

**U3A Bikers  
London Parks and cemeteries  
Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>February 2022**

This was a new ride for the group, researched by John and Denise who had reconnoitred it no fewer than four times, to find the best route for the group.

We were a large group (seventeen in number) as we assembled at Brockwell Park Lido.

We took the opportunity to welcome Nick to his first ride with the group.

On this occasion we headed around the park and left it to cross into Rosendale Road and up the side of Norwood Cemetery to Norwood High Street.

This brought us to the Robson Entrance.

Known as the “Millionaires Cemetery” because of the number and quality of the mausoleums it was the most fashionable cemetery in South London. (It was the place to be seen, perhaps?)

Denise provided us with a short summary of the history of the cemetery and some notable people who were buried here

Retracing our steps, we headed back down the hill towards Dulwich Village, passing the Dulwich College building on the way to Belair Park.

Leaving the park at the Gallery Road entrance brought us to the Dulwich Picture Gallery.

The cycle racks already had a number of bikes in place but we managed to secure ours before heading to the café (Flotsam and Jetsam) to order refreshments.





The spacious garden was just the right place to sit and shelter from a cool wind, and to live up to our moniker, the “chattering cyclists”.

Across Dulwich Park and left via Fireman’s Passage and through the properties at Bew Court. Crossing Lordship Lane and into Melford Road soon led us to the entrance to Camberwell Old Cemetery.

Spotted by Juliet at the entrance, at our feet, was as stone inscribed “I shall remember while the light lasts and in the darkness I shall not forget”.



We circled the cemetery, pausing to look at the very ornate gravestone to one Victoria Josephine O'Brien with a dozen or so dedications from members of the family.

Less ostentatious but more moving was the screen wall memorial of names of those who died in the Great War.

It seems that they had probably died of their wounds, perhaps in a nearby hospital after returning to England, with death dates mostly after 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918.

Here too was a Memorial to the twenty one civilians who were killed by Zeppelin bombings in 1917.

In this cemetery in November 2011 one Azezur Khan was shot dead after attending a funeral. Police believe that Mr Khan was an innocent bystander.

Just half a mile away was the Camberwell New Cemetery with its distinctive mortuary chapel.

Here are buried Anne Shelton (1923–1994) the popular singer and the 'Forces' Favourite in World War II, and Freddie Mills, world light heavyweight boxing champion from 1948 to 1950.

The next stop was at the All Saints Cemetery at Nunhead which is one of the seven great Victorian cemeteries (the “**Magnificent Seven**”) established around London between 1832 and 1841.

A number of music hall personalities are buried here. The music halls flourished in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and many were to be found in this area, in Lewisham, Peckham, New Cross and Bermondsey.

The Anglican Chapel remains derelict, having been vandalised by arsonists in the 1970s.

A memorial commemorates the nine Sea Scouts age 11 to 14 who drowned off Leysdown, the Isle of Sheppey, in 1912.



The **Scottish Political Martyrs' Memorial** is an obelisk at the Linden Grove entrance to the cemetery.



Leaving from this entrance we headed down to Peckham Rye Park and The Round café with its outdoor seating where lunch was taken.

The café was serving roast peppers soup which some of us ordered. Then it was time to leave to make our way home.

Once again, a big “thank you” to John and Denise from the group. We all enjoyed this interesting local ride and we were reminded that there is much more to see and learn about, just on our doorstep.

Finally, one of the group sent in this photo of bicycle.

It has been suggested that we have a competition for the most interesting, amusing or unusual picture and this week we say, Ann, you are the winner!



Distance: 11 miles, 3½ hours with stops.

Riders: Andrew and Mary, Ann, Chris, David, Denise and John, Dilwen, Felicity, Gisella, Irene, Jane, Jane and Joe, John, Juliet, Martin.

*Acknowledgement of source material: Wikipedia; Guidelines to Britain*

*Ride leaders: Denise and John Davies*

*Report by John Clements, 1st February 2022*

## Notes

### **The Magnificent Seven**

The "Magnificent Seven" is an informal term applied to seven large private cemeteries in London. They were established in the 19th century to alleviate overcrowding in existing parish burial grounds. The seven cemeteries are at Kensal Green, West Norwood, Highgate, Abney Park, Brompton, Nunhead and Tower Hamlets.

### **Scottish Political Martyrs' Memorial**

Towards the end of the 18th century there were a number of movements for Parliamentary Reform which the government of William Pitt the Younger were determined to stamp out. A Convention was held in Edinburgh with delegates from 45 Scottish reform societies and 3 English societies. The Convention was dispersed by the authorities and a number of the delegates sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay in Australia. In February 1837, a meeting at Clerkenwell Green (in the Crown and Anchor) decided to commemorate what were now known as the Scottish Martyrs by erecting monuments in Edinburgh and London. The London monument is 33 feet high, weighs 40 tons and is built of granite.

**West Norwood Cemetery** is a 40-acre (16 ha) rural cemetery in West Norwood in London, England. It was also known as the South Metropolitan Cemetery. One of the first private landscaped cemeteries in London, it is one of the "Magnificent Seven" cemeteries of London, and is a site of major historical, architectural and ecological interest. Believed by some to hold the finest collection of sepulchral monuments in London, the cemetery features 69 Grade II and Grade II\* listed buildings and structures, including a dedicated Greek Orthodox necropolis with 19 listed mausoleums and monuments. It is one of the **Magnificent Seven** metropolitan lawn cemeteries of the Victorian era, and its extensive Gothic Revival architecture qualifies it as one of the significant cemeteries in Europe. The cemetery was established 1837; around 200, 000 interments and 42, 000+ graves!



Its grounds are a mixture of historic monumental cemetery and modern lawn cemetery, but it also has catacombs, cremation plots and a columbarium for cinerary ashes. Gothic inner gates to the cemetery, designed by Sir William Tite.

The cemetery was founded by its own Act of Parliament of 1836 and consecrated for its first burials in 1837.

The site of the cemetery was part of the ancient **Great North Wood**, from which Norwood took its name. Although many trees had been cleared, a number of mature specimens were included in Tite's original landscaping. A tree survey of the cemetery in 2005 identified one oak which is thought to date from 1540 to 1640. Fourteen more oaks, a maple and an ash tree were identified that predate the foundation of the cemetery in 1836.

In the first years of the cemetery's operation, these were joined by coniferous trees and evergreen holm oaks.



Doulton Mausoleum    Mrs Beeton's grave    Henry Tate Mausoleum    Sir Henry Bessemer

Also, In 1842, a section of the cemetery was acquired by London's Greek community for a **Greek Orthodox** cemetery. The Greek necropolis is overseen by the trustees of the Cathedral of Saint Sophia. [Contributed by Denise].

**Other photos**



*In Dulwich Park*



*Memorial to the sea scouts*

*Inscription in stone*



