NUNHEAD CEMETERY, LONDON

A History of the Planning, Architecture, Landscaping and Fortunes of a Great Nineteenth-century Cemetery

By James Stevens Curl

> The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.
>
> Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822): from the Preface to *Adonais*.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have long been interested in the extraordinary phenomenon of the Victorian Age. In particular, I have always found the strange melancholy of graveyards and cemeteries peculiarly moving. The tombstones, mausolea and monuments set among evergreens and mature trees have often intrigued, delighted, and saddened me. The pious inscriptions, protesting too much about never-to-be-forgotten lives that are all too patently forgotten, induce a profound mood of regret, of longing, and even of despair. The ephemeral nature of life itself, and the transience of emotions, of family ties, of kinship, and even of love, are brought home again and again to the beholder of neglected graves, of vandalised monuments, and of fading inscriptions. A great monument that leans drunkenly, about to topple into a mass of undergrowth, I often see is barely a century old, and sometimes a lot less. In the neglected cemeteries there are hundreds of thousands of such expensive memorials to families, today of no interest to the descendants of those families or to anyone else. Long lists of names are often inscribed, with a statement referring to the sureness of a resurrection. Even if the Victorians were certain of celestial bliss, the transient nature of their certainty, and our own complete lack of it, is nowhere

demonstrated more poignantly than in the great cemeteries of London.

I first started to photograph the London Cemeteries in the 1960s, when they were already in decline, but, in the second half of the 1970s, that decline has been rapid. Vandalism, neglect, arson and the financial difficulties of maintenance have all contributed, but the change, in a decade, is shocking. Not only is the smashing of tombstones commonplace, but the disturbing of graves, the burning of chapels, mausolea, and lodges, and the destruction of railings, gates, and walls are now usual. This desecration reflects seriously on the state of our society, and on the ethics, or lack of them, among the young.

The purpose of this paper is to tell the story of one of the great nineteenth-century cemeteries of London: that of the Cemetery of All Saints, Nunhead.

The grand cemeteries of the last century were showpieces at the time of their creation. They were products of a radical reform movement just as significant in the history of the urban fabric as those other political and sanitary reforms that were features of the liberal climate of the epoch. As a result of the ignorance of the importance of the nineteenth-century cemeteries, they are in danger of being destroyed, since appreciation of their merits is non-existent, or exists only in a minority of students of the period. Many cemeteries have been destroyed; it is feared that many, many more will be consigned to oblivion before a few will finally be preserved in part. It is tragic that, in an age when so much lip-service is paid to conservation, the cemeteries are so little appreciated.

I am extremely grateful to Miss Laura Grenfell and to the Ancient Monuments Society for asking me to write this most necessary history. I am also very grateful to the Worshipful Company of Grocers for having provided the Society with some funds for this purpose.

My thanks are due to Mr. F. A. Wragg and Mr. Robert J. Cook of the Borough Engineer's Department, London Borough of Southwark, for invaluable help in making material available for study. I am also very grateful to other members of the staff of the London Borough of Southwark, including Mr. A. Vercouttere, Miss M. Boast, and Mr. Frank Nilan for assistance with documents, photographs and other material. All have

been extremely courteous and helpful. I should also like to thank Mr. David Dean and the staff of the R.I.B.A. Library for their help. I am also grateful to Mr. John Harris and the staff of the R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection for help with the Little drawings of Nunhead.

The staffs of the Bodleian Library, Oxford; of the British Museum Reading Room; of the Public Record Office; and of the various public libraries I have consulted also have my gratitude. I owe especial thanks to Mr. Ralph Hyde of the Guildhall Library, and to Mr. B. R. Curle of the Libraries of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

If I have omitted to mention any other helper, it has been unintentional, for I thank all those who aided me with the project.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Too late the wished-for boon has come,
Too late wiped out the strain,—
No Schedule shall restore to health,
No Act give life again
To the thousands whom, in bygone years,
Our City Graves have slain!

An anonymous poem in *Household Words*,
14 December 1850

The Industrial Revolution brought wealth and death. The mortality rates for the first half of the nineteenth century are horrifying, while the dense concentrations of people, and the frequency of death made it hard to forget the ephemeral nature of existence. In 1842, for example, the average age at death of a professional man and his family was thirty years, while it was only seventeen for mechanics, labourers, and their families. These figures are taken from the famous *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, but they are made rather more melodramatic by the fact that the average included *families*, the figures obviously affected by the high infant mortality rate.

The poor lived in conditions that were the subject of concern

throughout the century, and yet the better-off were not spared frequent visitations from the Angel of Death. We recall that the Prince Consort died from the effects of bad sanitation. Yet the Victorian age was one of unparalleled reform in sanitation, for clean drinking-water and adequate sewers were provided during that epoch. It is not surprising that, as part of this reform of sanitation, the Victorians should turn their attention to the disposal of the dead in an hygienic manner. Never before had the population been so great, and it was still increasing at a phenomenal rate. When Victoria ascended the throne, there were only five places in England and Wales outside London with a population of 100,000 or more. In 1800 there had been none. By 1891 there were twenty-three.[1] The numbers of dead to be buried were enormous, and something very much more satisfactory than the old parish churchyard burial had to be devised, for it must be remembered that what had once been a small town graveyard often had to suffice as a cemetery for the new towns that had grown round the old settlement.

It had become apparent that some radical and hygienic method of disposing of the dead should be adopted. The state of the churchyards, especially in London, was deplorable, and John Evelyn campaigned for the formation of cemeteries outside the City after the Plague and Fire of 1665–6. It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that any major reforms were made, although the Dissenters had formed their own model cemetery at Bunhill Fields much earlier. The radical idea of establishing a large cemetery was therefore first carried out by Dissenters, for the reason that burial in the old churchyards was associated with the Established Church and also with Popery, and therefore was distasteful. The Church could deny burial in consecrated ground to Dissenters, while they, in turn, were in no mind to be buried in such ground. Besides, and probably more contentious, was the whole vexed question of payment of burial fees to the Established Church. It was obviously felt that separate burial grounds were essential.

Among the first cities in the British Isles to establish cemeteries away from the centres was Belfast. The old cemetery at Carlisle Circus was largely founded by radical thinkers at the end of the eighteenth century. It is not insignificant that many of the leaders of the 1798 rebellion were, in fact, Protestant Irishmen

who were steeped in the ideals of the French Revolution, and in Freemasonry. In Scotland, too, cemeteries had been formed, notably the Calton Hill burial ground in Edinburgh, that was quite divorced from a churchyard.

It was, however, the redoubtable barrister, George Frederick Carden, who appears to have been the first to suggest *public* cemeteries in England in the nineteenth century. From 1824, *The Penny Magazine* had given Carden considerable coverage for his campaign to improve the burial grounds of Britain. He compared the "abodes of the dead in France, Spain, Germany, and in the principal States of America" with the "hideous burial-grounds" of Britain. The new cemeteries were "open and airy spaces, mostly decent, frequently beautiful", that often "formed the favourite places of resort for the neighbouring population". France had honourably distinguished herself in this matter, for she purified her metropolis by the Herculean task of removing the enormous masses of human remains from the churchyards to the famous Catacombs, where now lie the bones of several million people.

Liverpool was among the first of English cities to establish a cemetery in modern times. St. James's Cemetery was created from a disused stone quarry during the years 1825–9 at a cost of £21,000. It was for many years the chief burial place of Liverpudlians. The architect was John Foster who made a dramatic setting for this great necropolis. Liverpool, with its income from port dues, and a large municipal trade, was in advance of other cities in terms of urban and sanitary reform. The large percentage of Nonconformists in the population helped to create a climate of opinion favourable to the formation of a non-denominational cemetery.

It was predictable that the examples of France and of Liverpool would spur Glasgow on to reform. In the early years of the nineteenth century Glasgow was a forward-looking, adventurous city, with men of education and liberal tastes to guide its destinies. The Fir Park, adjacent to the cathedral of St. Mungo, resembled Mount Louis in Paris where the cemetery of Père Lachaise had been laid out. The ground had been bought in 1650 by the Merchants' House, and in the late 1820s discussions were held with a view to forming a cemetery modelled on Père Lachaise. The original proposal to form a

necropolis on the site was made by Dean of Guild James Ewing, later Provost and M.P., supported by Laurence Hill, the Collector, and by John Strang, the Chamberlain. When John Strang published his *Necropolis Glasguensis with Osbervations* (sic) *on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture* in Glasgow in 1831, the only burial grounds to serve the city were those that had an ancient origin and that were associated with churches. The proposed Glasgow Necropolis was to be non-denominational and open to every faith. Advertisements were placed in January 1831 for plans, sections and estimates for the conversion of the park into an ornamental cemetery in a manner which should best embrace "economy, security, and picturesque effect". This was the first major cemetery in Scotland, and in terms of hygiene and sanitation it inaugurated a new era in Glasgow.

When Dr. Strang's book was reviewed in the *Edinburgh Observer* it was stated that if the scheme were successful, it would be of enormous benefit. Strang himself was described as a "brilliant super-orthodox luminary burning in a dense cloud of Scotch prejudice and Glasgow smoke". The first burial was in 1832, and the cemetery quickly became a success. There can be no cemetery in Britain as spectacular as the Glasgow Necropolis, and the cemetery appears as a dreamlike vision of Attic splendour, on a hill beside the cathedral. Every style of architectural monument, from purest Greek Doric to Moresque Mausolea is represented. When John Claudius Loudon visited the Glasgow Necropolis in 1841 he noted that the impression was "grand and melancholy". He was particularly impressed by the "totally different character" of the "tombs and gravestones, even at a distance, for there appears to be no mean, trivial, or vulgar" form among them. Loudon also noted that the monuments were all vertical, and there was nothing of the untidy effect of English cemeteries. The designs of the stones were "of a very superior kind . . . , all the monuments in the Glasgow cemtery convey the dignified idea of being built, and had not the mean appearance of being thrust in like slates, or laid down like pavement".

It was clear that the movement to found cemeteries was well under way, but London still lagged behind the provinces. On 8th February 1830, George Frederick Carden convened a

meeting to establish the best mode of interment for the metropolis. From this meeting, recorded on page 1 of the minutes of the General Cemetery Company, the first large cemetery in London developed as a reality. John Claudius Loudon wrote to the *Morning Advertiser* of 14 May 1830 to set out his ideas on the subject. He advocated several burial grounds, equidistant from each other, and from the centre of the metropolis. They should be regularly laid out and planted with every sort of hardy tree and shrub, so that they could become botantic gardens. "The burial-places for the metropolis", he wrote, "ought to be made sufficiently large to serve at the same time as breathing places".

The General Cemetery Company was the first commercial cemetery in London. When it is realised that the population of London increased by a fifth in the 1820s, and that the average number of new burials was two hundred per acre, an idea of the hideous conditions that pervaded in the old burial grounds may be gained. Between 1832 and 1847 Parliament authorised the establishment of eight commercial cemetery companies in the London area.

Carden's first proposal for a site for a General Cemetery was at Primrose Hill. Interest was aroused, and Thomas Willson exhibited a design for a huge "Pyramid Cemetery for the Metropolis" in 1824. Pugin and Brunel exhibited a more orthodox plan for a cemetery in 1827, and many other architects followed suit, no doubt spurred on by the fact that St. James's Cemetery at Liverpool was paying a dividend of 8% in 1830. In July 1832 the Bill "for establishing a General Cemetery for the Interment of the Dead in the Neighbourhood of the Metropolis" received the Royal assent.[2] The passage of the Bill was no doubt smoothed by the fact that in October 1831, the first cholera epidemic was experienced, and, apart from the chaos caused in the already overcrowded churchyards, new theories were proposed that actually blamed the epidemics on the evil miasmas that arose from the burial grounds. The Bill incorporated the General Cemetery Company, and authorised it to raise up to £45,000 in shares of £25. Eighty acres of land were bought and chapels, designed by J. W. Griffith, were built. In order to get over objections from the clergy, many of whom depended for their incomes on the revenues from burial

fees, the Act of Incorporation provided that for each burial a fee ranging from 1s. 6d. to 5s. should be paid to the incumbent of the parish from which the body came.

