

THE SOUTH METROPOLITAN CEMETERY WEST NORWOOD AND ITS MEMORIALS

Some additional notes

Eric E. F. Smith

Since a paper on the South Metropolitan Cemetery was published in *Collectanea Londiniensia* further work has been done which has uncovered a number of additions to the long list of interesting memorials. It is likely to be a final list, insofar as finality in such matters is possible, and includes a further 40 names of persons commemorated in the Dictionary of National Biography, making a total of 142. All this makes it even more regrettable that the London Borough of Lambeth, that owns the cemetery, should have embarked upon a scheme which is now being carried out and which involves the destruction of thousands of the gravestones and other memorials.

To follow the grouping adopted in the earlier paper would seem to be the most useful method of recording the additional names and at the same time noting one or two corrections to the original lists.

Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries. Henry Harrod (1871), a Norfolk historian of some note, author of "Gleanings Among the Castles and Convents of Norfolk" 1857; John Tolhurst (1909). It would seem only right to include the name of Mill Stephenson (1937), best known for his work on monumental brasses, who was cremated here but has no memorial.

Correction: p.440, line 2, for Crosby (1865) read Crosby (1867).

The City. Corrections: p.440, line 26, Brook died 1850 and not 1880. Sir John Pirie was also Lord Mayor 1841-42.

Artists. George Tinworth (1913) an artist in Terra Cotta who worked for Doulton's of Lambeth is buried in the grave of his Mother, Jane Tinworth, but his name has not been inscribed on the stone. Another Lambeth potter, James Stiff (1897), has a memorial in the cemetery. G. H. Andrews (1899), a Fellow of the Royal Water-Colour Society, lies here, but the stone over the grave of the minor artist Sophia Raincock, whose chief distinction was being No.1 in the cemetery burial register, has now been smashed to pieces.

Architects. Under this heading might be included Caroline Harriet (1882) wife of Sir A. W. Blomfield, and also the parents of Sir Ernest George the architect of the crematorium at Golders Green where he himself was cremated.

Musicians. Alberto Napoleon Mezzetti (1906) described as "Musician, artist, inventor and scholar" and John Saunders (1919) "Artist and Musician" have not been identified. Correction: p.442, line 27, for Sir James read Sir Joseph Barnby.

Authors. William Phelps (1856) author of the History and Antiquities of Somersetshire, a work that he did not live to complete. Correction: p.443, line 6, for Sir James Dods read Sir James Dods Shaw.

Actors. Frederick Gye (1878) lessee of Convent Garden Theatre. Alice E. Haslip (1862) of the South Eastern Music Hall in Tooley Street, a long forgotten place of entertainment. John Henry Pepper (1900) the famous Victorian illusionist and producer of "Pepper's Ghost". T. J. Edwards (1933) "The Huntsman Ventriloquist" and James Bassett (1907) a noted conjuror in his day.

