the future. The cemetery remained open for longer hours for much of the year and became a source of comfort and refuge for a dramatically increased number of visitors. When regulations have permitted, we have immediately reinstated our activities on site. Jane Hart has become our risk assessment expert in providing proposals to Southwark which they have endorsed. We have had to introduce a booking system, which has worked well, for the limited tour places available. We have worked with Southwark Council to mitigate the effects as much as possible. Work on various projects on site was also interrupted (see below).

3. FONC MEETINGS AND MEMBERS' VISITS

All 'meetings' this year were held on the Zoom 'virtual' platform. Trustees held eleven regular meetings and the Voluntary Work Sub-Committee met three times. The 2020 AGM was postponed to December and was also held 'virtually' with only minor technical glitches as the Coordinator gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on the East Lodge restoration project. It was not possible to run any members' visits during the year. Trustees continue to work on good governance issues and to actively consider how best to encourage greater involvement from the BAME community.

4. AFFILIATIONS

We continue to be affiliated to the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE) (€25 p.a.) and the National Federation of Cemetery Friends (£20 p.a.). We participate in Community Southwark opportunities and are affiliated to the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (free). We maintain contacts with many other local and national groups. We also participate in the Southwark Green Forum and attend the Southwark Council Ward Assemblies which permitted the Neighbourhood Fund grant towards the Open Day costs to be rolled over to 2021. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, FONC is required to submit information to the Charity Commission on an annual basis which is available on line for public review.

5. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CEMETERY FRIENDS (NFCF) AND ASSOCIATION OF SIGNIFICANT CEMETERIES IN EUROPE (ASCE)

Both the national and European organisations had to cancel their annual general meetings last year due to the pandemic but they continued to give support and advice to members through their websites, newsletters and email. Carol Stevenson responded on FONC's behalf to the invitation

from the ASCE for contributions to an online photobook. For the theme 'Crossroads of Diversity' in cemeteries she has chosen a photograph which includes the Vincent Figgins memorial and marks the junction between one path to the grand Victorian monuments and the other to the New Burial Ground. FONC has continued to support the NCF's on-going promotion and advice work and featured prominently in their newsletters.

6. FONC VOLUNTEERING AND PUBLICATIONS & ENQUIRY DESK

After the easing of the first lockdown, FONC commenced running the publications and enquiry (PED) desk to support socially distanced tours which commenced in July. Risk assessments were developed and submitted to Southwark to enable FONC activities to restart on site. Measures put in place included the use of disinfectant, hand sanitiser, and strict social distancing provisions as well as a booking system (both to ensure contact details for track and trace purposes and to control numbers within government guidelines) for those wishing to attend tours. The number of visitors to the cemetery had increased greatly during the year and many mentioned their appreciation of FONC and its work to the volunteers on PED. However, as winter approached and cases of COVID-19 began rising, further lockdowns meant the PED and FONC activities on site had to cease. It was therefore lovely to be able to offer the PED again in April with the easing of restrictions. The PED had to temporarily relocate to near the Linden Grove gate when the area in front of the portacabin was fenced off due to the resurfacing work but had the advantage that everyone coming into the cemetery from that gate passed the desk! The use of an electronic card payment system, introduced in early 2020, has helped to support sales with less and less people carrying cash with them. The PED continues to be an important initial point of contact for visitors to learn about FONC, volunteer to help with our activities, buy FONC publications, and sign up as members. The desk still continues to need new volunteers and it really does offer a great way to meet and chat with the cemetery's many and varied visitors. The only commitment is to help on the occasional Sunday afternoon for a couple of hours.

7. ANNUAL CEMETERY OPEN DAY AND OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND

The Trustees reluctantly decided to postpone the annual Open Day planned for May 2021 to September 2021 to coincide with the London Open City weekend. In September 2020, we were able to run an enhanced Open House weekend in the cemetery offering socially distanced crypt and cemetery tours on both days - again with a pre-booking system in place. In addition, the PED was supplemented with both the FONC plant, monument inscription recording and refreshments stalls. This event was greatly appreciated by cemetery visitors and also raised over £1200 for FONC funds.

8. FONC WEB SITE, PUBLICITY AND MEDIA COVERAGE

Whilst Simon Quill, our webmaster, continues to work on updating and improving our website (www.fonc.org.uk) we are able to monitor increasing web-site usage through monthly data received. Our presence on Instagram was greatly enhanced by Fran White and since March has now been taken further forward by Zoe Ellesmore. Pete Trotman runs our Facebook presence. Both are effective means of connecting us to a wider, and younger, audience and produces positive feedback and new volunteers. Whilst unable to attend 'real' events outside the cemetery, we have continued to receive excellent media coverage, including an extensive feature article in a German magazine, *Friedhofs Kultur*.