Architectural passions as well as rivalries were aroused when the General Cemetery of All Souls, Kensal Green, was founded. Several architects tried to interest the infant company in their designs, including Thomas Willson, but the views of Carden prevailed, and the committee accepted Carden's opinion that the cemetery should follow the example of Père Lachaise where the public were "at liberty to erect what description of monuments they please".

The Company acquired land adjoining the Harrow Road, and had excellent access to London by road and via the Grand Junction Canal. Indeed, funerals by water were proposed, and early architectural design allowed for water gates for access from the canal. The layout of the cemetery was derived from a number of sources, but the main designers appear to have been Griffith, Sir John Dean Paul (the banker), Pugin, and Mr. Liddell, who had worked under John Nash.

An architectural competition was arranged for the designs of the buildings in 1831. There were no less than forty-six entrants for the competition, and in March 1832 the premium was awarded to H. E. Kendall for his designs in the Gothic mode, but in 1833 Paul defeated the pro-Gothic camp in favour of Greek Revival, and the designs of J. W. Griffith for the Anglican and Nonconformist chapels, Catacombs, and Gate Lodge were accepted. All were in a neo-classical manner.

The Cemetery of All Souls, Kensal Green, was consecrated on 24 January 1833, and the Anglican chapel, in a Greek Doric style, was completed in 1837. Cemetery companies had become respectable, and Griffith's son, William Pettit Griffith, was anxious to establish himself as an expert in the field of cemetery design. Many architects were contenders in the same field. Kensal Green had two sections, one for Anglicans, and the other for Dissenters, whilst many catacombs were provided under both chapels, and against the wall of the Harrow Road. The Cemetery was helped to fashionable status by its choice by Princess Sophia and the Duke of Sussex (both children of King George III) for a burial place.

By 1839 Kensal Green Cemetery was described as being a

flourishing concern, and the original £25 shares of the General Cemetery Company were priced at £52. This success encouraged the formation of other cemeteries that followed in rapid succession from 1836. The first of these later private cemeteries was established at Norwood by the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company. It comprised some forty acres, and was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester on 6 December 1837. The South Metropolitan Cemetery was established by an Act of Parliament dated 28 July 1836.[3] It was designed by Sir William Tite, with two chapels, one for Anglicans and the other for Dissenters. This time, the buildings were in the Gothic manner, and the landscape was in the picturesque tradition.

Within a month, another Bill was passed by Parliament that became "An Act for establishing cemeteries for the Interment of the Dead, Northward, Southward, and Eastward of the Metropolis, by a Company to be called the *London* Cemetery Company" dated 17 August 1836.[4]

"Whereas the Cemeteries or Burial Grounds within the Cities of *London* and *Westminster* and the immediate suburbs thereof are of limited extent, and many of them having been long in use are so occupied and filled with Graves and Vaults as to be altogether insufficient for the increased and increasing Population in the Neighbourhood thereof, and not equal to afford those Facilities for the Interment of Bodies which is necessary and essential to the Convenience of the present and increasing Population", the Act argued the case for setting up large cemeteries, well-regulated and maintained.

The Company was empowered to establish and maintain three cemeteries in Surrey, Kent and Middlesex. One was to be in the Parish of Camberwell and in the parishes adjoining; another was to be in the Parish of St. Pancras, and adjoining parishes; and the other was to be in Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Stepney, Bow, Mile End, or Stratford. Paths, walks, avenues, roads, trees, shrubs, plantations, and other embellishments were to be laid out and planted, and the cemeteries were to be enclosed by proper walls, fences, gates, etc.

Part of the cemeteries was to be set aide and consecrated for the interment of the dead according to the rites and usages of the "United Church of *England* and *Ireland*", and was to be consecrated by a bishop. Other parts were to be set aside for the

burial of Dissenters. Chapels for Anglicans and Dissenters were to be built, and catacombs and any other necessary structures were allowed by the Act.

Exclusive rights of burial in vaults or graves could be sold in perpetuity or for a limited period. Proper conveyances were to be provided, and full records were to be kept. The company was obliged by law to "keep the said cemeteries respectively and the said Chapel or Chapels respectively, and the several Buildings thereon and therein, and the external Walls and Fences thereof, and all other Parts of the same, in thorough and complete Repair". Plans were to be kept, with full records of all burials and transactions, and fees were to be paid to the Incumbents of parishes from which corpses derived.

The London Cemetery Company established offices at 29 New Bridge Street, E.C., and laid out the Cemetery of St. James at Highgate, which was consecrated on 20 May 1839. It is odd that the name of Stephen Geary is not mentioned in the list of proprietors, for he was described as "Architect and Founder" of Highgate Cemetery on his tombstone.[5] He died of cholera, aged 56. Geary is also described as the "Founder of the Cemeteries at Highgate, Nunhead, Peckham, Westminster, Gravesend, Brighton, etc." on the title page of a book of *Cemetery Designs for Tombs and Cenotaphs* (1840) engraved by B. Winkles. Geary's exact part in the design of cemeteries is difficult to establish. Only his work for the West of London and Westminster Cemetery Company is known from documentary evidence.[6]

It would appear, however, that Geary acted as Architect to the company in its early days, and carried out initial surveys. He was probably responsible for the appointment of David Ramsay as landscape gardener to the company. Ramsay was a nurseryman at Brompton who subsequently became a speculative builder. Geary was succeeded as architect by James Bunstone Bunning around 1839. Bunning was born in London on 6 October 1802. He was described as an "Architect in London, Surveyor of the Foundling Hospital 1825", and was appointed surveyor to the London Cemetery Company in 1839. Among his chief works were Highgate and Nunhead Cemeteries, the Coal Exchange, Holloway Gaol, Billingsgate Market, and the Metropolitan Cattle Market at Copenhagen Fields near

Pentonville. He was City Architect of London for some twenty years after he left the London Cemetery Company. He died in 1863 and is buried in Highgate Cemetery.

Highgate must be the most unashamedly romantic of all the cemeteries in Britain, and comprised some fifty acres. It is picturesque, and the treatments of winding circuitous paths was by J. B. Bunning and David Ramsay. Perhaps the most astonishing feature of the cemetery is the series of buildings that form the catacombs. These are in a neo-Egyptian style, and are awe-inspiring. Highgate became a fashionable burial-ground, and the Company determined to proceed with the formation of other cemeteries.

THE CEMETERY OF ALL SAINTS, NUNHEAD

> Churchyards and cemeteries are scenes not only calculated to improve the morals and the taste, and by their botanical riches to cultivate the intellect, but they serve as *historical records.*
>
> John Claudius Loudon.

I have established Nunhead Cemetery in its historical context. I shall now describe that cemetery in detail, together with the subsequent fortunes of the London Cemetery Company.

The desirability of the new cemeteries was further helped by the cholera epidemics and by the pioneering polemics of George Alfred Walker, whose *Gatherings from Graveyards, particularly those of London; with a concise History of the Modes of Interment among different Nations, from the earliest Periods; and a Detail of dangerous and fatal Results produced by the unwise and revolting Custom of inhuming the Dead in the midst of the Living* was published in 1839.

Opinion was formed by writers such as Carden and Walker, and by the success of the other cemeteries. One of the most influential of writers of the period was John Claudius Loudon, who was a remarkable thinker, a prolific writer, and a former of taste. As Editor of *The Gardener's Magazine*, and as author of a number of influential works, Loudon had been an early advocate of cemeteries. He was to collate and publish his views in *On the*

Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries, and on the Improvement of Churchyards (1843). Loudon wrote unsentimentally of suitable trees, of proper drainage, of costs and capacities, of styles of architecture, and of cremation. He saw the possibilities of forming funerary monuments to wealthy and influential persons in order to further the case of taste and style. He saw cemeteries as improving "the moral sentiments and general taste of all classes, and more especially of the great masses of society".

Loudon saw a cemetery as, above all, a place for the safe decomposition of dead bodies, and a place of remembrance of the dead. Potentially, it was an open space for recreation, for liberal and moral education, and for the peace of the living. Cemeteries should be sited outside but near towns, so that, properly laid out, "ornamented" with tombs, and planted with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, all named, the cemetery could become a "school of instruction in architecture, sculpture, landscape gardening, aboriculture, botany, and the important points of general gardening: neatness, order, and high keeping". Loudon was in enthusiastic agreement with John Strang, who wrote in *Necropolis Glasguensis* (1831) that a "garden cemetery and monumental decoration are not only beneficial to public morals, to improvement of manners, but are likewise calculated to extend virtuous and generous feelings . . . a garden cemetery gives a token of a nation's progress in civilisation and in arts, which are its result".

Clearly, as the population of London expanded, churchyards closed, and cholera struck again, it would be profitable to set up more cemeteries. Under 6 and 7 William IV, *c.* 136, local, The London Cemetery Company set up the Cemetery of All Saints, Nunhead, to cater for the burial of the dead south of the river. As at Highgate, a hill-top site was chosen, this time at Nunhead, near Peckham. The fifty-one acres of the Cemetery of All Saints were consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester on 29 July 1840, although some acres were reserved for Dissenters.

Nunhead forms a huge wedge of open space, well planted with mature trees. It is the best-known landscape layout of James Bunstone Bunning, Surveyor to the London Cemetery Company. A formal drive approaches the Anglican chapel through noble entrance gates of cast iron suspended from

Portland stone classical piers designed by Bunning. The stone piers are adorned with cast-iron inverted torches, symbolic of the extinguishing of life. This axial approach is further emphasised by the rows of trees that flank the drive and draw the eye inexorably to the pinnacles and *porte-cochère* of the Anglican chapel. Just inside the entrance gates in Linden Grove are two symmetrically designed lodges, of exquisite design in a neo-classical manner, with a piling-up of chimney motifs, and a clustering of simplified classical ornament. These lodges, though tiny, have a grandeur of scale worthy of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's work in Berlin, or the designs of Alexander Thomson in Glasgow. Something of the influence of Soane, Schinkel, von Klenze, and J. B. Papworth may be detected. Although both lodges are now derelict, the brickwork and masonry are in good condition. Both are buildings of the first quality, and are representative of Bunning at his most inventive. Since so much of his work has been destroyed, these lodges should be restored and used.

Yet this grand, obsessive, dramatic, formal, and axial approach to the Anglican chapel is the only concession to classicism, apart from the lodges and the gates. Subsidiary entrances and the boundary walls, (of stock brick with stone dressings) are in a stripped-down classical manner. A subsidiary road at right angles to the main drive led to the Dissenters' Chapel and to the outer paths of the cemetery. Elsewhere, throughout the grounds, the drives and paths are circuitous and winding, somewhat reminiscent of the layout at Highgate that may have owed something to the designs of Stephen Geary.

Generally, the monuments of Nunhead Cemetery are not as distinguished as those in Kensal Green, Highgate, Brompton, or Norwood, perhaps reflecting the less socially élite buried there. Among the most impressive memorials is the great 33-foot high granite obelisk to commemorate the Scots Martyrs to the cause of Parliamentary Reform. This was erected in 1851 from funds collected by Joseph Hume, M.P., and celebrates the memories of those Scots who were sentenced to transportation for advocating a representative democratic system. This, of course, is a memorial, or cenotaph. A similar obelisk, of Craigleith stone, had been erected in the Calton Hill Cemetery in Edinburgh, in 1846, and it was the remainder of

the fund that was expended on the memorial at Nunhead. Most other monuments are actually over the graves of those buried there. Several eminent City merchants and businessmen are buried in Nunhead, and there are several brick vaults and graves, surmounted by broken columns, obelisks, urns, angels, and other familiar motifs of the Victorian Celebration of Death.

