



Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

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Newsletter

Hands-on History



Have I got to go up there?

Our intrepid Chair Angela Phillips faces a mountaineering challenge at the former Holy Trinity Church. Trinity Arts Centre staff helpfully drew back the curtains that normally screen the handsome stained glass window from public view and piled up for us a filming platform of tables. What besides the window was Angela hoping to photograph? Turn overleaf to find out.

This window was just one of the many pictures shown at our lecture "Canon Edward Hoare: Protestant pontiff of Tunbridge Wells" on 4th March. Some hitherto unseen family portraits were included, thanks to two descendants of his son Bishop Joseph Hoare, who perished in a typhoon in the China Sea.

All of Canon Hoare's Gurney forebears were remarkably good-looking and in particular his mother Louisa was so beautiful that we can't resist including her picture here. If you haven't already bought our latest illustrated booklet about Canon



Louisa Hoare

Hoare, see the details on page 3. You will also want to buy a copy of Philip Whitbourn's latest fascinating opus *Where they lived* tracing links between thirty seven people buried in the cemetery and their residences. His lecture in February took us on a virtual walk round mid-Victorian Tunbridge Wells to locate them and envisage how the town looked at that time. You can follow this walk yourself using the maps he has included in his booklet.

Treats in store

Fri 20th May: Annual General Meeting, followed by talk on the Rev, Joseph Ridgeway by David Bushell.
Christ Church Hall, 7.30pm.

Sat 21st May: Plant sale.
St John's Church Green, 10am onwards.

Sun 5th June: Children's mini-beast safari with Dr Ian Beavis.
WPC, 2.30 pm.

Sun 10th July: Visit to Brompton Cemetery, Kensington.
BC, 1pm.

Sun 24th July: Victorian concert.
WPC, 3pm.

Fri 5th Aug: Moth trapping evening.
WPC, 9.15pm.

Thu 8th to Sun 11th Sept (*Heritage Open Days*): History walks — details to be announced.

Sun 2nd Oct: Lichens, fungi, leaf miners and plant galls..
WPC, 2.30 pm.

Do come to your AGM, but note that this year it is in Christ Church Hall. That is because after the AGM David Bushell will be talking about the Rev. Joseph Ridgeway, vicar of Christ Church from 1857 to 1871. He is the third of our trio of notable Anglican priests buried in WPC, and a booklet about him will be published that day.

This summer we are visiting another of the "magnificent seven" London Victorian graveyards — Brompton Cemetery. It is an opportunity to look at interesting memorials contemporaneous with our own. Contact Barbara Ling (01892 681260) if you want to come.

Hidden treasure: the memorial to Maria Hoare in the chancel of Holy Trinity.



Maria was only 43 when she died of "malignant disease" after bearing eleven children.



Monument repairs

Following restoration of the Hoare family tomb, we have just commissioned this year's repair programme for the following fifteen monuments. This will bring the grand total of monuments repaired through our efforts to seventy-seven:

Margaret and Sarah Hussey Knight, genteel sisters from Northumberland;

William Allan, solicitor's clerk;

George and Maria Elmore, fish-dealers;

Arthur and Henrietta Wheatley, brewer's children;

Clarissa Hubbard, vicar's daughter;

Commander Friend RN, sea captain, explorer and controller of convict ships;

John and Sarah Jack, railway truck inspector;

John and Fanny Burgess, farmers;

William and Mary Usherwood, carpenter;

Emma Turner and Mary Smith, innkeeper's daughters;

Rebecca Cross Potter, West Indian slave-plantation owner;

Stephen and Elizabeth Catt, ironmongers;

Thomas Stevenson, town-rate collector;

Sarah Williams, lodging-house keeper;

Frederick and Sarah Field, confectioners, Chapel Place.

Spring arrives

Spring has reached the cemetery. The fine show of snowdrops has just finished and the primroses have taken over. We want many more snowdrops, so if you are splitting up your clumps this spring, do please provide a few "in the green" to Angela Swain on 01892 541881. Or come along and plant them yourself on a grave of your choice. (Angela would also welcome any plants you have to spare to sell on 21st May.)



Checking up on the first blossom of 2011.

New planting

We have increased the amount of bird-cover with some pink and white flowering hawthorns. One of these was tamped-down into its new home by the august foot of the Mayor David Jukes, a second by Stephanie Corah of the Cripps Harries Hall team, whose back-breaking work cleared the ground for planting, and a third by Gerry Diebel, whose handsomely renovated warehouse building adjoins that part of the Cemetery and who has undertaken to keep them watered. Not an onerous task this winter.



Steph Corah, of the Cripps Harries Hall team.

New publications

The two new booklets already referred to are:

Where they lived in Tunbridge Wells: Residences and lodgings of some of those buried in Woodbury Park Cemetery — Philip Whitbourn, £2.50 + 50p p&p;

Canon Edward Hoare, 1812–94: Vicar of Holy Trinity, Tunbridge Wells, 1853–94 — June Bridgeman, £3 + 50p p&p.

Also, the transcriptions of the Burial Register prepared by Jan Holly and her team have been copied onto a CD-ROM, which is available for £5 + 50p p&p.

Other booklets still available are listed on www.fwpc.org.uk. You can obtain copies of new and existing publications either by downloading an order form from that web-site, and sending the completed form with a cheque to the Secretary, or at meetings, thereby saving postage.