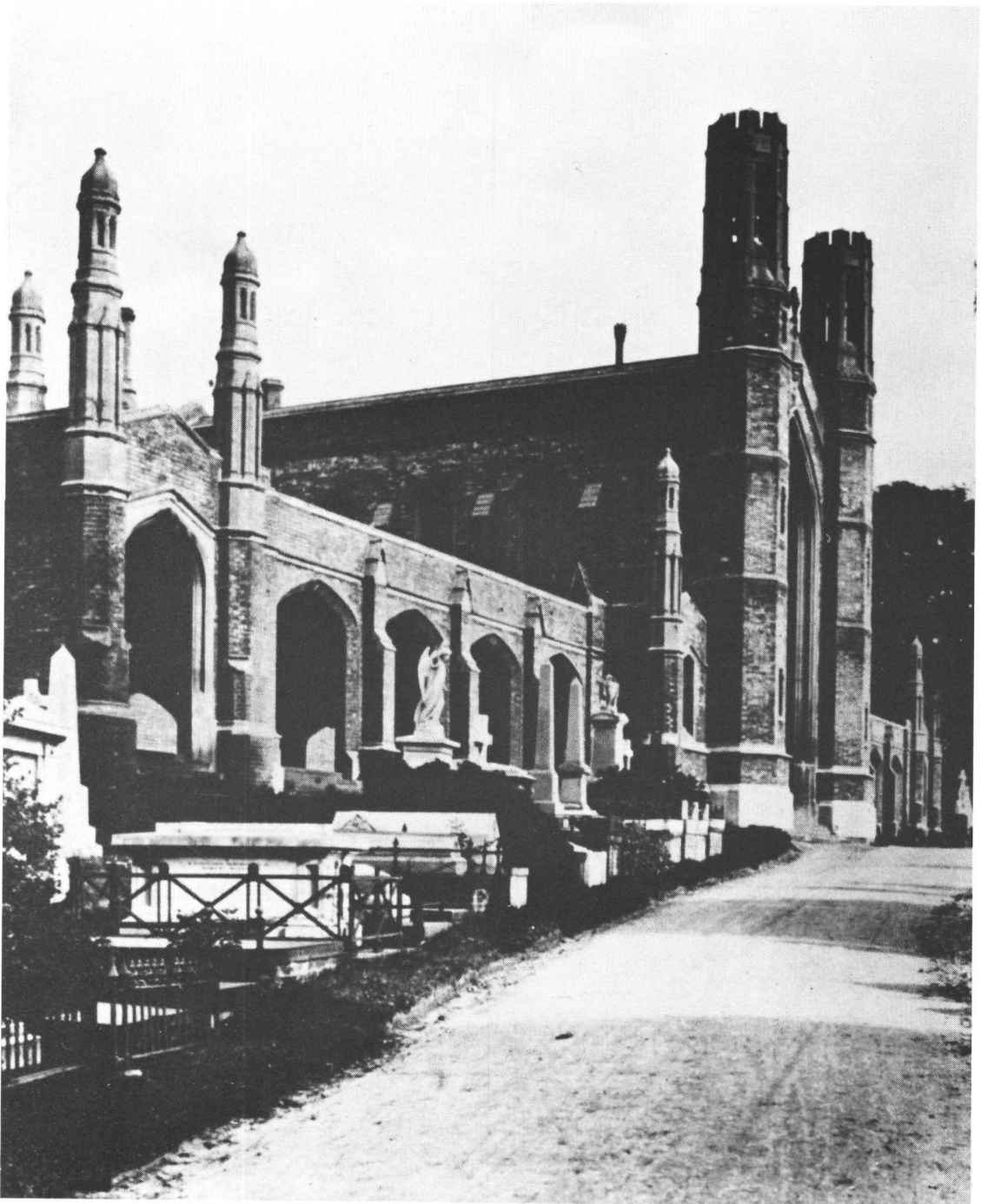


Plate 1. South Metropolitan Cemetery. Episcopal Chapel & Cloister c. 1930. Architect: William Tite, 1837.

