



Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

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Newsletter

“An outstanding team”



This was the accolade of the Green Flag judges. In renewing our coveted Green Flag Award for 2011—12, they described the Friends work on conservation of heritage and nature as “first class and valued” with “excellent and well interpreted understanding”. So a big bouquet for all the members and their long-suffering families who work so hard on WPC projects. You are rated “an exemplar of Friends Group support and how it can add value and support to a site”.

Progress on the memorials

The “big project” next month will be restoration of the



M a i n g a y tomb, next to that of Canon Hoare. Our last Newsletter gave a glimpse of the lives of this interesting merchant family and their years in St Petersburg.

We are delighted that a group of Maingay descendants have clubbed together to meet the hefty cost of repairing their family vault. With the money we have raised, the Friends are also repairing seven more headstones on the steep slope above the fountain.

Hill Billies

Summer is out-of-doors time no matter if it rains. Here are some of you making hay while the sun shone. Raking off rank matted grass after annual mowing is crucial to allow wild flowers to survive. Angela Swain’s team have had to put in many hours making good some shoddy work by the contractors. We are currently monitoring the contractors mowing and rubbish clearance to help the Council crack-down where prescribed standards are not being met.



Fêtes champêtres

Areas the haymakers cleared included the natural amphitheatre where the audience reclined on the sward for our first open-air Victorian concert. The acoustic proved to be as good as we had hoped and the weather





much better. Altogether there were around a hundred of us there on an idyllic sunny afternoon, butterflies fluttering round our heads and wrens singing their heads off among the brambles in an effort to see off the competition from the Gravelly Graveyard Group, a consort of voices led by Nadia Currie, and the Clockhouse Recorder Consort led by Olivia Seaman. A fantastic effort by all concerned that raised some £600 for memorial repairs.

The plant sale

Equally successful was the plant sale on St Johns' Church Green which raised another £600 for memorial conservation work. Word has spread about the high quality of the plants provided from members gardens, many of them "brought on" by our Green Thumb wizards. Now is the time to ponder your perennials for cuttings or divisions to contribute to next year's event, or to sow some extra seeds for us. Please contact Angela



Swain now on 01892 541881 if you could provide a few plants for next May's sale. Contributions can be groomed later in one of the WPC Finishing Schools.

Design your own event

If you have bright ideas for a suitable WPC event next summer do tell us. A Teddy Bears' Picnic? A Midsummer Nights Dream? A brass ensemble playing tributes to some of the distinguished military and naval inhabitants of WPC? An "artists day" for people to come along to sketch/paint/compose poetry and music inspired by WPC? We should greatly welcome your suggestions and, even more, any offers to organise such an event for us.

What's in a name?

Jan Holly has done an interesting trawl of *Ancestry* for names with Crimean War connections. Her starting point was the WPC memorial of Frederick Inkerman Coleman, son of Edmund and Louisa Coleman, who in 1877 aged 22 died of consumption — scourge of so many young adults in Victorian Tunbridge Wells. His unusual middle name clearly stems from the Battle of Inkerman in October 1854, not long before his birth. But it does not appear on either his birth or death certificate or any census. So what was the connection? Jan reports:

The Crimean connection remains a mystery. While some other member of the family may have fought there, (the local regiment, the 50th Foot, did) it seems unlikely that his father did. so. In 1851 he was a railway porter who later progressed to signalman, but he might just possibly have also been a militia man who volunteered to serve with the 50th. Frederick himself also worked on the railway as a porter,



Lady Butler's picture "The Return from Inkerman"

A general search of Ancestry found that prior to 1854 no children called Inkerman appear in the English registers. But following the battle there were 21 in 1854, 215 in 1855 and 88 in 1856, after which it gradually fell out of use. Looking further, 47 children were named Sebastapol between 1854 and 1858, and 8 named Balaclava between 1854 and 1862. The most popular name with a Crimean connection was Alma (Battle of Alma September 1854) given to 610 children between 1854 and 1856. There seems to be no gender association with these names as there were Mary Inkermans as well as Frederick Inkermans.