As with Kensal Green and Brompton, a competition was arranged for the design of the chapels. This was won by the architect Thomas Little in 1844. Born in 1802, Little was a pupil of Robert Abraham. He designed St. Mark's, Regent's Park, in 1848; All Saints', St. John's Wood, in 1850, and St. Saviour's, Paddington, in 1856. The designs for the two chapels are in a chaste gothic of the Decorated style, and the buildings were constructed of Kentish ragstone with freestone dressings. Little also designed the Cemetery for the Parish of Paddington in Willesden Lane, one of the first non-commercial cemeteries. Little's complete drawings for the Nunhead chapels survive in the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Little died on 20 December 1859. The chapels have been incorrectly ascribed to Bunning elsewhere, notably by Pevsner in *The Buildings of England, London*, Volume 2.

By the time J. C. Loudon published his work on cemeteries in 1843, Nunhead Cemetery was a going concern. Some early prints are indicative of the charm of this semi-rural cemetery. Nunhead Cemetery certainly provided a site of which Loudon would have approved, for he felt that the "chapel or chapels ought to be placed in a central and conspicuous situation, so as, if possible, to be seen from all the prominent points of view along the roads and walks". Loudon criticised the lodges at Nunhead, for he felt that they were unrelated to the gates and walls, and would have been more useful as one building.

It is interesting to note that the first superintendent of Nunhead Cemetery, Mr. E. Buxton, is mentioned in Loudon's book. Buxton appears to have been a go-ahead, inventive fellow, for Loudon illustrates his invention of grave-boards. One board was put in beneath another as a grave was excavated, and each board was kept in place by the end struts which were driven outwards by a mallet at each end of the grave. These grave-boards used by Buxton were in four parts: two sides, each of which was hinged on a bevelled edge, so that they could

not be disturbed; and two ends which were really struts to keep the sides apart. The sides were kept in place by the pressure of the soil, against which they acted as arches.

Buxton was quoted by Loudon as taking "a deep interest in the Nunhead Cemetery, and in the subject of cemeteries generally". This is an understatement, as we shall see.

The London Cemetery Company had meetings once a year, and accounts were presented annually. Thix appears to be a contravention of the Act (6 Vic. Cap 36) that stated meetings should be held every six months. The Company appeared to do well for some twenty-five years, and both Highgate and Nunhead were greatly admired.

At the Annual General Meeting of 1863, it was reported that receipts at Nunhead were up by £200, and the number of burials by 40. The Company was in difficulties in 1864 when the approaches to the cemetery were obstructed by new railway works, and takings declined. The following year, however, was nearly the end of the company, for it was shaken by a scandal of the greatest magnitude.

On 5 July 1865, Edward Buxton, Secretary to the London Cemetery Company, died. At a meeting held at Radley's Hotel, New Bridge Street, on 10 August 1865, the full horrific story was revealed to the shareholders.

Buxton was first of all Clerk, then Superintendent at Nunhead. His zeal so impressed the Directors that he was appointed Secretary of the Company on 19 January, 1847, a post he held for 18 years. "By his apparent regularity and strict attention to the business of his office, he gained the entire confidence of the Board and Proprietors". As soon as Buxton died, the Directors were called together to decide how the business of the Company should be carried on. All would be left in order, it was felt, but that confidence was not destroyed until the Clerk found books which were suspect. Soon, falsified Bankers' Pass Books, and an ingenious system of fraud and forgery were found.

Fictional Pass Books had been displayed by Buxton at Board Meetings, and the correct Pass Books were withheld. The frauds perpetrated by Buxton were not petty, however. It was found that "Mr. Buxton had been tampering with the Shares, creating shares by issuing forged certificates and fraudulent transfers". Transfers had been made, with forged

names, sellers, and interests. Many people therefore held fewer shares than they appeared to hold, whilst others appeared to hold shares that were never properly assigned. False dividends were drawn up. A book purporting to show a deposit of £7,500 at the bank was false, and no money whatever had been deposited.

A new Secretary was appointed in 1865, a Mr. David G. D. Matthews, but he died on 31 August 1865, and was succeeded by Mr. William Walton, on whose shoulders the whole crumbling Company was placed.

A profit of £4,777 4s. 11d. was announced in 1866, and dividends were restored to 12s. per share. It was revealed, however, that the accounts left by Buxton showed a deficiency of £18,179 3s. 2d., a colossal sum for those days, and a fortune if translated into today's values. Buxton had fraudulently issued 2,434 shares up to 1 March 1865, and a further 230 up to 5 July. He paid "dividends" from cheques fraudulently obtained, or from his own funds.

The mess was so complete that all shares had to be called in, and a new register of shareholders was prepared. The seal of the Company was to be used to authenticate shares. The Directors were empowered to compromise with Buxton's creditors to the sum of 15s. in the pound. In 1865, therefore, no dividend could be paid, and the Company was in great difficulties. On 7 February 1866, the holders of the spurious Buxton shares were admitted as part proprietors of the Company and by 28 July 1866 all shares had been consecutively numbered and entered in the share ledger.

By 1867, rates had increased and large sums had to be expended on improved drainage and repairs in Nunhead. It was necessary to render the grounds more attractive because of competition from the new public cemeteries.

The several cemeteries in the London suburbs were the property of Joint Stock Companies, apart from the West of London and Westminster Cemetery at Brompton that had been taken over by the Government in 1852. From the costliness of interment in these cemeteries, they only went a small way towards abating the problems of intramural burial. As London grew, and the cemeteries that only a few years earlier had been in the country became surrounded by development, the size of the problem became realised.

The practice of establishing commercial cemeteries was not widely followed after 1850, for there was a change of outlook culminating in a Parliamentary Report that stated interment of the dead was a most unfit subject for commercial speculation. In 1850, an Act of Parliament (13 and 14 Vict. c. 52, public) constituted a Metropolitan Burial District, and granted the General Board of Health power to provide burial grounds and to purchase the commercial cemeteries already established. In fact, only one, Brompton, was acquired, but the threat of what was virtually nationalisation hit the Joint Stock Companies very hard. This Act was repealed in 1852, when the Vestries were empowered to establish Burial Boards (15 and 16 Vict. c. 85, public), but not before Nunhead had been mentioned in regard to a possible takeover. Shares fell, and it seemed that the London Cemetery Company was in dire trouble.

Repeal of the Act did little to improve matters for the Companies, for the several public cemeteries formed by the Burial Boards were set up in direct opposition to those established by the Joint Stock Companies. In particular, the setting up of Honor Oak Cemetery did the Company harm. Thus, by 1867, when public cemeteries in South London were in operation, the London Cemetery Company had to try to attract custom to Nunhead Cemetery by improving the buildings and the grounds.

In 1868 there was a disastrous economic recession, and the mode of interments changed, the most expensive graves being avoided. Oddly, there was also a low rate of mortality that year, so dividends were low. In the *Minutes* of the London Cemetery Company for 1868 we read that mortality was low owing to the "sanitary improvements working out their beneficial results which must be gratifying to all". It was noted, however, that this improvement in health could only affect the income of the Company in a temporary manner, as "the average thus thrown out of course from a particular course, must in time revert to its former result". The Company Directors were anxious to point out to shareholders that the cemeteries would claim the quota of corpses in the end.

That winter, Death struck, and the *Minutes* of 1869 show an increase in profits that was "the best for many years". Just as gratifying was the observation that the "grounds, both at

Highgate and Nunhead, were in a most satisfactory condition, both as to ornamental and substantial repair". Drainage improvements were also completed. It was reported that the "better classes of Vaults and Graves" were the most profitable, and at "the same time most consistent with the character of the cemeteries". These "better classes" were, of course, brick-lined graves, brick vaults, and catacombs.

1870 was the best year since the Buxton scandal. The Directors had "good reason to believe that the cemeteries were commanding an increasing share of the public favour". Business had improved, and it was felt desirable to erect a residence for the Superintendent at Highgate at a cost of £625 to designs by Mr. Robinson, the architect to Messrs. Millward & Co., the London Cemetery Company's masons. The property of the Company was worth £150,598 9s. 2d. at 10 August 1870. In that year, too, the exterior of the Cedar of Lebanon Catacombs at Highgate was much dilapidated by the action of the weather on the cement facing, and the Company considered refacing them in stone. One further cloud was reported: that of the operation of the Valuation (Metropolis) Act, for this was to add yet more to the "excessive" parochial rates.

In 1871 expenditure on upkeep and repair reduced profits, but both cemeteries were in good order, the only problem being the Lebanon Catacombs at Highgate. It was decided to reface the latter with Portland Cement at a cost of £300, and that the owners of the Catacombs already sold would be applied to for their share towards repairs. These remedial works would "attract the public eye, and give increased confidence, as evincing the great anxiety the Directors face in maintaining the buildings in efficient repair".

1872 saw a reduction in profits due to the repairs and to the cost of erecting greenhouses. The sale of flowers and plants to relatives visiting the cemeteries now became an essential part of the business, and extensive greenhouses and nurseries were formed at Nunhead and Highgate.

In 1873, the Company experienced "good results" despite "the greatly diminished mortality that has been reported for many months past". A very wet winter had caused little problems, since the new drainage systems had been installed. At this time, too, the Directors were concerned to retain their

City office at 29 New Bridge Street, Blackfriars, which they held as tenants at will of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company. £9,000 was offered for the freehold, since profits for the year were in the region of that figure. Business at Nunhead was very much on the increase, and so completion of the purchase of the City office was arrived at. By letting out part of the building, the Directors saw this purchase as being highly profitable to the Cemetery Company.

The largest receipts for fifteen years were reported in 1876, and £350 was spent on improvements to the lodges at Nunhead. Lausanne Road, leading from "the Queen's Road to Nunhead" was completed by the parish, "thereby much facilitating access from the large neighbourhoods of Bermondsey, New Cross, and Deptford, to which fact doubtless may be attributed much of the increased receipts at Nunhead". 1876 also saw the death of the Chairman, Jonah Smith Wells, for so many years connected with the Company. By this time, nearly all the Lebanon Catacombs had been sold, so the erection of some additional catacomb chambers was necessary. Brick graves of the "most select character" were also advised. The proposal to build yet more catacombs at Highgate as late as 1876 is curious, for by that time public opinion had turned away from catacombs as a mode of interment. While there were catacombs under both chapels at Nunhead, there were also underground rectangular catacombs and one enormous cylindrical shaft at that cemetery, despite the fact that the catchment area was for a less salubrious cross-section of the population than was the case at Highgate.

By 1877, the "New Catacombs" at Highgate were completed, and were "much admired". Application for their purchase had already been made. They form wings on either side of the "magnificent Mausoleum in course of construction by Julius Beer, Esq.", and in fact are the outer crescents around the Egyptian-style Cedar of Lebanon Catacombs. At Nunhead, repairs and improvements to the exterior of the Eastern Catacombs were made. This range is a stock-brick rectangular cell approached by a downward flight of steps and a gloomy portal with iron gates. At the same time, rises in the costs of labour and materials reduced profits, so the Company decided to increase charges by revising "the tariff".

1878 saw a depression and a massive drop in profits. Despite

this, in the following year, "in the midst of much disaster, and wide spread depression in all branches of business", the Directors were able to produce a favourable Balance Sheet. In 1880 the depression continued, and the number of interments was reduced, partly due to a lower death-rate, and partly because the middle classes were using the new Parochial Cemeteries, where charges were lower. The Burial Laws Amendment Act had just been passed, enabling Dissenters to be buried in consecrated ground, a major change since 1830, when the Joint Stock Cemeteries were first proposed.

In order to offset financial problems, the Company, in 1881, decided to introduce a third class of private grave at a reduced price at Nunhead, and to reduce the charge for common interment, in order to attract business away from the public cemeteries. The Terrace Catacombs at Highgate had to be re-rendered at this time for £197. These are the Gothic Catacombs at the north of the cemetery. These repairs, and the other expenses, caused the Company to start an advertising campaign in railway stations and in local newspapers to alleviate the competition by the parochial graveyards that surrounded Nunhead.