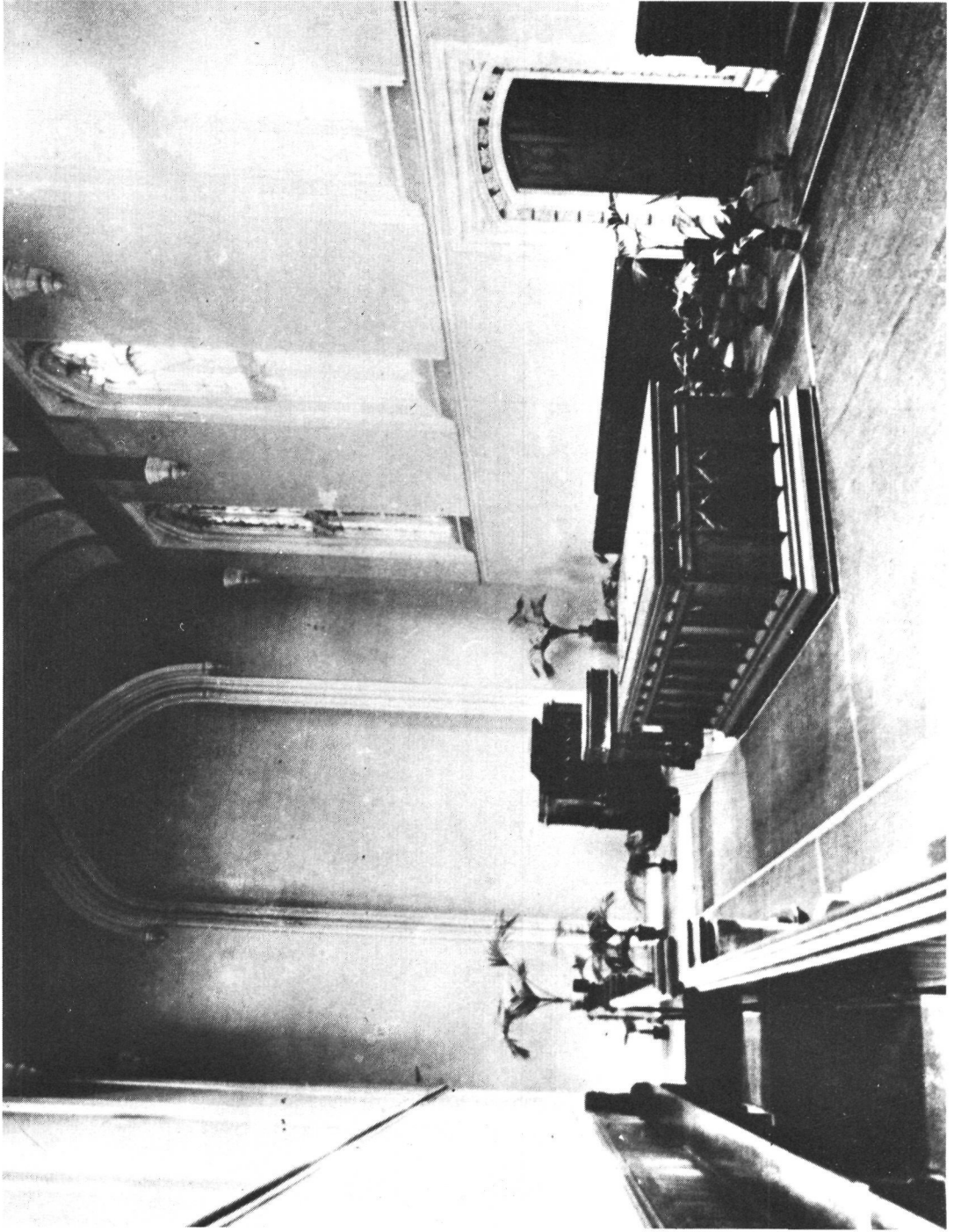


Plate 2. South Metropolitan Cemetery. Episcopal Chapel, interior c. 1930. Lift in centre descending to vaults.

