



# Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

Issue No.17

January 2017

## Newsletter

### Celebrating Jeffery Hale



*The challenge*



*Getting down to it*



*How it looks today*

1. Our biggest recent project has been repair of the memorials of Jeffery Hale, Canadian philanthropist, and five of his brothers and sisters - Bernard, Fanny, Mary, Richard and George. We have also enhanced their setting, installed a commemorative seat and created easier public access with new steps and a wrought iron handrail. Visitors are now making good use of this seat to enjoy its magnificent view across the cemetery.



*The Mayor presents Angela Swain with an FWPC medallion honouring the gardening team*

2. All this was made possible by the generous donations of the Jeffery Hale Foundation and seven other Quebec institutions which have their roots in Hale's pioneering provision there in the 1840s and 1850s of local schooling and health care for the poor.

3. The President of the Jeffery Hale Foundation flew in from Quebec to unveil its Green Flag covering from the new memorial plaque to "*A man of charity, piety and benevolence*". The Bishop of Quebec then blessed the once-more gleaming marble tombs. A Town Hall reception, video link to the Mayor of Quebec, and goodwill messages from the Archbishop of Canterbury and our MP all added lustre to the occasion. As did the presence of so many of the Friends who came along to

the ceremony and the planting of a Canadian maple tree by our Mayor, David Neve. In a matching ceremony across the Atlantic at Mount Hermon Cemetery, the Mayor of Quebec planted an English oak tree beside the graves of the Hale family members buried there.

## The Jeffery Hale award

4. Hot on the heels of this event, we have launched an educational award scheme. Letters have gone out to local primary schools inviting them to visit the cemetery and to prepare a collage on the theme “A place of grace”. We plan to make awards of £500 and £250 to the winners at our May AGM.

## Bernard and George Carleton Hale

5. The Hale event also celebrated Jeffery’s younger brother Bernard. It is largely due to his legal battle with Lord De La Warr in 1877 that Ashdown Forest remains open to the public today *“for quiet recreation and enjoyment”*. The Forest Conservators laid a heathery wreath on his renovated tomb and Vivien Rahr placed by it a posy in memory of his younger brother, her great grandfather George Carleton Hale, buried in the same grave.



Councillor Whetstone and Vivien Rahr

6. The first 10 of the Hale progeny were born in Quebec where their father John Hale, married to Elizabeth Amherst, had Crown appointments first as Paymaster to the British troops then later Receiver General, ie tax collector.

7. In 1812 America declared war on Britain, at the height of its European struggle against Napoleon. A major grievance was Britain’s trade restrictions on their foreign commerce due to its sea blockade of the French. President Jefferson also had ambitions to annex Canada. In the course of that war, there being as yet no Special Relationship, British troops entered Washington and burned down the White House. Today’s iconic building rests on the ruins.

8. Fearing for her children’s safety in Quebec, their mother Elizabeth Hale brought them across the Atlantic to Montreal House, Sevenoaks. Orphaned while young, she and her brother - later the second Lord Amherst - had grown up there in the care of their soldier uncle and first Governor General of Canada, Lord Jeffery Amherst. Their family has long connections with this part of Kent, including Bayhall, and some are buried in Pembury Old Church. During their refugee stay in England, George Carleton, named after a hero of Badajoz, was born in Montreal House in October 1812.



Montreal House Sevenoaks as Elizabeth Amherst knew it



Bayhall in its heyday

## Gardening and wildlife matters

9. A third Hale project is a new public information board and a seat to be installed beside the boggy lower area of the cemetery near Henry Austen's grave. The aim is to help visitors to identify the marsh-loving species our volunteers are planting in a new "wet meadow".

10. Waterlogging from wandering springs in this lower area must have caused many a headache over the years for past sextons. No doubt this was a factor in locating here the paupers' graves rather than selling the plots to wealthier and more demanding patrons. It may also have influenced the choice of Giant Redwood trees to line the boundary. Sequoias suck up huge quantities of water through extensive roots just below the surface and must never dry out.



*Ragged Robin is one of the new plantings*

11. A hardy soul may some day trace the extent to which the enriched drainage was feeding into the early water supplies of the town at Jack's Wood Spring, before brick lined graves became compulsory in this part of the cemetery.