Modern technology was introduced in 1886 when telephonic communication was set up between Head Office and the Cemetery Lodges at Highgate and Nunhead.

There was a brush with the Parish of Camberwell in 1886, when the Parish attempted to compel the Directors to contribute to the paving of Linden Grove as a new street, but was resisted. In the following year, the Directors decided to brick up several bays between piers at Nunhead then filled with iron railings between the main entrance and the western gates. Adverse publicity in that portion had rendered a large part of the ground unsaleable, for mourners attending the Dissenters' Chapel were liable to be annoyed by children and by others outside. An experiment to discontinue payment of discounts to undertakers had been started, but undertakers simply arranged for burial in cemeteries where a "discount" was given, so payment to undertakers was resumed in an attempt to boost trade.

By 1888, business was on the mend, but the use of brick graves had declined. These "pestilential vaults" had long been denounced by reformers, but vanity and caste encouraged the

construction of expensive vaults. It looked as though the Company had backed the wrong horse in building yet more catacombs.

1892 was also a good year because of the influenza epidemic. The chapels at Highgate were repaired and new heating was installed. An organ was also erected. The New Catacombs at Highgate cannot have paid their way, for a columbarium for cremated remains was set up in one of the compartments there in 1893.

In 1899, the new Secretary died, and was succeeded by Henry Martyn Dodd. Over the next four years, the retirement of Mr. La Bois, the appropriately named Superintendent at Highgate for 33 years, enabled the Company to present him with a gratuity of £200. He was succeeded by J. H. Witty, Superintendent at Nunhead, which cemetery was now to be managed by R. Forster.

Mortality decreased, while rates and other expenses increased, though in 1902 it was noted that the flower business flourished. New heating was installed in both chapels at Nunhead. Further expenses were incurred in 1903 at Highgate, for the boundary wall was rebuilt, and the lodge had to be underpinned. The flower business was expanded when the Townshend Yard Nursery at Highgate was bought for £1,500 in 1904.

The Company progressed without much ado for several years. It was noted that the average amount spent by the public on an ordinary earth interment in 1906 was £3 7s. 4d. In 1909 a new entrance was built at Nunhead.

In 1911 the first major change in the Company since its foundation took place. This was in the form of a Bill to rearrange, reduce, and fix the capital of the London Cemetery Company, and to extend the power of the Company to acquire and hold land. This Bill received the Royal Assent in 1911. The following year, the greenhouses at Highgate were moved to the Townshend Yard Nursery, and more ground was thus freed for burial purposes. Cremation was being actively discussed, and sites for a crematorium were considered at Nunhead. It was decided in 1913 that the cost of a crematorium should not exceed £4,000.

The First World War of 1914–18 caused great difficulties. In 1916 the Secretary, Dodd, resigned after 46 years with the

Company, and was given a pension of £75 per annum. He was succeeded by James Clements, whose services were curtailed by his having to enlist. Dividends were still being paid at 6% per annum. 1919 saw big increases in wages, and the necessity to repair all roads, paths, and buildings. Clements returned to his job as Secretary. In the same year, the London Cemetery Company became a limited liability company.

In following years, the capital of the Company was reduced, and the dividend dropped to 5% per annum less Income Tax. The Earl of Courtown became Chairman in 1936, and held office for many years. War damage in 1941 did not help Nunhead, and 1942 was a very difficult year, for the decision by the Government to remove the iron railings was viewed with despair by the Directors. The destruction of the iron railings in 1943 left the cemetery wide open to vandalism and misuse at a time when the records and Head Office were moved to the lodges at Nunhead.

The end of the Second World War caused the Company increasing difficulties with rising costs. By 1948 stocks were being sold to pay dividends, and increasing wage demands obviously brought the Company increasingly to its knees. In 1951 the issued capital was reduced to £16,596. Thefts of lead were reported from all chapels and even vaults in 1952, and in 1954 the issued capital was reduced to £4,149.

The following years were a time of rapid decline. Mr.Clements resigned as Secretary in 1955, and was succeeded by Mr. A. E. Pearce. Clements died in October. The Superintendent's house at Highgate was sold in 1956, and chainlink fencing was erected at Nunhead to try to arrest vandalism. Throughout the 1950s, assets were being sold, and funds were desperately being raised. Monies in the Perpetuity Account (cash paid by owners of graves and vaults to ensure the fabric would be kept in good order) were used for acquiring freehold ground rents; Townshend's Yard was sold; and St. James' Villa, Highgate, was disposed of. In 1957, the Deed of Grant of the new Karl Marx grave at Highgate Cemetery was sealed.

In 1958 the Chairman approached the Soviet Consulate to try to get the Marx family removed, but without success. Break-ins were reported from Nunhead, while the boundary walls again became dangerous. The chapels at Highgate were

infested with fungi. The Chairman also visited Edinburgh, and saw the possibilities of taking over other cemeteries. An offer was made to purchase the Metropolitan Cemetery Co. Ltd. of Edinburgh, and 1940 shares in the Edinburgh Cemetery Co. Ltd. were acquired. 200 shares were acquired in the Edinburgh Western Cemetery Co. Ltd., and a controlling interest in several Edinburgh Cemeteries. Further 400 shares of the Edinburgh Western Cemetery Co. Ltd. were bought, with 80 Edinburgh and Portobello Cemetery Co. Ltd. shares, and several in the Edinburgh and Leith Cemetery Co. Ltd. Later in 1958 the 600 Edinburgh Western Cemetery Co. Ltd. shares were sold and many non-cemetery shares were purchased. The ground and buildings of the Rosebank Cemetery of Edinburgh were transferred to the Company by the Edinburgh and Leith Cemetery Co. Ltd. at a book value of £1.

Even in 1958, in December, a perpetuity undertaking was signed, and a leakage in the roof of the chapel at Nunhead was reported. Four young vandals had been caught in Nunhead in 1957, but the cemetery became a popular target of vandals from the late 1950s.

Wage increases, the retreat from cemeteries in order to branch out into other forms of property speculation, and general neglect soon encouraged further vandalism. Both Highgate and Nunhead suffered a rapid decline. Landscape, once lovingly tended, started to run wild, and monuments were vandalised and started to decay rapidly. Any evidence of maintenance being carried out was difficult to discern.

By 13 January 1960, Nunhead, Highgate, and Rosebank, Edinburgh, were incorporated as United Cemeteries Ltd. In 1967 United Cemeteries Ltd. became a subsidiary of the Raybourne Group Ltd., and in 1969, Nunhead was closed, but vandalism and neglect had already caused frightening deterioration, despite the Act of Parliament that stated "the Company shall, by and out of the monies to be received by virtue of this Act, keep the said Cemeteries respectively and the said Chapel or Chapels respectively, and the several Buildings thereon and therein, and the external Walls and Fences thereof, and all other Parts of the same, in thorough and complete Repair". Furthermore, the Act stated "it shall not be lawful for the said Company . . . to sell or dispose of any land which shall have been

consecrated, or set apart or used for the Burial of the Dead".

In the early 1970s the cemetery at Nunhead, like that of Highgate, had become scandalous. Vandalism was widespread, brick vaults and catacombs were broken into and ransacked, and monuments were desecrated. The plight of both Highgate and Nunhead received local and national publicity.

In 1974 the London Borough of Southwark, in whose territory Nunhead lies, decided to attempt to purchase and manage the cemetery. For many years the Council had been greatly concerned because the closure of the cemetery had resulted in distress to families with relatives buried there. In view of the heavy cost of restoration, the Council had delayed taking action, because it was felt that every effort should be made to require the owners to fulfil their statutory obligation to keep the cemetery in repair, or, alternatively, that the Council should obtain financial assistance from central government.

One of the difficulties of acquiring the cemetery was that the original Act of 1836 prohibited the sale of land used for burial. To overcome this problem, another Act of Parliament was needed which the Council decided to promote by means of the Greater London Council (General Powers) Bill, 1974–75, which became law in August 1975. Part IV of that Act empowered the Council to purchase Nunhead Cemetery compulsorily. The Act divided Nunhead Cemetery into two parts: the "burial lands" and the "open space" lands. The division between the two parts could be amended only by further legislation. The "burial lands" included the Anglican Chapel, and the four main plots of war graves. The Dissenters' Chapel had been demolished years before.

The burial lands are to be administered as a cemetery, under normal cemetery laws. Exclusive burial rights granted by the cemetery company and in force when the Council gained possession are to continue if the grave is in the burial lands. Exclusive rights of burial in private graves that have not been used for burial for 75 years can be extinguished. Notices of any proposal to use old graves for further burials must be given in the press and at the cemetery, and by personal notification to owners. The owner of a burial right may object, in which case the right must not be extinguished, and any other person may also object, when the right must not be extinguished without

the consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment. Compensation is payable to owners affected.

Burials in the "open space" lands will be discontinued and land will be freed from the effects of consecration. These lands can be used for a nature reserve, for an open space, for any purpose under the Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937, and as an access to the burial lands.

The Council may level or raise the surface of the land on the open space, and cover, remove, move, repair, sell, or dispose of any memorial. Any stones removed and not re-erected must be broken up before disposal. Notice of the intention to remove stones must be published in the press and personal notification should be made to relatives.

Similarly, the Council may demolish, reconstruct, extend, seal up, or fill in any building, structure, crypt, vault, catacomb, or mausoleum in the open space lands, subject to notice being given. Human remains can also be removed, subject to notice being given, and subject to proper re-interment or cremation. Human remains will not be moved unless this is absolutely necessary, and then only in accordance with the direction given by the Home Secretary. Proper certification of re-interment or cremation shall be sent to the Registrar-General. An owner of a burial right can have remains in the "open space" lands re-interred, and tombstones re-erected.

The Act also provided for the cemetery records to be delivered to the Council, and that a record should be made of all tombstone removed under the Act. Areas where the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have been granted exclusive rights are protected. The Act of 1836 under which Nunhead Cemetery was established, has now ceased to apply, and Southwark has taken possession.

While the Bill was going through Parliament, the Borough Engineer had the cemetery surveyed, and it was found there was sufficient land for burial to last Southwark for the forseeable future. The land near Linden Grove contains the oldest graves, but is covered with a dense forest of trees and undergrowth. Many memorials, vaults, and catacombs were dangerous, and some 600 elms were found to be dead. The problem was how to open the site to the public without destroying the woodland, but avoiding the dangers of continued vandalism.

The Borough Council also took the responsible step of commissioning a report from M. McDowell & Partners, Consulting Engineers, on the state of the catacombs. The firm was instructed to visit the site to carry out a structural survey and building survey to determine the stability and extent of two of the catacombs.

These catacombs were surveyed in 1975. Both were overgrown with scrub, and the whole area is surrounded by trees. The first catacomb is a vertical cylinder of 2·80 m. diameter, tapering towards the base to 2·28 m. It has burial cells in the east and west faces. This catacomb was known as the "Catacomb Shaft", and is constructed of brickwork. There are 30 burial cells, with 15 on each side, most of which are empty. The other, or Main Catacomb, is in the form of a long rectangular box, with a barrel-vault roof, all constructed of brickwork. Here there are 144 burial cells arranged in groups of 12 on each side of a main passage, with four rooms on each side. Both catacombs appear to date from 1842, and are therefore probably by J. B. Bunning.

Inspection revealed that the base of the shaft is 5·85 m. below ground, and the top projects 1·65 m. above the ground. The alcoves for coffins are each 2·65 m. deep and 1·41 m. wide. Part of the shaft was seen to be in an unstable condition, and there were considerable structural cracks. The catacomb has now been bricked up.

The Main Catacomb is in better condition. Entrance is via a flight of stone steps and through iron gates. The roof is a brick barrel vault over the length of the central passage, with eight cross-barrel-vault roofs at right angles to it, and the pairs of vaults and ante-rooms. Air-vents were provided.