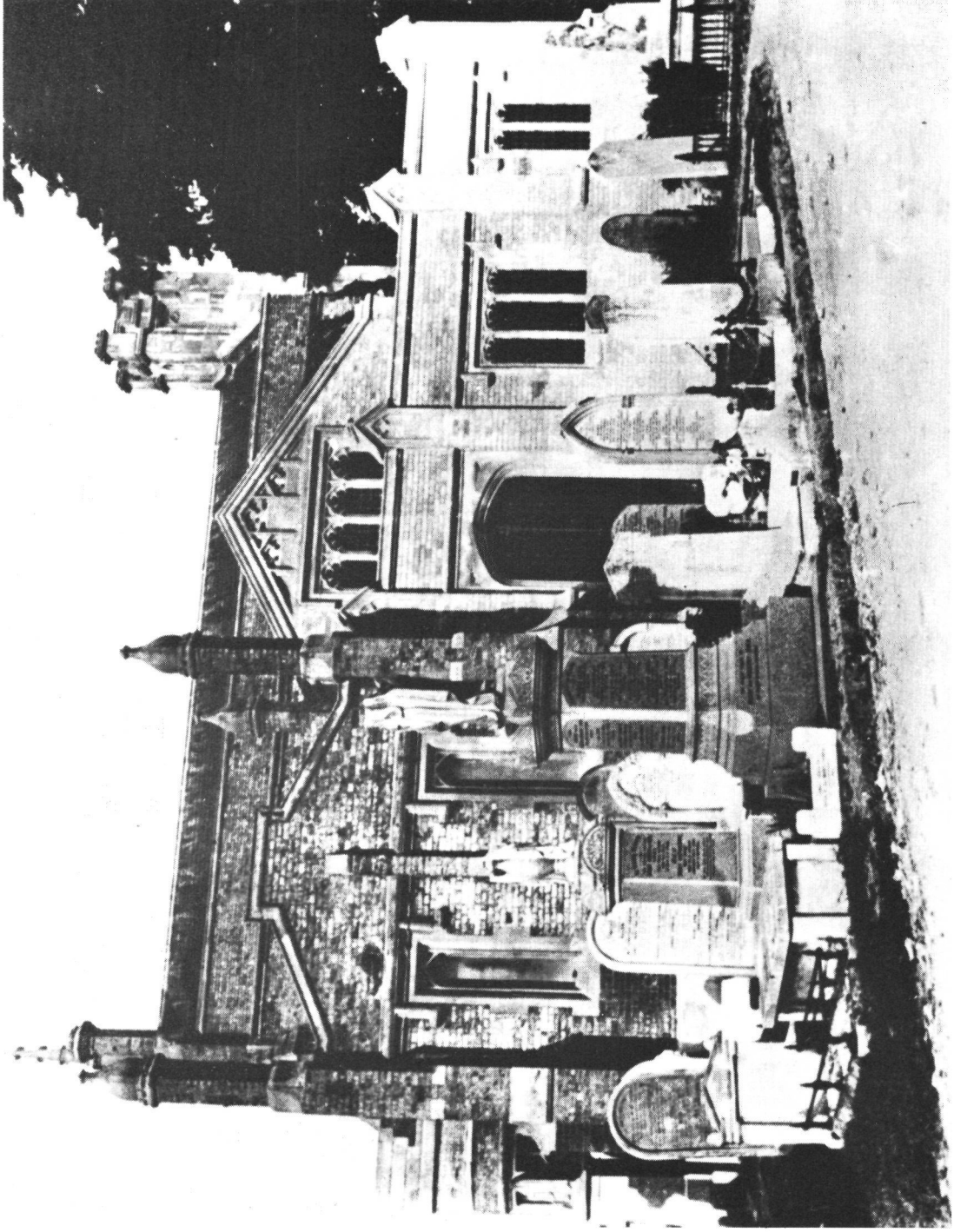


Plate 3. South Metropolitan Cemetery. Dissenters Chapel west side c. 1930. Architect: William Tite, 1837.

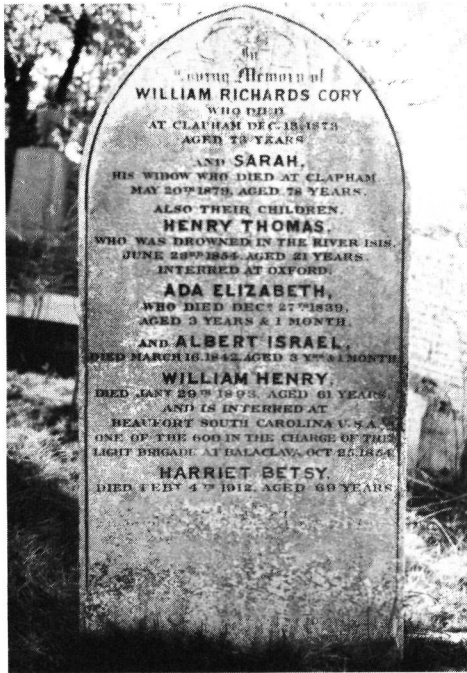


Plate 4. South Metropolitan Cemetery. *Left:* William Henry Cory, 1893, and family.
Right: George Stiepel, 1860.
 Two interesting memorials recently destroyed.

Business men. Two publishers, Henry George Bohn (1884) producer of many popular series, including the British Classics in 600 volumes, and J. C. Nimmo (1907); and two printers William Clowes senior (1847) and junior (1883). Thomas Letts (1873) the son of John Letts of diary fame. He converted a family business into a flourishing company. Henry Sotheran (1905) bookseller.

The miscellaneous section is again the longest. Robert Francis Fairlie (1885) a noted railway engineer; two of the many Colonial administrators who lie at West Norwood, the Hon. William Field (1861) member of the Council of the Cape of Good Hope and Sir George Shenton (1909) President of the Legislative Council of Western Australia; and a sea captain, James Lee (1900) "who commanded successively the ships Bengal, Princess Victoria, Cambrian and Fairfield in the free trade to India and China". Also James Noah Lee (1880) Editor of Bell's Weekly Messenger, "with which paper he was connected for upwards of fifty years", and John Collis Nesbit (1862) chemist and agriculturist, the father of Edith Nesbit the writer of many popular children's books. The grave of Colonel Joseph Crowe V.C. (1876) the first South African to receive that decoration is now empty, his body having been taken to South Africa on the centenary of his death.

There is little figure sculpture of any note in the cemetery. Medallion busts are to be found on the memorials to Frances Welstead (1840), Frederick Royce (1847), Benjamin Colls (1878), Mary Edwards (1892) and James Goodman (1902), and in the Greek Cemetery life size figures of a mother and child, signed Cecil Thomas 1927, can be seen, and another mourning figure nearby signed Alfred Bowker. A monument to George Stiepel (1860) in Square 65 is signed E. J. Physick Sc. Near the main gate is a very unusual memorial which commemorates Henry Clay Gallup, of Upper Norwood, (1885) and his wife Lucy. He was an American who made a fortune in this country by the sale of Fragrant Floriline and Mexican Hair Restorer and the tall monument bears a small inset photograph of his wife and is surmounted by a full length statue of her.