Florence was already a popular name in earlier times, but there was a sharp increase when news travelled to England about the work of Florence Nightingale.

The most remarkable entries found were "Siege Sebastapol Biddeson" and "Alma Inkerman Sebastapol Grogan", the counterparts of today's unfortunates saddled by their zealous parents with a string of footballers' names.

Inward migration

We knew we had all six common varieties of British bumblebee. But now we find we have a seventh. During the recent mini-beast safari, Dr Beavis in his inimitable way plucked from the air a startled new arrival, the

Tree Bumblebee. This EU immigrant was first spotted in Britain only 10 years ago. It is quite distinctive with its brown thorax, black abdomen and high visibility white tail. The Beewatch Conservation Trust is recording sightings and behaviour so keep your eyes skinned and if you spot one in your garden, tell them via their website. This picture may help you identify it.



Creatures of the night

Keith Palmer is giving a guided walk on Sunday 2nd October and an illustrated talk next February about some of the myriad small creatures to be found in the cemetery that most of us have no idea exist except when we begin to itch. By way of a taster, here is his account of our recent field evening viewing "the delightful little creatures of the night".

This year we chose early August as darkness fell to site our moth trap on the damp grassland below the fountain. Mostly unseen by day since they hide or camouflage themselves so effectively, at night moths are paradoxically attracted to light, especially it seems an ultra-violet light trap.

Conditions were not ideal as moths take to the wing more readily in overcast and humid weather and are deterred by falling evening temperatures on a clear night. However we met with better success than in May last year

Among the first arrivals were several of the so-called grass moths, Agriphila straminella. These small moths frequently fly up by day when you walk across fields of long grass, disappearing quickly again as they rest along a grass stalk rather than across it and so are hard to find even when you think you have pinpointed the exact spot. These visitors were not having to come far to reach the light. On a good night moths may be flying high and drop down to the light having travelled some distance.

Some of the moths were tiny and nondescript such as

Blastobasis lignea, too insignificant a creature to have earned a common English name and looking for all the world like a thin sliver of wood. A plume moth turned up, a very unusual little moth which holds its wings in such a way that the moth forms a slender cross when at rest.

Eventually some rather larger moths dropped in, as seems to be usual here, just as we were thinking of leaving. Willow Beauty, Riband Wave, Small Fan-footed Wave and the laboriously named Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing all arrived. This last moth has two lines of defence against potential predators. A dull brown on the upperside, merging into the colour of bark or dead leaves, in the event that a predator approaches too closely the moth will fly off exhibiting a flash of yellow from the hind wings, startling the aggressor.

Some other visiting moths were more instantly attractive, such as the Common and Garden Carpets, and a fresh Yellow-barred Brindle showing a bright green pigment. This pigment in moths is very unstable and washes out to a dirty white colour quite quickly but this example was in pristine condition. Others were the more conventional dull brown, Shuttle-shaped Dart and Common Rustic.

In total sixteen species were identified, some being "firsts" for the moth list for the Cemetery. It was nearly 11.30 p.m. when we carefully released the moths into the surrounding vegetation and packed up, leaving the three opportunist bats who had been swooping around our heads to the rest of their supper.



A picture from elsewhere of the western pipistrelle and a moth, as our cameras could not track quickly enough to capture the locals.

Grayson Perry

Grayson Perry, potter, artist, tapestry designer and TV personality, joined us with his filming team one evening



in July as we fossicked for the foundations of fallen stones.

He has generously donated one of his pictures to us to sell in aid of our work. We are most grateful to him.



For your diary

The list of future events is in the box on page 6. Besides the Palmer walk and lecture, be sure to book the evening of Friday 21st October. Philip Whitbourn will give an illustrated talk about the pictorial record Charles Tattershall Dodd has left of the fast-changing urban scene in mid-Victorian Tunbridge Wells. Some fabulous pictures that most of you will never have seen, and of course a fabulous lecturer. Camden Centre as usual at 7.30pm. He is also compiling an accompanying booklet — a future collectors' item. And do start inviting friends to make up tables of six for our Kent Quiz night in November.