Most of the cells were formed of stone slabs, but in the ante-rooms, several coffins rested on iron beams, many of which have corroded. Root penetration had caused some damage, while cracking, decay, time, and vandalism had played their parts.

The Consultants advised that the catacomb shaft should be completely filled in, and the upper works demolished. For the Main Catacombs, they advised a modicum of restoration as an historic monument. I completely agree with this proposal.

A scheme was prepared providing for some 22 acres to be retained as a cemetery, of which 14 acres will be converted to a

lawn cemetery, and the remainder, densely wooded, left as it is. The remainder, some 29 acres, will become a public open space and nature reserve. Part will be laid out as a park, cleared of all save specimen trees and some monuments, with a viewing platform at the highest point. Estimated costs in 1975 were £356,000 for the cemetery, and £236,000 for the open space and nature reserve.

A programme of work has been approved, to be implemented over the next eight years. The first tasks, those of fencing the cemetery securely, then to fell dangerous trees, are of paramount importance. Unfortunately, the Anglican Chapel has recently been burned down, and only the stone shell remains. It is to be hoped that the tower will remain as a focus. Already, much thinning of undergrowth is taking place using young labour, and slowly, improvements are being carried out.

Both the Lodges and Chapel are listed as being of architectural and historic interest, and it would be very desirable to restore these. The shaft catacombs and brick graves, however, should be filled with earth, to secure them. They are in a grisly state, and these "better-class" graves and vaults have nothing to recommend them. Burial in the earth is greatly to be preferred.

The Council formerly took over Nunhead Cemetery on 24 November 1976. A purchase price of £1 was agreed, and the freehold interest of the 51 acres passed from United Cemeteries Ltd. The Council had to pay the vendor's legal costs.

The first task is to make the whole area secure. Boundary walls will be repaired at a cost of £41,976, split between repairs to brickwork and Portland Stone at £15,476, and railings and fences at £26,000.

The twenty acres to be retained for burial will be known as Nunhead Cemetery, but the spaces to be used as a park and nature reserve will be called Waverley Park, something the Scots Martyrs would no doubt applaud.

So ended the fortunes of one of the great private cemeteries of London. Perhaps the London Borough of Southwark will give it a new lease of life as a cemetery, but the formal avenues, noble buildings, and grand memorials set in a romantic landscape will not be the same. This great Victorian Cemetery has been so badly vandalised and neglected that it is difficult to

assess just how much of the original conception by Bunning and Little will survive.

The problems of Nunhead are those of Highgate (which may be taken over by the London Borough of Camden under the same Act), Abney Park, and many other nineteenth-century cemeteries throughout Britain. Vandalism, neglect, the machinations of the world of the speculative property market, wage increases, taxation, and changes in taste have all contributed to their decline. The history of Nunhead is a history of many other cemeteries, and it represents the story of an extraordinary movement in taste and in the civilising of urban man.

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I am also indebted to Miss Melanie Simo, who asked me to read her excellent paper on Loudon and cemetery design.

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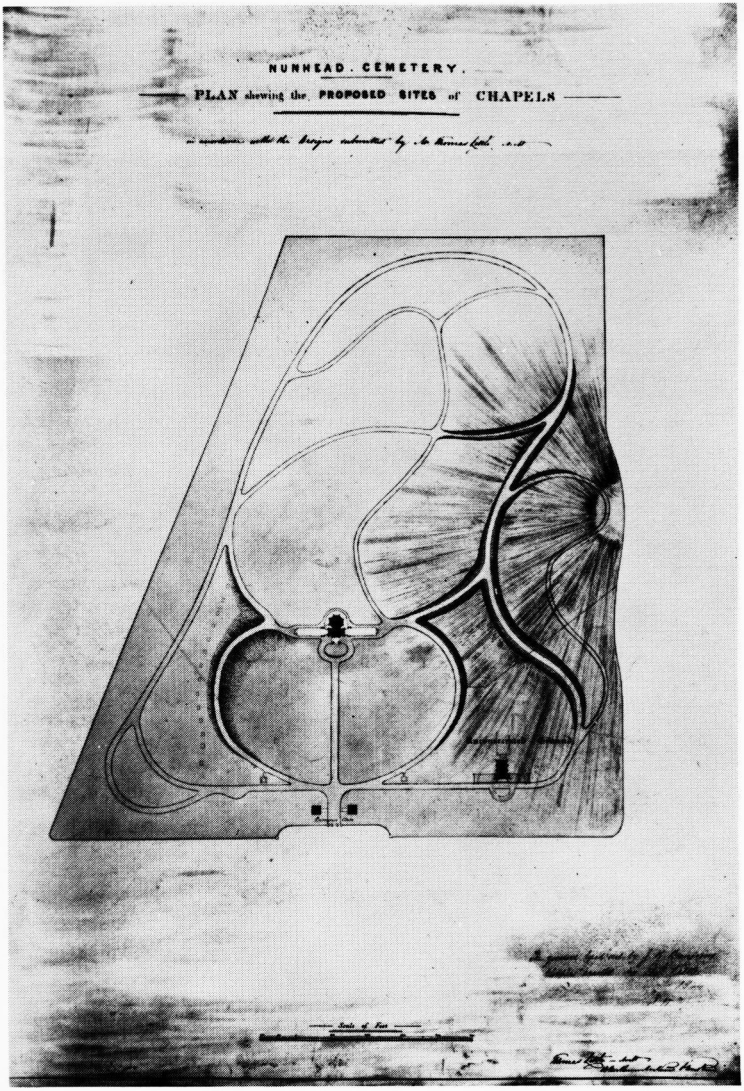

Fig. 1. "Nunhead Cemetery. Plan shewing the Proposed sites of Chapels in accordance with the designs submitted by Mr. Thomas Little, Archt.". This plan clearly shows the strong main axis of the Entrance Gates and Lodges, avenue, and Anglican Chapel in the centre. The Dissenters' Chapel is to the right. The serpentine walks and the hilly nature of the ground are also clearly shown. The Drawing also confirms, in a note, that the ground was "laid out by J. B. Bunning" and that the Chapels were erected by Thomas Little in 1844. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

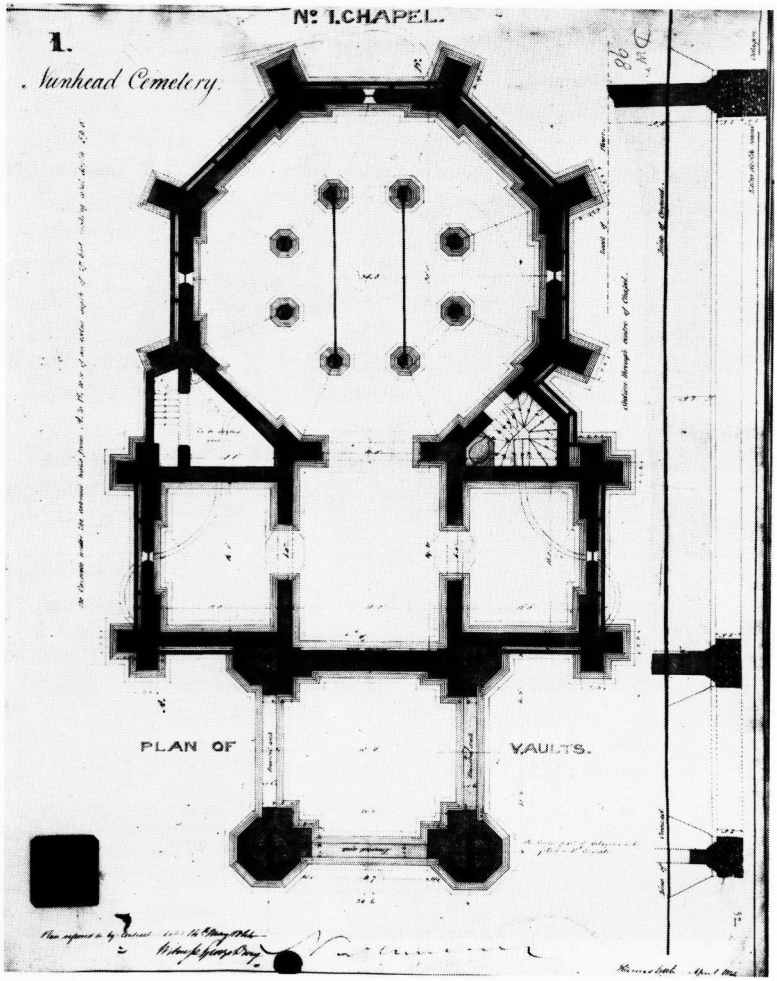

Fig. 2. Thomas Little's Contract Drawing of the Plan of the Vaults of the No. 1 or Anglican Chapel. It is signed and dated April 1844. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

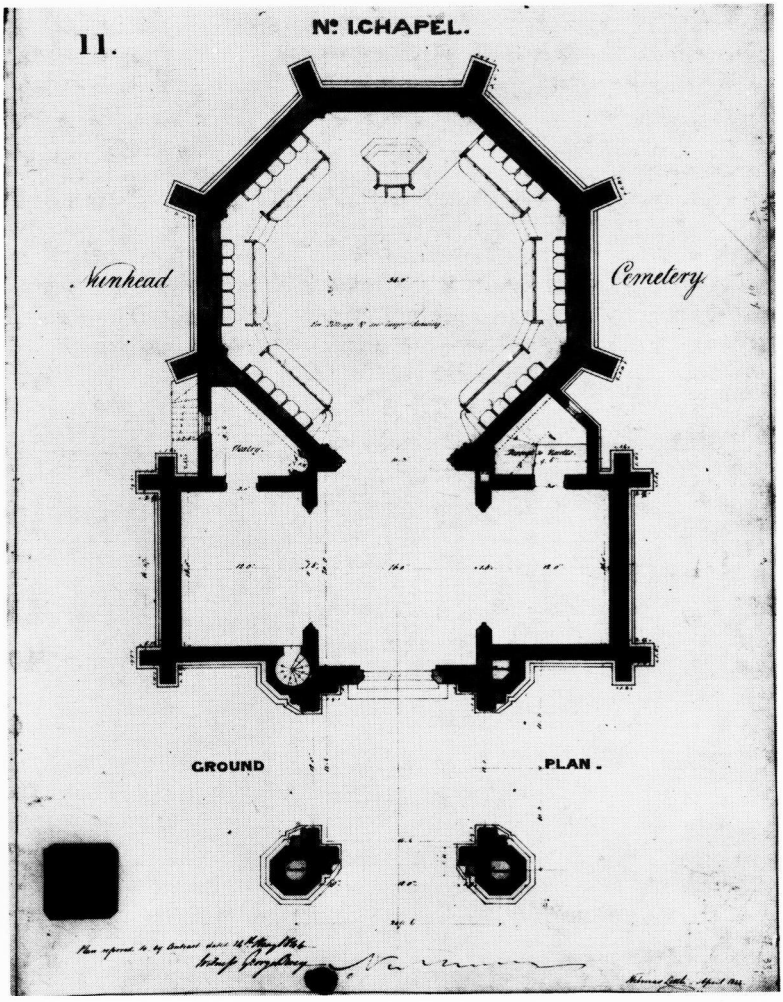

Fig. 3. The Ground Floor Plan of the Anglican Chapel, by Thomas Little. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