Not far from the St Mary at Hill enclosure, where lie the bodies removed from that City church in 1892, is now a single grave (in Square 21) which contains the unidentified, and now cremated, remains of innumerable persons who once lay in the Burial Ground of St George's Hanover Square, in the Bayswater Road, now built over. It is interesting to speculate who may lie there. Perhaps J. T. Smith, author of "A Book for a Rainy Day" and "Nollekens and his Times", or the parents of Thomas Willement, the famous Victorian stained glass artist, or John Webber (1793) who sailed as draughtsman with Captain Cook on his second voyage round the world, or Colour Sgt. Lawrence Barlow of the 1st Grenadier Guards who fought "in 22 engagements including Corunna, St Sebastian, Waterloo and the taking of Peronne" and died in 1841. We shall never know.

Finally a group of interesting, curious and unusual inscriptions. How many of these will remain by the time this is in print it is impossible to forecast, but a card index of all legible inscriptions will be deposited in the Minet Library, Lambeth.

On the grave of John Burke (1897) an inscription to his daughter Florence Gertrude Armitage "who lost her life in the Lusitania which was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland May 7th 1915".

On the grave of Kate Mary Boyes (1927) an inscription to her parents Surgeon William R. Boyes and his wife Katherine, killed at Cawnpore in the Indian Mutiny 1857.

William Cates, died 25th March, 1878, aged 82 "more than sixty years a member of the

third record founded by God's last true witnesses John Reeve and Lodowick Muggleton in the year 1651. See their writings."

George Cattermole "one of the most eminent painters of his time and founder of the historico-romantic branch of water-colour art in England. He was a member of the Old Water-Colour Society of London, of the Royal Academy Amsterdam and of the Society of Water-Colour Painters Brussels". He also illustrated two of the novels by Charles Dickens. He was born on 10th August, 1800, and died 24th July, 1868.

Lizzette Davoud, "wife of . . . Davoud of Constantinople, in the Empire of Turkey, Pasha of the said Empire". She died 7th June, 1872.

Robert James Ellis "killed by enemy action London Sessions 11 May 1941". One of many such monumental inscriptions of the period 1939-1945.

Louis Genesta, died 20th January, 1894. "He entered the Royal Navy in 1843, served in the New Zealand and Russian Wars, was taken prisoner at the Massacre of Hango. Promoted to Commander in 1866."

John Jones, who on 28th November, 1845 "expired instantaneously whilst engaged in his vocation . . . in the Surveyor General's Office in the Tower of London in which department he was occupied for 41 years," aged 70. With him lie his wife Mary (1852) and his son William Robert, who "was surgeon attached to the President Steamship and perished during her homeward bound voyage from New York from whence she departed on the 11th March 1844 and was not afterwards heard of".

Hannibal H. McArthur who emigrated to New South Wales in 1805 and eventually became a member of the Legislative Council. He died at Norwood aged 73 on 26th October, 1861. "In September 1964 the Queensland Women's Historical Association restored the grave of this Australian Pioneer."

Major Alexander James Polden "late in the service of the Queen of Spain", died 29th April, 1840, aged 39.

Lt. Col. James Ruthvin Pond of the 1st European Bengal Fusiliers, died 17th April, 1857. "He served in the war in Afghanistan, present at the assault and capture of Cheznee, also during the campaign on the Sutledge including the actions of Ferozeshuhur and Sabraon as Asst. Adjt. Genl. to General Sir R. Dicks Division. In the war in Burmah in 1852 & 3 present at the capture of Pegu, 21st Novr. 1852".

On the grave of Elizabeth, wife of Charles Potter of Peckham, who died 16th September, 1839, aged 67, are these rather charming verses, superior to most of the poetical tributes to be found in the cemetery.

Deep in the heart, too deep to be erased
Her countless deeds of active love are traced.
To aid, to bless, was her whole life's employ
In others happiness her highest joy.
Led by the sacred memory of the past,
Endearing visions of the friend they've lost,
Here shall her mourning children oft renew
The grateful feelings to their mother due.