## Tree identification walk

12. Another current project is updating our tree walk booklet to improve it as a spotters guide for differences between one evergreen tree and another. If you have a conifer in your garden, try squeezing a frond in your fingers for a sniff test. Oenophiles familiar with the language of wine guides should have little trouble identifying the following

No scent	Chinese Thuja
Rich almondy fruit cake	Korean thuja
Cooked apples with cloves	White cedar
Lemony cheap sweets	Japanese Thuja
Pineapple	Western red cedar (no crushing needed)



*The artist at work*

13. And if it is a *Chamaecyparis* or "false cypress", a tree with many cultivars, you may be able to identify its parent species by the scent of ginger, sour parsley, acrid resin, seaweed or eucalyptus.

14. Elaine Gill's illustrations will assist the less keen of nose, as will a guided tree walk on 16<sup>th</sup> July to follow publication.

## Other gardening projects

15. Unflagging, the gardening team continues to work its horticultural wonders. During 2016, this has attracted no fewer than three awards. Some of our funds have gone towards updating their equipment, but their main tools are imagination and enthusiasm.



16. Their latest nature feature is an “insect hotel” in a cleared space below the crag. It is built on High Weald guidelines. Is any of you a keen entomologist willing to report on the residents or guest lists there? The damaged general Nature Board nearby is shortly being replaced after any needful updating.

17. The top of the crag - the belvedere- is once more open to visitors following repair of its badger holes. When the Council have decided what powers to take under new anti-social behaviour legislation, the general information board by the gate will be renewed. Look out on your visits for the monthly information board by the gate about what is currently in bloom.

18. As this shot of our Mayor hard at work shows, the commemorative maple should soon help to fill the gap left where a forest giant was victim of the storms two years ago. Beyond it, the flourishing new hedge of blackthorn, hawthorn, dog roses and other species, underplanted with wood anemones, will be friendly to wild life as well as screen off the fence. TWBC provided the whips (the arboreal sort, that is) as part of their very helpful working partnership with us.



## Memorial repairs

19. Memorials we have recently repaired near the Jeffery Hale tomb include the ledger slab of John Waithman, from whom Holy Trinity Church bought the cemetery land (see the last page of this newsletter). We gave these priority from our funds so that they would offer stable standing room on the steep bank throughout the Hale unveiling, blessing, tape snipping and planting sequence. They provided admirable public viewing platforms. While we had the monument engraver on site, we also refurbished the lettering on the Tattershall Dodd headstone. Philip Whitbourn’s unique booklet about him, full of the artist’s drawings and paintings, continues to be a firm favourite with visitors.



20. Our current priority, unless diverted by some unanticipated memorial crisis, is to continue restoring damaged or missing kerbs along the top path. The gardening team can then add to their much-admired “picture plantings” of individual graves.

## The paths

21. A continuing concern has been wear and tear of grass path surfaces as the visitor numbers grow. Our public consultation last summer indicated universal support for an unobtrusive permanent form of surface on the vulnerable sections. We are trialling different types of mesh underlay to get the best long-term solution to fit in with the unique character of the cemetery while being cost-effective.

## Adjoining land

22. Construction proceeds apace of the new block of flats and houses at 9 Park Road. The original design for converting mellowed brick stables into mews houses was abandoned after the site was gutted in the big fire there two years ago. We shall be monitoring any possible impacts on WPC. It will be vital to maintain and enhance evergreen screening on this side of the cemetery. Hopefully, the new build should improve boundary security.

23. Nearer the chapel, it is welcome that a strip of land along the boundary has been acquired by the owners of the cemetery lodge to extend their garden. Another boundary area at the rear of houses in Grosvenor Park below the cemetery wall has recently been bought and landscaped by an adjoining house owner. The long term future of the Triangle, so important to the habitat and tranquillity of the cemetery, remains an unknown quantity.

## Talks and events

24. Though challenges and priorities may differ, we have a shared interest with the Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery in local Victorian history. We liaise closely on lectures and outings for the public to enjoy these unique places. The following dates for your 2017 diary cover both. Everyone is welcome to attend. And do start looking out any old gardening tools or bric a brac that could raise funds at the plant sale. If you let Angela Swain know on 01892 541881 she can plan collection.