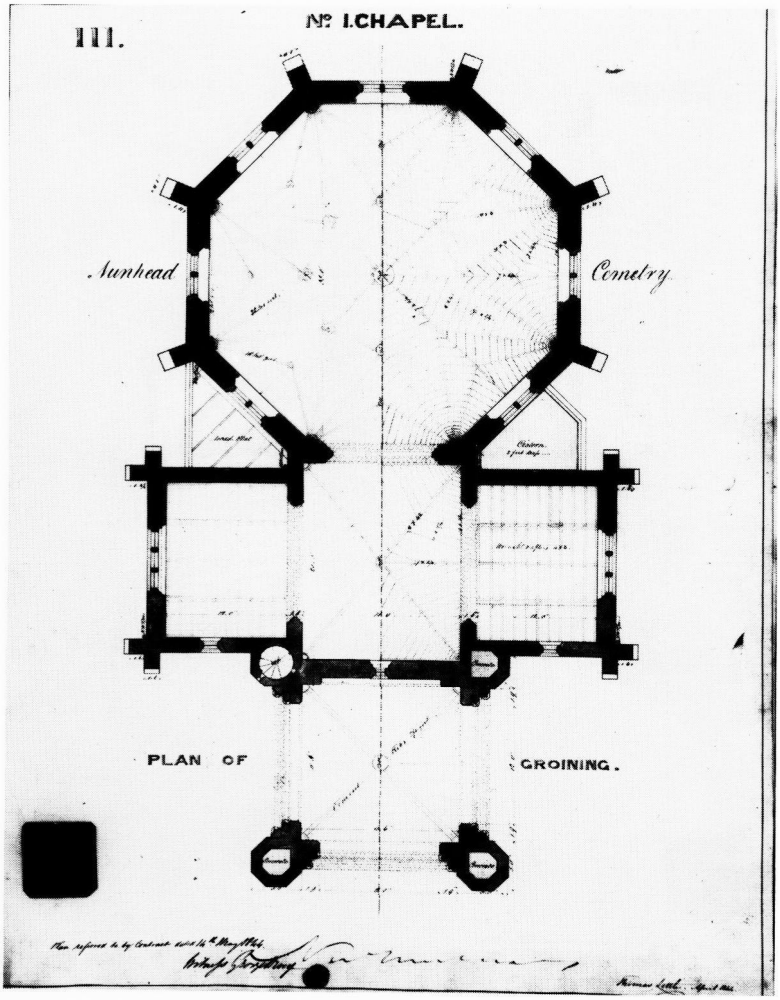

Fig. 4. The Plan of the Groining of the Anglican Chapel by Thomas Little (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

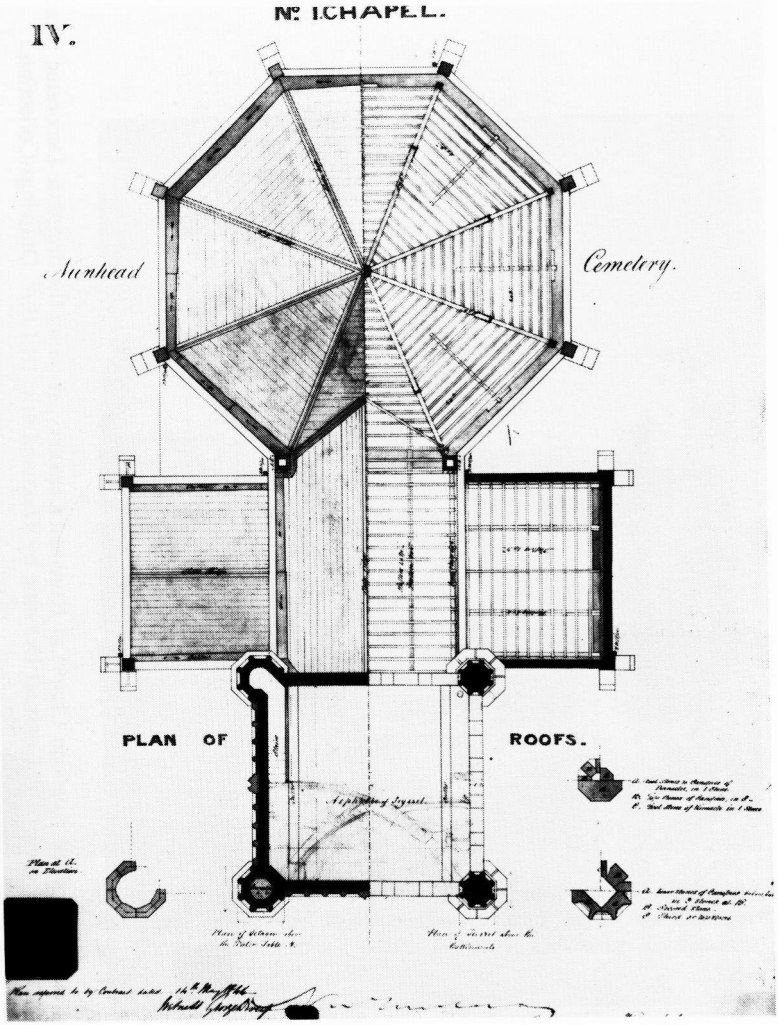

Fig. 5. The Plan of the Roofs of the Anglican Chapel, by Thomas Little. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

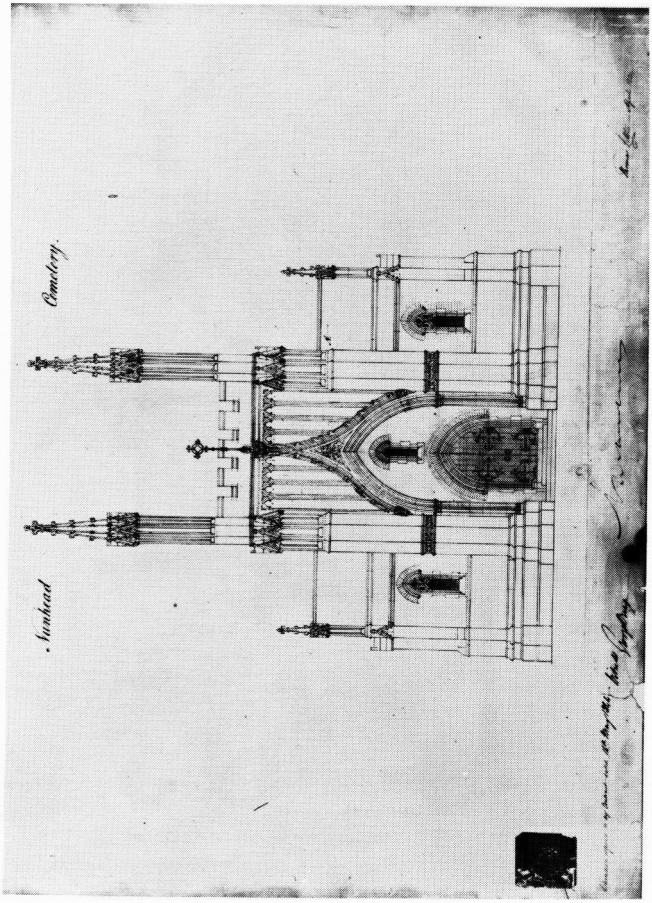

Fig. 6. The front elevation of the Anglican Chapel at Nunhead Cemetery, showing the dramatic Decorated façade with the tower and *porte cochère*. A Contract Drawing by Thomas Little. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

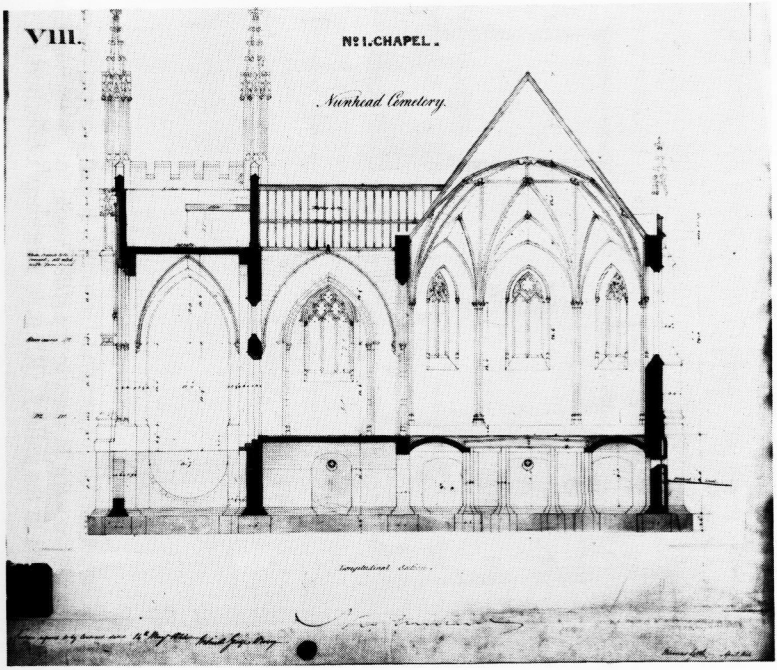

Fig. 7. A Section through the Anglican Chapel at Nunhead Cemetery, showing the *porte cochère*, octagonal chapel, and crypt. A Contract Drawing by Thomas Little, dated 1844. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

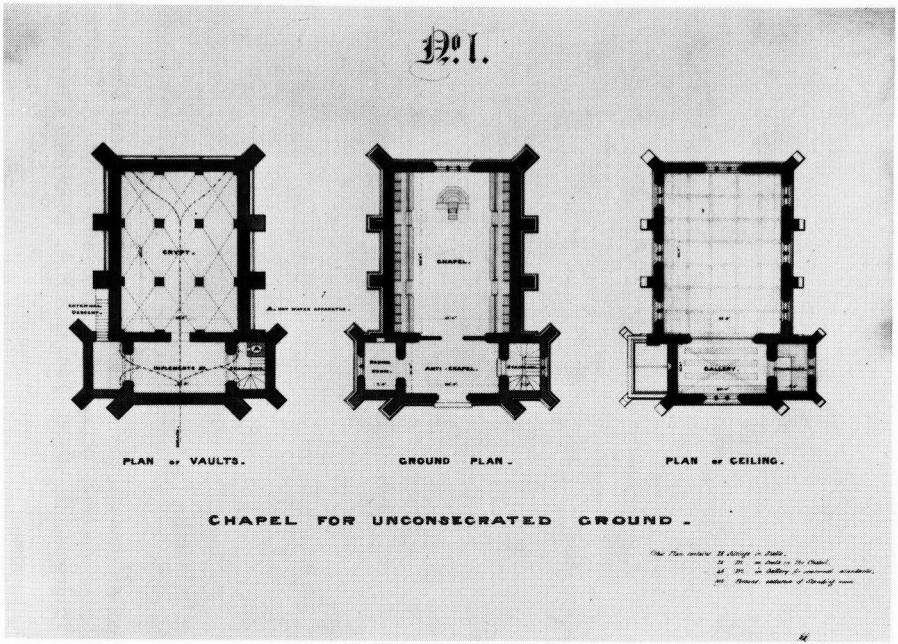

Fig. 8. Thomas Little's Plans of the "Chapel for Unconsecrated Ground". It had a crypt, chapel, and gallery. There were also a robing room, and a store for tools. There were 28 seats in the stalls, room for 28 seats in the body of the chapel, and an extra 46 seats in the gallery. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