The Rev. George Rose of Bermondsey died 1869 and on his headstone is recorded the death of his son Arthur "who was murdered by the natives of a small island off Fiji" and who was buried at sea off the Island of New Ham on 15th December, 1883, aged 26.

Edward Stephens "one of the earliest settlers in the Colony of South Australia. He was

many years manager of the Bank of South Australia at Adelaide and sometime a member of the Colonial Legislative Council". He died at Maida Vale 12th March, 1861.

Herbert George Tomkins "1/23rd London Regiment, fell May 26, 1915, at Givenchy whilst holding trenches captured from Prussian Guards". Typical of many such inscriptions dating from the First World War.

Mrs Mary Scriven who died at Camberwell in 1936 at the age of 104, has the distinction of being the oldest person buried in the cemetery.

Access having been obtained to the catacombs it was found that many of the memorials from the Cloisters and also the tablet to Sir William Tite, once in the Episcopal Chapel, had been placed there when the building was demolished in 1960. Some few are broken but the remainder are stacked against the walls.

Of the six other cemeteries opened in the same period as West Norwood, Highgate, it is hoped will be restored, Kensal Green is still in use as a private cemetery, Nunhead is to be landscaped and many of the memorials removed, and the future of Abney Park is uncertain.

Brompton is in the care of the Department of the Environment and is a shining example of an old cemetery kept in good order by only a small staff whilst retaining all the monuments, great or small.

LIST OF THOSE PERSONS COMMEMORATED IN THE SOUTH METROPOLITAN CEMETERY

who are also included in The Dictionary of National Biography (Additional to that printed in *Collectanea Londiniensia*)¹.

APPOLD	John George	1800-1865	9,928.76
BEALE	Thomas Willert	1828-1894	26,001.21
BOHN	Henry George	1796-1884	4,321.63
BRISTOWE ²	John Syer	1827-1895	11,243.34
BROWN	Robert	1842-1895	27,034.120
BROWN	Samuel	1810-1875	15,318.79
CALLENDER ³	George William	1830-1879	11,570.37
CLOWES	William	1807-1883	645.34
CLOWES	William	1779-1847	1,616.34
CORNWELL	James	1812-1902	3,440.48
FAGGE	Charles Hilton	1838-1883	19,889.21
FAIRLIE	Robert Francis	1831-1885	20,788.21
GURNEY	William Brodie	1777-1855	419.40
GYE ⁴	Frederick	1810-1878	939.98
HAINES	William	1778-1848	2,065.47
HARROD	Henry	1817-1871	13,058.23
HERAPATH	John	1790-1868	3,604.64
KEARNS	William Henry	1794-1846	1,588.119
MacFARLANE	John	1807-1875	11,801.40
MacGREGOR	John	1797-1857	3,615.67

MALLET	Robert	1810-1881	11,023.109
MILLER	William Allen	1817-1870	12,126.75
MURCHISON	Charles	1830-1879	4,025.36
NESBIT	John Collis	1818-1862	Catacombs
NOAD	Henry Minchin	1815-1877	16,626.21
PEPPER	John Henry	1821-1900	23,229.23
PHELPS	William	1776-1856	3,645.85
POOLE	Edward Stanley	1830-1867	10,405.61
POOLE	Sophia	1804-1891	10,405.61
SANGSTER	Samuel	1804-1872	Cat. 16
SEYMOUR	Edward James	1796-1866	10,238.48
SIMMS	William	1793-1860	79.64
SKEFFINGTON	Sir Lumley St George	1771-1850	2,750.61
SOPWITH	Thomas	1803-1879	17,339.91
STRANGE	Thomas Lumisden	1808-1884	20,310.27
THOMPSON	Theophilus	1807-1860	7,144.35
TIDD	William	1760-1847	1,633.62
TINWORTH	George	1843-1913	18,786.118
WEBSTER	Thomas	1810-1875	1,858.65
WILLIAMS	William Mattieu	1820-1892	15,429.21

¹Eric E. F. Smith 'The South Metropolitan Cemetary, West Norwood, and its memorials' *Collectanea Londiniensia* London Middx. Archaeol. Soc. Special Paper No. 2 (1978) 436-452.

²J. S. Bristowe lies in the vault of Joseph Stearns.

³The D.N.B. appears to be in error in giving the year of death as 1878.

⁴F. Gye lies in the vault of Richard Hughes.

(The numbers in the final column are the grave numbers and the section number, the cemetery being divided into squares on the plan.)