9. MEMBERS' JOURNAL

In spite of the restrictions imposed by the continuing pandemic and necessary lockdowns, we have continued to produce the quarterly journal and deliver it on time, thanks to Catford Print, Royal Mail and our local hand deliverers. Jeff and Jane Hart collect the work from Catford Print

and deliver it to Linda Martin for enveloping ready for mailing, and to Nicola Dunn for distribution to the hand deliverers. During the last year Jeff and Jane have also collected the journals from Linda and taken them to the Post Office for onward transmission by Royal Mail. The four issues published last year were as follows: No 148, Summer 2020; No 149, Autumn 2020; No 150, Winter 2020/21; and No 151, Spring 2021. Issue No 150 was a special edition featuring a full colour cover both front and back, and No 151, was a bumper issue comprising 28 pages. Our thanks to everyone involved in the production and delivery of the journals and to all our contributors for sending in their articles. If you haven't yet sent an article to the editor, then please think about it or - even better - do it. We really do need more articles from our members. Why not tell us what you think about the cemetery and about FONC. Subjects of interest include local history subjects; your local cemetery; wildlife in cemeteries; and family history relating to Nunhead Cemetery, etc.

10. PUBLICATIONS, ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH WORK

In February we published 'A Guide to the Grave Symbols in Nunhead Cemetery' which built on a free leaflet produced years ago by Ron Woollacott. Although we were unable to launch the book at an event on site, it is already selling well at the modest price of £3. We are delighted that we continue to receive from members and others their family histories and memorabilia which helps to add to the wealth of stories about our increasing number of 'Notables'. We continue to research and add to our natural history database following sweet chestnut and stag beetle surveys.

11. CEMETERY PRESENTATIONS, TOURS AND OTHER EVENTS IN THE CEMETERY

The much-truncated tour programme continued between lockdowns and the restricted numbers required a booking arrangement which worked well enough. Many tours were fully subscribed well beforehand leaving disappointed visitors, many of whom subscribed to later tours. A new World War Two walk was enjoyed by the full complement of attendees. Although physical events have not been possible, we were able to give virtual presentations to the Trust U3A British Cemeteries group and Crowborough U3A. Discussions have also been held with Antique Beat about possible audio tours of the cemetery and with the National Army Museum about future cooperation.

12. MONUMENT INSCRIPTION RECORDING AND GRAVESEARCH

Although the pandemic lockdowns severely curtailed activities on monument inscription recording this year, there are a couple of bright points to report. First, the number of MI recording volunteers has continued to grow, and now stands at 14. Second, with the kind cooperation of Candy Edwards at Southwark Council we have been given access to the full set of maps showing the grave plots for all 167 squares within the cemetery. This will open up the possibility of locating far more graves than we previously would have done, and has already resulted in a few 'finds' following enquiries from relatives and descendants of those interred at Nunhead. Trustees Garry Wiles and Malcolm Collins have also assisted with a number of enquiries regarding finding graves on site and carrying out searches of the cemetery records when possible.

13. ART PROJECTS

We worked with Studio Voltaire, a prestigious London gallery, towards staging an exhibit in the Anglican chapel by internationally known Royal Academician, sculptor Phyllida Barlow. Unfortunately, as repairs to the chapel were delayed, the exhibition had to be moved to another venue. A number of enquiries have been received from others hoping to put on events in the coming year on which we offer advice.

14. RELIGIOUS SERVICES

We were fortunate to be able to hold an All-Souls Service just prior to another lockdown. Trustee Ish Lennox organised a much-enhanced event which included a choir from Nunhead's Lighthouse Cathedral, an address by Ali Angus and led by Fr. Dele Ogunyemi of St. Antony with St. Silas. As a result, attendance was much improved with many by-standers joining in. Children especially enjoyed the symbolic bulb planting. Covid restrictions led to the cancellation of the annual Remembrance Service but FONC Trustees laid wreaths at each of the principal war grave areas and were pleased that many socially distancing by-passers stopped to observe the silence and wreath laying with us. Given the difficulty of public collections, we made an increased donation to the Royal British Legion of £300.

15. MANAGEMENT OF THE CEMETERY BY SOUTHWARK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Site meetings with Southwark Bereavement Services to discuss various on-site issues were another Covid-19 casualty and have been much missed. After a further year's delay, the proposed Land Use Consultants conservation management plan for the cemetery has still not even been seen in draft. Enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order to encourage responsible dog ownership was relaxed during lockdowns. Standard opening hours were reintroduced from April. Increased visitor numbers have been maintained and a new counter system introduced in February has recorded an average of about one thousand visitors per day. Some further anti-social incidents have been reported but represent a very small minority of visitors. FONC also contributed to the Planning Inspector's review of the LBS Southwark Plan to preserve the view from West Hill to St. Paul's from tall building encroachment. An increased number of tree falls have been addressed promptly by Southwark's tree team. We have also attended 'virtual' Council ward meetings, some of which addressed cemetery issues, on a regular basis and have benefitted from Southwark grants towards new tool purchases and Open Day costs.