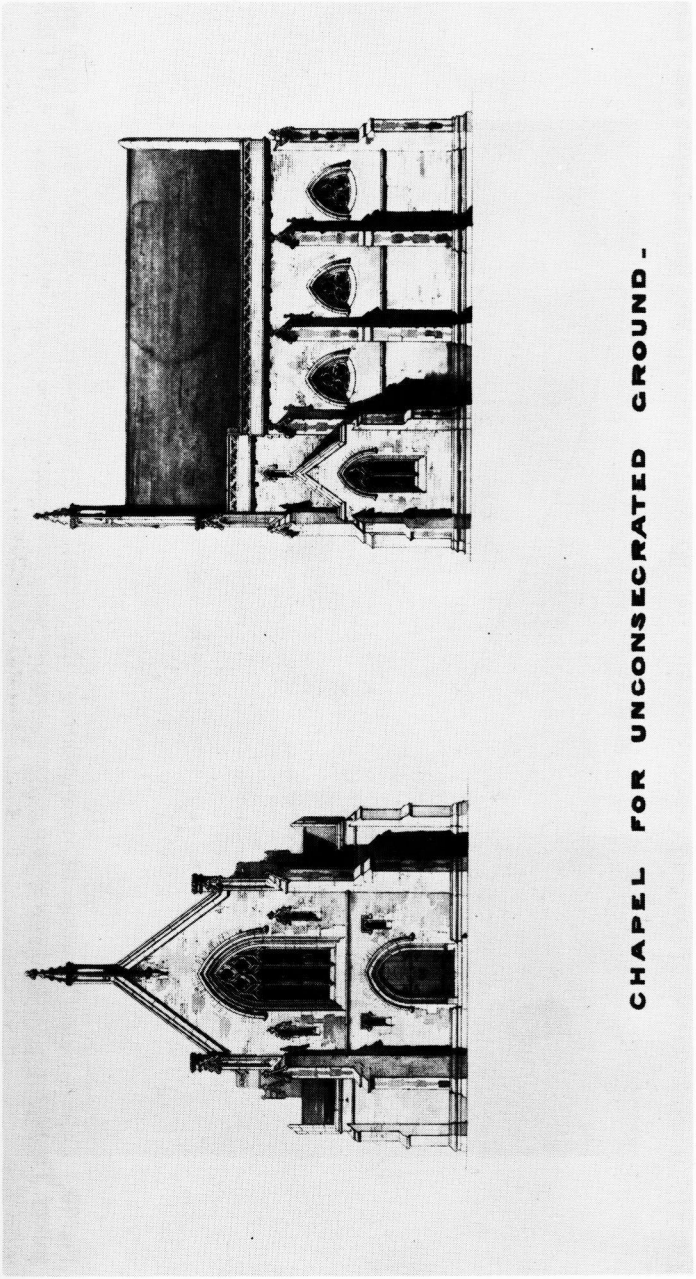

Fig. 9. Thomas Little's Drawings of the Elevations of the "Chapel for Unconsecrated Ground". (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

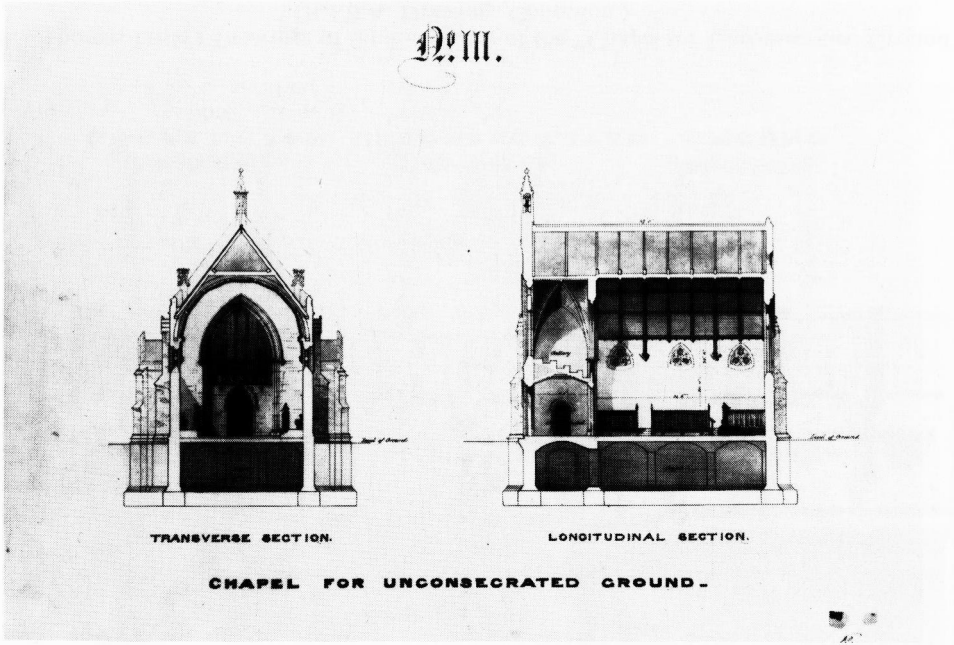

Fig. 10. Thomas Little's Drawings of Sections through the "Chapel for Unconsecrated Ground" showing the crypt and gallery. The charming little bellcote should be noted, together with the Decorated style of the Gothic Architecture. (R.I.B.A. Drawings Collection.)

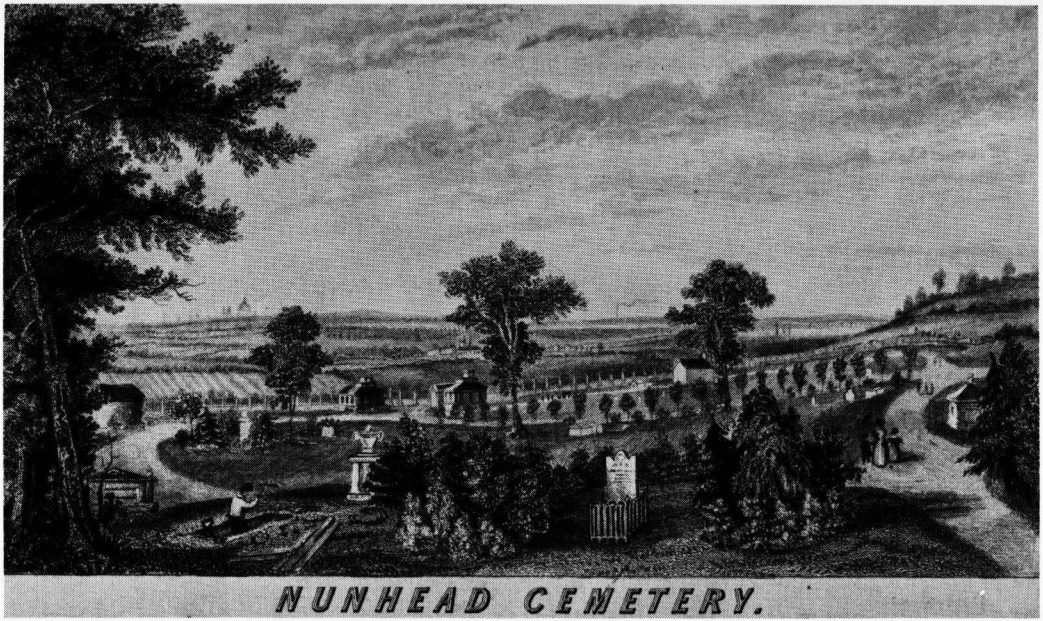

Fig. 11. A romantic view of Nunhead Cemetery, showing the hilly nature of the site, and the marvellous views over London. The Dome of St. Paul's Cathedral may be seen on the left. This view must have been published shortly after the cemetery opened, for it shows J. B. Bunning's two gate lodges, and the entrance gates. The boundary walls, consisting of brick piers with iron railings in between are also shown. This view must be about 1843, for buildings that are clearly temporary chapels are indicated. (Southwark Library Services.)

Fig. 12. "All Saints Cemetery, Nunhead, Peckham Rye:" a Print published by Rock and Co. showing the main gates in Linden Grove, the two lodges by J. B. Bunning, and the striking vista towards Thomas Little's Gothic Anglican Chapel The print must date from the 1850s, for the main avenue of trees does not appear to have reached any size. (Southwark Library Services.)

Fig. 13. "Nunhead Cemetery, Surrey". A view published on 28 May 1863 by Rock and Co. It shows the main avenue leading up to Thomas Little's Anglican Chapel, with the lines of formally planted trees now a respectable size. (Southwark Library Services.)

Fig. 14. The main entrance gates and piers at Nunhead, by J. B. Bunning. The inverted torches of cast iron, symbolic of the extinguishing of life, should be noted. The lodges, also by Bunning, are partially visible. The main avenue of trees is now impressive, and the imposing Anglican Chapel by Thomas Little, of 1844, stops the vista. (Photograph of 1969 by James Stevens Curl.)

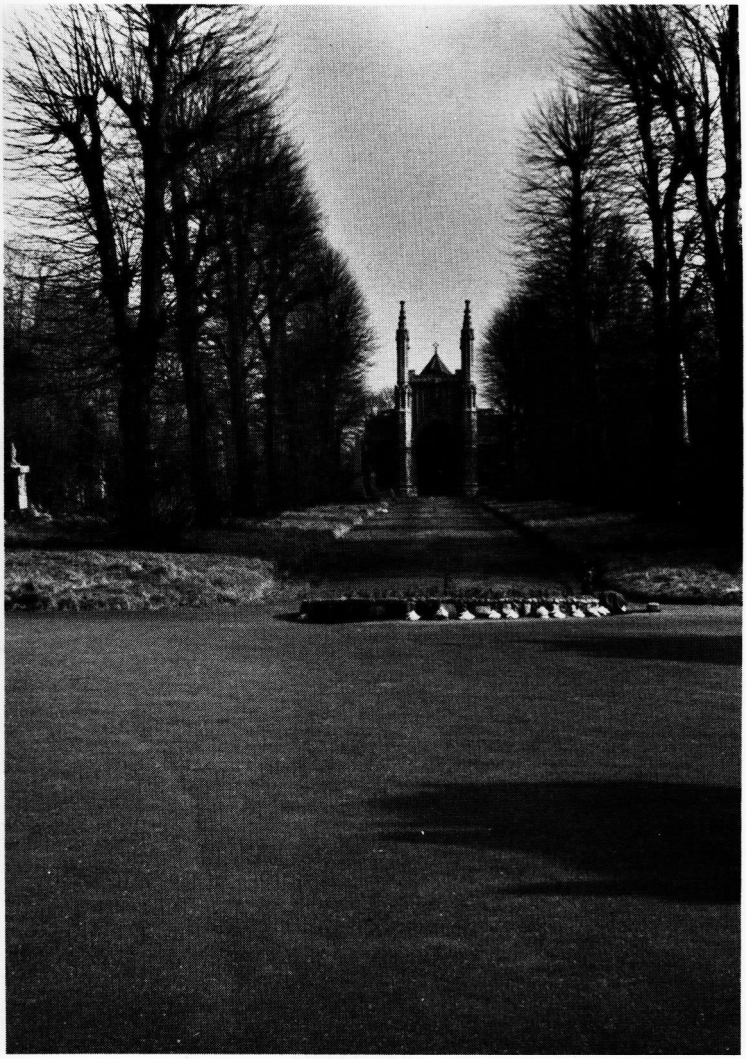

Fig. 15. The main avenue, lines of trees, and the Anglican Chapel. (Photograph of 1969 by James Stevens Curl.)

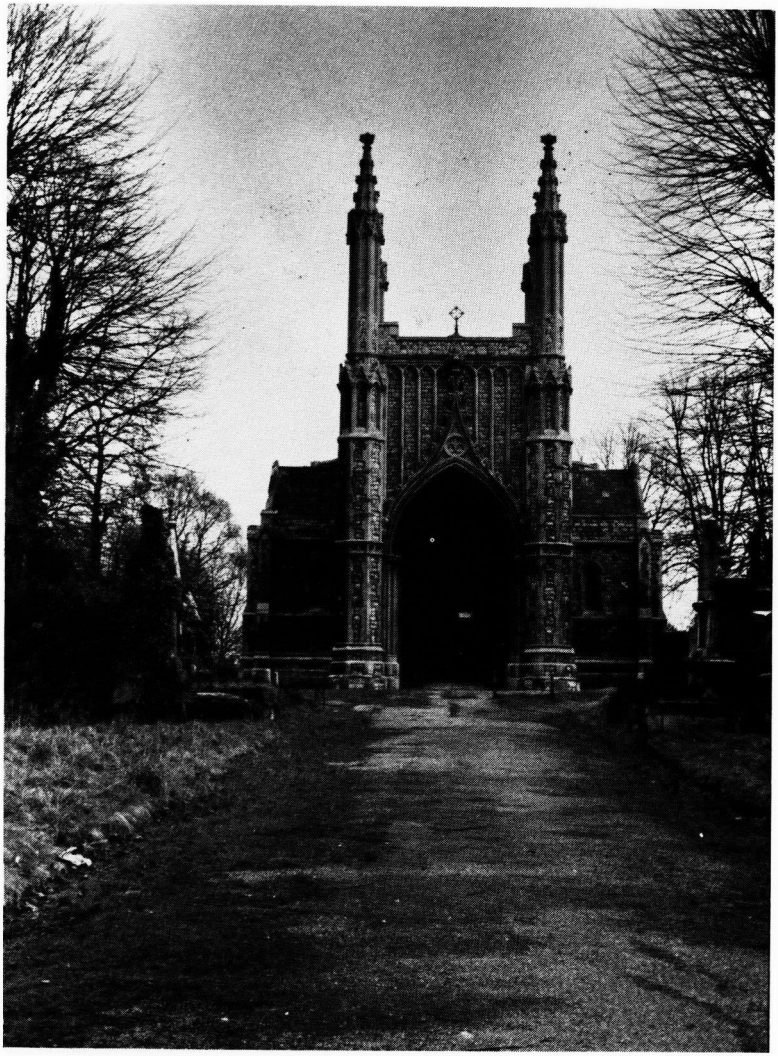

Fig. 16. The tower, *porte-cochère*, and pinnacles of the Anglican Chapel. (Photograph of 1969 by James Stevens Curl.)