Testing travels

The following advice by a merchant on how to get from St. Petersburg to London in eleven days in the 1840s would have applied to the Maingays, subject of the “WPC Burials” article overleaf.

The Malle Poste is the best conveyance to the frontier (in witness whereof my father used to have pillow strapped over his head to serve as a buffer between his body and the roof of the carriage).

The only attraction at Riga is the river which you cross at Tilsit; you will find comfortable accommodation at the new Hotel der Somme, Landlord Beyner. Change your silver money for Thaler notes and small Prussian coin, the agio gives Beyner a fractional advantage.

After reposing yourself for the night, travel by extra post to Koenigsburg, 9 to 10 hours journey; avoid the night diligence as the company is not the most select.

Take your quarters at Koenigsburg in the Deuts Haus, the landlord is civil and the accommodation fair.

I take the Schnell Post coach from Koenigsburg to Berlin, which is under excellent regulation and saves much trouble on the road, 58 hours journey.

An English hotel has lately been opened on the Linden, the best situation.

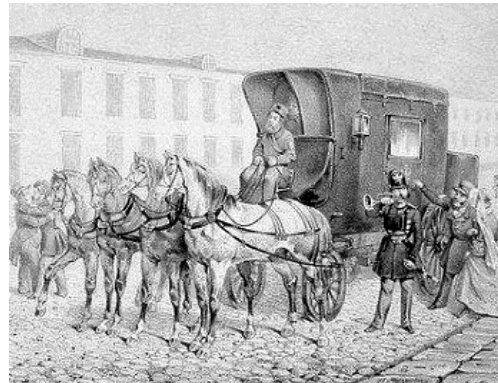
Take the railroad to Magdeburg, you will arrive in time to take a refreshing meal.

Book yourself when you reach Magdeburg in the diligence via Minden to Cologne, the best route, 36 hours journey; the Hotel Bellevue on the Rhine is well conducted.

At Cologne you can ascertain when the Antwerp steamer starts for London, but, I prefer the passage from Ostend to

Dover, avoiding all Steam Companies when I can advance by a Government administered steam boat.

Many Woodbury Park residents made similar challenging journeys by land and sea around the world taking several weeks, if not months. Afghanistan, China, South America, Jamaica, Australia, and the Arctic are just some of the places where they explored, mapped, traded, administered justice and fought long-forgotten battles.



The Malle Poste about to leave St Petersburg , 1848. It could carry three passengers inside, plus one beside the driver.



A diligence was a larger form of stage coach used in Europe, often by families. This one had three compartments and a dicky seat.



Berlin Potsdamer Bahnhof, 1843. Most passengers travelled in stock like that of the train on the left. But you could choose to remain in your own carriage loaded on to a flat-wagon with its horses in another wagon, rather like Motorail.

WPC Burials

9. William & Eliza Maingay (1791—1862 and 1799—1879)



The Maingays' grave, adjacent to that of Canon Hoare, houses William and Eliza and seven of their family. William Maingay made his fortune in St Petersburg. He and his wife Eliza came from Guernsey where his family's wine and spirits business was forced by the end of the Napoleonic wars to turn from piracy and smuggling to more legitimate forms of trading around the world.

In 1831, William decided he too would seek his fortune further afield. With his wife and four children he moved to St Petersburg, where three more children, Amelia, Frederick and Emily were born. This was the Imperial City of the "Iron



Tsar" Nicholas, a total autocrat. Russian society was polarised between relatively few aristocratic families and sixty million peasants and serfs. There was virtually no middle class and merchants were mainly foreigners. Roads were little more than muddy tracks, and the waterways through the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea were treacherous and icebound for many months of the year.

Trade with Britain was handled by a tightknit merchanting cooperative known as the British Factory. Many of its members built large comfortable houses for themselves by the Neva, but mingled little with Russian society. The focal point of their social and business life was the Chapel of the British Factory. It was supported by dues charged on cargoes, which also paid for the British Consul and various schools, clubs and other facilities that served their closed society. The Maingays moved in these inner circles, with William's name appearing as witness to high status merchant marriages, and sponsor or godparent to children of similar status. He was clearly respected as a man of probity and a good churchman.

As the industrial revolution came to Russia, and Britain lifted its embargo on textile machinery exports, William helped found the Ohta cotton mill (with at least fifteen of the original eighty seven shares.) It was clearly profitable since its dividends continued to benefit the family until they finally dried up with the Russian Revolution.

William and most of his family left Russia some time after 1848, settling in Tunbridge Wells. But his eldest son William Bonamy stayed on a few more years to look after their commercial interests. When William Bonamy eventually returned to Britain he married Anna Maria Courtney, a Dublin iron-merchant's daughter, thereafter styling himself in the censuses as a gentleman of independent means.

By 1857, both father and son were sufficiently established in Tunbridge Wells to be on the committee to found St John's church. Both were indefatigable in various good works around the town. They lived in adjoining Church Road properties, where all nine of William Bonamy's children were born. William senior was the first occupant of the Woodbury Park grave. He was followed a few months later by his youngest son Frederick. Eliza, William Bonamy and Anna Maria later joined them, along with three of the latter's children.



The English Embankment, St. Petersburg, 1835.