<b>20<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>FWPC Victorian Gardening 7.30pm St James Church Hall</b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<i>Broadwater Down memorial hunt and presentation by Paul Avis in Chapel of internal features of its Mansfield houses 2.30pm</i>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<i>FTWC Memorial Inscriptions Group meeting 10am Birling Road</i>
<b>1 April</b>	<i>FTWC AGM followed by a talk 2.30 in chapel</i>
<b>22 April</b>	<b>FWPC Action day</b>
<b>18 May</b>	<i>FTWC Early morning birdsong walk. 7-9am</i>
<b>20 May</b>	<b>FWPC plant sale am St Johns Church Green</b>
<b>26 May</b>	<b>FWPC AGM, and Hale awards to schools 7.30pm</b>
<b>25 June</b>	<b>FWPC flower walk 2.30pm</b>
<b>16 July</b>	<b>FWPC tree walk 2.30pm</b>
<b>13 August</b>	<b>FWPC joint cemetery outing with FTWC - all day</b>
<b>9 September</b>	<i>FTWC Exhibition, talk and guided walk about paupers burials</i>
<b>10 September</b>	<b>FWPC HOD walk 2.30</b>
<b>25 October</b>	<b>FWPC The Charge of the Light Brigade 7.30pm</b>
<b>12 November</b>	<i>FTWC Remembrance Day event and lecture on VAD Hospitals</i>
<b>16 November</b>	<i>Fungi hunt 10am-1pm</i>
<b>9 December</b>	<b>FWPC The Victorian house 7.30pm</b>

## WPC Burials 17

### John Waithman 1789-1870 and his sisters Maria and Mary Ann

A story attaches to the street sweeper seen standing here with his broom by the John Wilkes obelisk. Maria Waithman was at that time living over her father Robert's flourishing shawl, muslin and linen goods emporium just visible in the right corner. He became an MP and Lord Mayor of London, commemorated with his own obelisk and street name. When Maria died in 1873 the press ran the street sweeper story.



Those who have had occasion to run the gauntlet of the busy crossing between the bottom of Fleet-street and the foot of Ludgate-hill may often have noticed two obelisks, the base of each forming a place of refuge for many a pedestrian waiting for a break in the-rush of vehicles. The monolith at the south side is intended to perpetuate the memory of John Wilkes, a very prominent man in the political world during some of the stormy times in the reign of George III. The obelisk on the north side is erected to the memory of Alderman Waithman, who was a City celebrity half a century ago, and who, with Brougham, Denman, and Sir Matthew Wood, was a popular advocate of the cause of Queen Caroline. The shop which now stands at the south-west corner of Ludgate-hill, and is covered with announcements of its speedy removal with a view to the completion of Ludgate-circus, was that in which Waithman made a fortune as a linendraper. To many of the older inhabitants of London the spot is still known as Waithman's corner. The alderman took a very active part in the politics of the City of London, and made his name as a friend of the people by constantly pressing forward social and political reforms. A few days ago his daughter, Miss Maria Waithman, died at an advanced age, and there is a pretty little story attached to her name. When her father carried on his drapery business, a poor crossing-sweeper established himself in front of the house. There he was in all weathers, and Miss Waithman often took compassion upon him, showing it in a substantial manner by giving him food and fourpenny pieces. At length time and exposure told their inevitable tale; one morning he was missed from the crossing—he was dead. It was then found that he had made a will leaving a handsome fortune to the young lady who had so often befriended him.



After Maria and her sister Mary Ann moved around 1847 with their older brother John to 3 Calverley Park, they devoted themselves to helping the local Ragged School and Lying In Charity among other good works.

John Waithman had prospered as partner in his father's business which he inherited in 1833 with other property. He showed some of his father's social zeal in successful action to shorten the long evening hours shop staff were forced to work.

Settled in Tunbridge Wells, he made shrewd land purchases round the railway station and at Brick Kiln Farm to the north. In 1847 he sold 3 acres of the latter, Ladies Wood, to Trinity Church for their new cemetery, and the rest to the Conservative Land Association a few years later for the Woodbury Park development of gentlemen's residences. He was a benefactor of the Christ Church schools, the hospital and missionary organisations. Today he and his two charitable sisters lie tucked under their newly repaired ledger stone in the land he once owned, aptly at the feet of Jeffery Hale.