WPC Burials

10. Jonathan Wheatley (1825-1878) and Kezia Wheatley (1829-1891).

Among the headstones repaired by the Friends are those of Jonathan and Kezia Wheatley, and of two of their children, Arthur aged 7 months and Henrietta Sarah aged 4.

Jonathan was the son of a Maresfield agricultural labourer and in the 1851 census was coachman at Ticehurst Lunatic Asylum catering for the gentry. John Bramston Wilmot, also buried in Woodbury Park Cemetery, was one of its visiting physicians. The asylum was regarded as the most enlightened of its kind. It still functions today as a private psychiatric hospital.

Jonathan married Kezia Brown in her home village of Pyecombe near Brighton in 1855, and six years later was an established brewer in Tunbridge Wells operating from the North Street premises that became the Windmill Tavern. This was part of the Windmill Fields development of small properties by Charles Cripps, father of William Charles. After Jonathan died at the age of 52, Kezia carried on the family business and its associated "tap" in Goods Station Road while raising their surviving children.

When his father died John Brown Wheatley, their eldest son, was newly married and already working in the business. His wife Sarah Amelia was a cousin on his mother's side whose father, Sergeant Funnell of the Grenadier Guards, had died of cholera in the Crimea when she was an infant. The Wheatley descendants still possess a touching letter he wrote to her mother a few days before he died (see next page). He had sailed from Southampton for the Crimea just a fortnight after the infant Sarah was baptised in St Peter ad Vincula, Tower of London, amid the tombs of Anne Boleyn, Katherine Howard, Lady Jane Grey and Sir Thomas More.

Kezia died aged 61 in Ramsgate, where one of her younger sons was a solicitors' clerk. She was buried alongside her husband on 20th January 1891.



Ticehurst Lunatic Asylum.



Pyecombe church where Jonathan and Kezia were married,
and their son John baptised.



The original Windmill Tavern in North Street.

Camp Gevecklee
 August 8th

My Dearest Wife,
 I received your kind letter on the 27th July I was very glad to hear that you and our dear child was quite well which I am very glad to say this leaves me quite well at this present time I was very glad to hear that your sister Sarah had been so ill, I hope she will have quite recovered when you receive this, you must excuse me writing a long Letter this time as the post goes out this evening and I had no time to write, any more we expect to go up the country on

Friday or Saturday to Sabastipool so there is not the least doubt that there will be something done in the course of a week or ten days, all my prayers are that I may return safe back to them that is dearer to me than all the world, I donot see the least fear but that I shall, give my respects to all friends and except my kindest love yourself and give our dear child a thousand kisses for me, may God protect you both

I remain your
 ever loving and
 affectionate Husband
 William Funnell

W^m Funnell
 5th Co. 5th Regt. Grenadier Guards
 Army in the East

Letter from John Wheatley's father-in-law, Sergeant William Funnell of the Grenadier Guards, to his wife. Two weeks later he died of cholera.



Queen Victoria bids farewell to her Guards before their departure to the Crimea.

FUTURE EVENTS

- Thu. 8th, Fri. 9th & Sun. 11th Sept (Heritage Open Days):
History walks round WPC, all at 2.30pm.
 - Sun 2nd Oct: **Lichens, fungi, leaf miners and plant galls,**
 walk round WPC, 2.30 pm.
 - Fri 21st Oct: **Charles Tattershall Dodd,** lecture by Dr. Philip Whitbourn, Camden Centre, 7.30pm.
 - Fri 11th Nov: **Kent Quiz,** with fish and chips, King Charles Hall, 7.30pm. (Ticket arrangements tba)
- 2012
- Fri 17th Feb: **Hidden creatures of WPC,** lecture by Keith Palmer, Camden Centre, 7.30pm.
 - Fri 25th May: **AGM and lecture on Sepuchral Symbolism,** Camden Centre, 7.30pm.
 - Fri 22nd June: **Moths and bats event,** WPC, 9pm.