16. CEMETERY IMPROVEMENTS

The poor winter weather and lack of urgency on the part of Southwark has impacted considerably on carrying out work on site. Resurfacing work around the Scottish Martyrs memorial finally began in January but was not completed until May. Fencing around the area meant that visitors had to re-route but signage was poor and many simply by-passed the fencing causing significant damage by creating new, muddy footpaths. Application has been made to the Southwark Diocesan Advisory Court to facilitate repair to the Limesford Road boundary walls. Southwark has confirmed its commitment to carry out these works but work has not started on site yet. Although planned works and funding were agreed, repair works to the Anglican chapel were delayed to the 2021-22 financial year. Work has not yet started and not being able to access the chapel has made FONC events planning very difficult. The promised planting of replacement trees at the Limesford Road entrance and elsewhere took place in November. A third tranche of Southwark funded monument repairs, agreed with FONC, also began in November, greatly slowed by the very wet weather. Again, additional unsafe memorials had to be tackled once work had started. Work has not yet been completed but additional monument repairs commissioned and paid for by FONC has been completed by Priest Stone Restoration. In January the electricity supply to the FONC portacabin and, although agreed by Southwark, has still not been restored, making matters difficult for FONC volunteers. See also FONC's Voluntary Work Report

17. EAST LODGE RESTORATION

The much delayed enabling works for the East Lodge restoration began in June 2020 and were 'completed' in January. It has been a very frustrating and difficult year for FONC in trying to move forward plans for the full restoration of the building. However, at last we feel that real progress is being made both in achieving a better understanding of FONC's activities in the cemetery by officers and in the revised designs for the restored East Lodge. Finally, LBS committed to

providing a dedicated office within the East Lodge for FONC (the original Superintendent's office), storage space for FONC's publications and archives and the use of meeting room/space for our events and activities. As space within the building is very limited, FONC's practical onsite work will continue to be based within renewed portacabin facilities at the existing location adjacent to the West Lodge. The portacabin replacement is now regarded as part of the East Lodge project and will be taken forward in parallel with the East Lodge restoration. The revised design for the restored East Lodge is now based on providing more flexible space with only the location of the café kitchen being fixed on the lower ground for ventilation/extraction purposes. This will allow the café and community hall to be located on either floor, depending on the chosen café franchise operator's preference. Ramped paths will be provided to enable access to both floors with the proposal of a 'bridge' at the rear of the building providing a second access to the upper floor from the raised garden area. Double doors in the existing bay window will be the principal entrance to the lower ground floor with appropriate landscaping and terracing around the south and rear of the building aimed at maximising external seating opportunities for the café. LBS is committed to completing the restoration and now intends putting this in the context of the proposed Conservation Management Plan of the cemetery as a whole. However, the delays in progressing the work and the continued deterioration of the building itself has resulted in increased costs for the restoration. Although streamlining options with no compromise on the quality of the design are being pursued, phased delivery of the work is being looked at. This will enable the submission of a joint LBS/FONC application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in August to resolve the funding gap. FONC believes that we now have an acceptable way forward and is committed to work with LBS to bring about the successful completion of the project.

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery
(CIO 1178763)

	New 2020/21 £	New 2019/20 £	New and old 2018/19 £
Receipts			
Publications	428	1,276	1,074
Subscriptions	1,480	1,574	1,584
Donations	5,788	5,961	5,610
Gift Aid	950	-	2,300
Event income	1,027	5,367	4,544
Interest	129	338	371
Grants	2,000	5,000	1,300
Total receipts	11,802	19,516	16,783
Payments - Administration and running			
Postage	1,313	1,382	1,298
Stationery	55	73	132
Printing - newsletter	1,081	956	919
Printing - publications	227	558	1,807
Meeting costs	13	359	370
Insurance	271	351	351
Electronic payment fees	44	-	-
Other expenses	54	81	345
	3,058	3,760	5,222
Payments - Events and other			
Purchases	154	671	450
Tools	1,004	-	-
Bins and banners	-	5,026	-
Event costs	316	1,772	2,209
Art Events - costs	-	-	1,341
	1,474	7,469	4,000
Payments - designated funds			
Monument repairs	3,720	6,600	9,240
Total expenditure	8,252	17,829	9,222
Surplus for the year	3,550	1,687	7,561
Balance sheet at 31 March	2021	2020	2019
Opening balance	127,190	125,503	127,182
Surplus for the year	3,550	1,687	(1,679)
Total assets	130,740	127,190	125,503
Consisting of:			
Santander Current a/c	9,514	9,986	12,001
Santander Deposit a/c	61,586	58,163	54,851
Co-op Deposit account	59,640	59,041	58,651
	130,740	127,190	125,503

Notes to the accounts

1 FONC tools valued at £2,000

2 FONC publications stock valued at £5,000 (resale value £8,000)

Friends of Nunhead Cemetery reserves policy

To ensure that FONC can continue to operate at its current level, and to mitigate the risk of a reduction in income streams, FONC holds general reserves of £15,000 to represent one and a half years of operating costs and an additional sum to meet unexpected expenditure on the portacabin and/ or storage facilities.

The remaining funds are held as unreserved, Designated, funds for the following purposes:

- contribution to the East Lodge Project £35,000
- fit out of the FONC facilities in the East Lodge £25,000
- Monument repair fund to fund a long term repair programme of monuments in the cemetery

Ann Coley

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Treasurer

2 June 2021