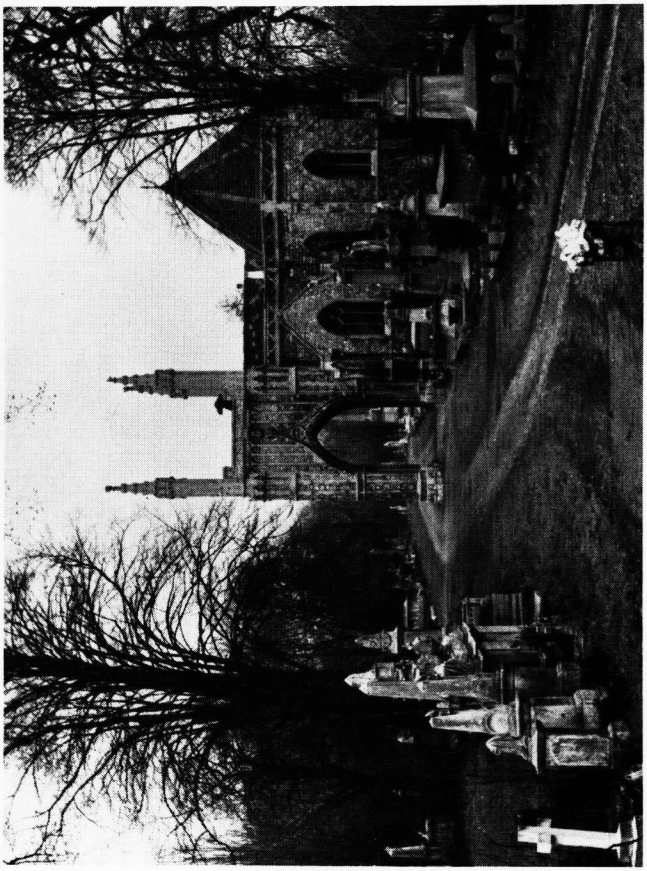

Fig. 17. The Anglican Chapel. (Photograph of 1969 by James Stevens Curl.)

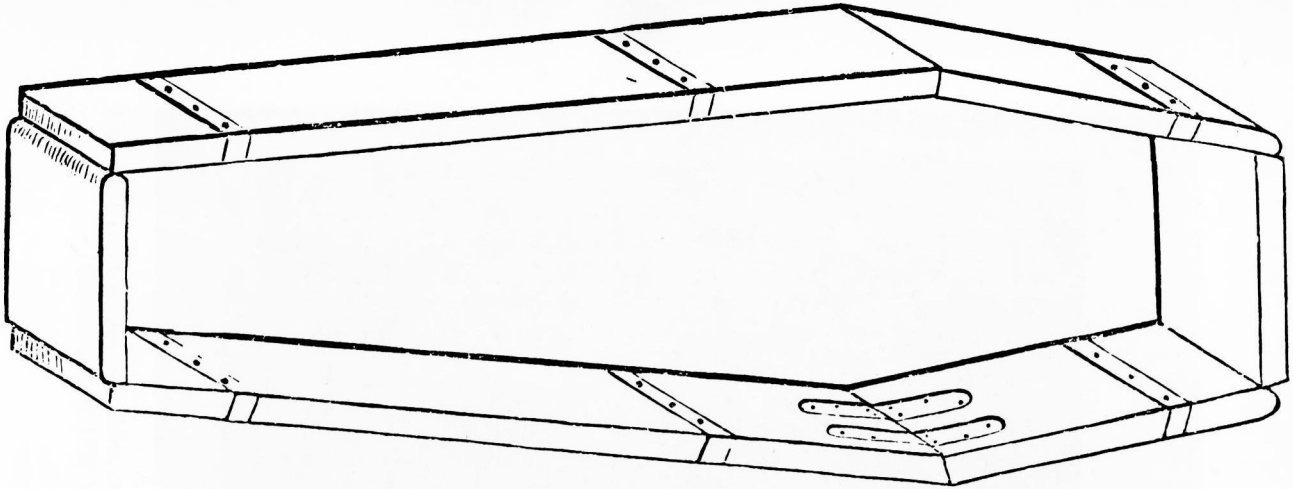

Fig. 18. The grave boards designed by E. Buxton, "the Superintendent of the Nunhead Cemetery". They were in four parts: two sides, each of which is hinged on a bevelled edge; and two ends that serve as struts to keep the sides apart. The ends were prevented from dropping out by cutting the grave slightly less than the intended width, and driving the ends home with a mallet. The sides were kept in place by the pressure of the soil against which they acted as arches.
The method of using these boards was as follows:
1. The ground was opened about 18 inches in depth, and the first set of boards was fixed.
2. At intervals of its own width, or closer, another set was fixed.
3. This process was continued until the grave was sunk to the required depth.
4. In this was a completely safe grave shaft with shuttering, was created.
5. When the coffin was deposited, the lowest pairs of boards and ends was removed.
6. As the grave was filled, the boards and ends were removed.
(From *The Gardener's Magazine*, conducted by J. C. Loudon, London and Edinburgh, 1843, p. 159, in the collection of James Stevens Curl.)

Fig. 19. Detail of one of the Portland Stone gate piers, designed by J. B. Bunning, and erected in 1840. The assured classical detailing, with inverted cast iron torch, demonstrates Bunning's skill as a designer. The Serpent eating its own tail on the die of the pedestal is symbolic of eternity. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl.)

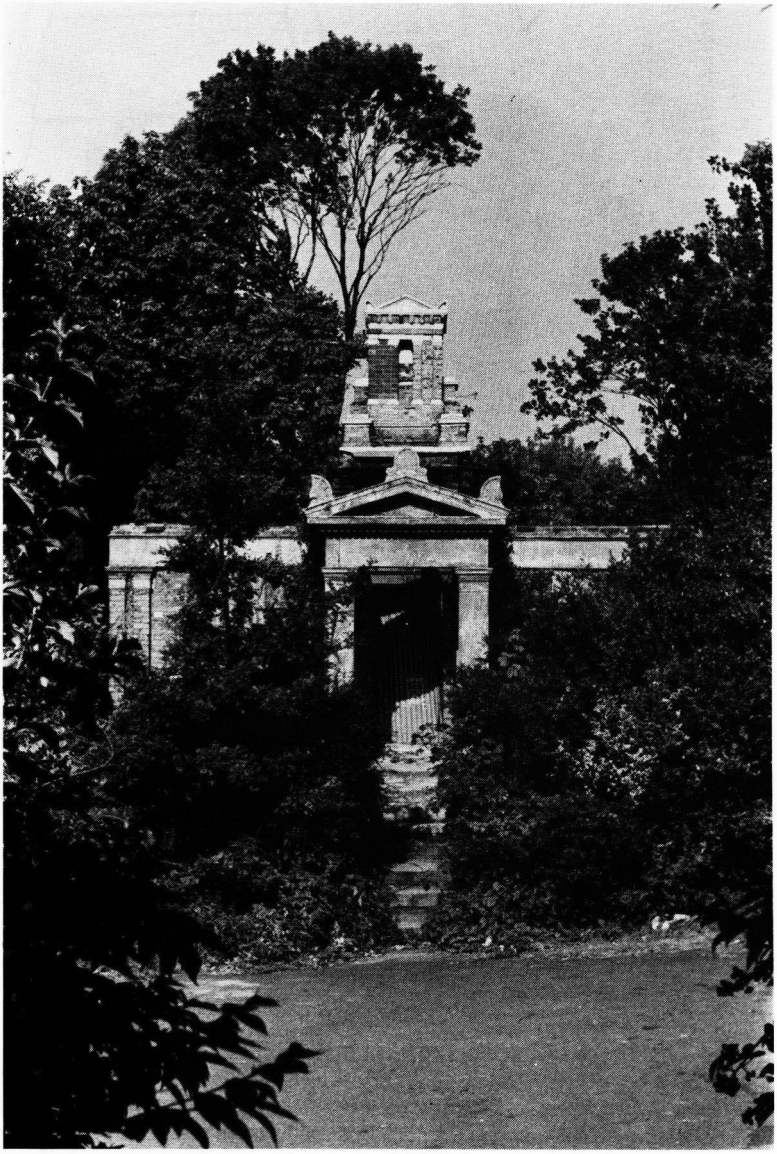

Fig. 20. One of the remarkably fine lodges by J. B. Bunning of 1840. The assured neo-classical hand of Bunning is evident. The building is of yellow stock bricks with stone dressings. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl.)

Fig. 21. One of the lodges by J. B. Bunning of 1840. The designs of the chimneys resemble classical mausolea. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl.)

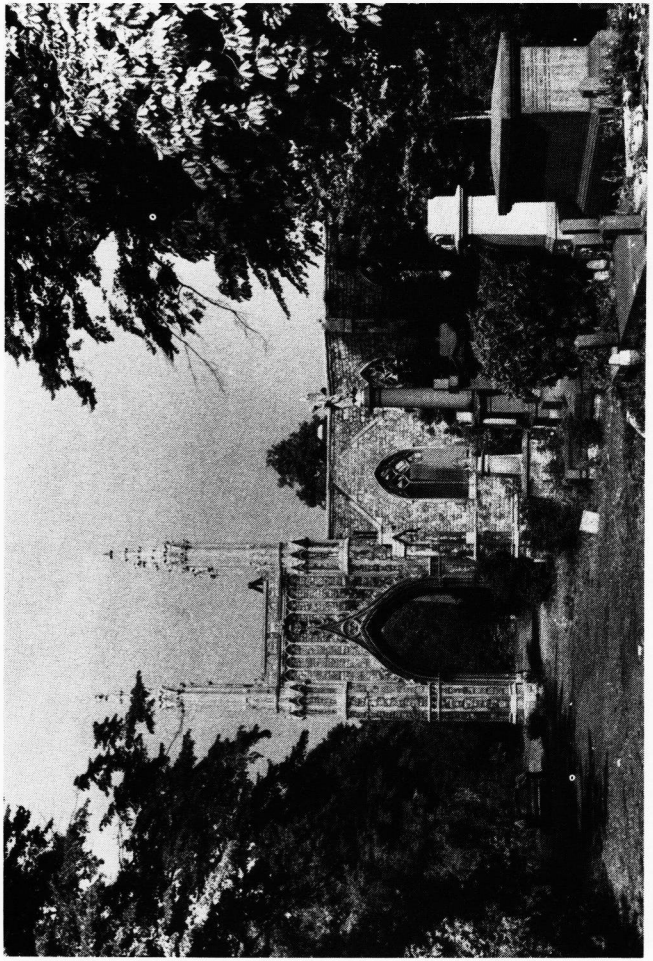

Fig. 22. The *porte cochère*, tower, and roofless Anglican Chapel. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl).

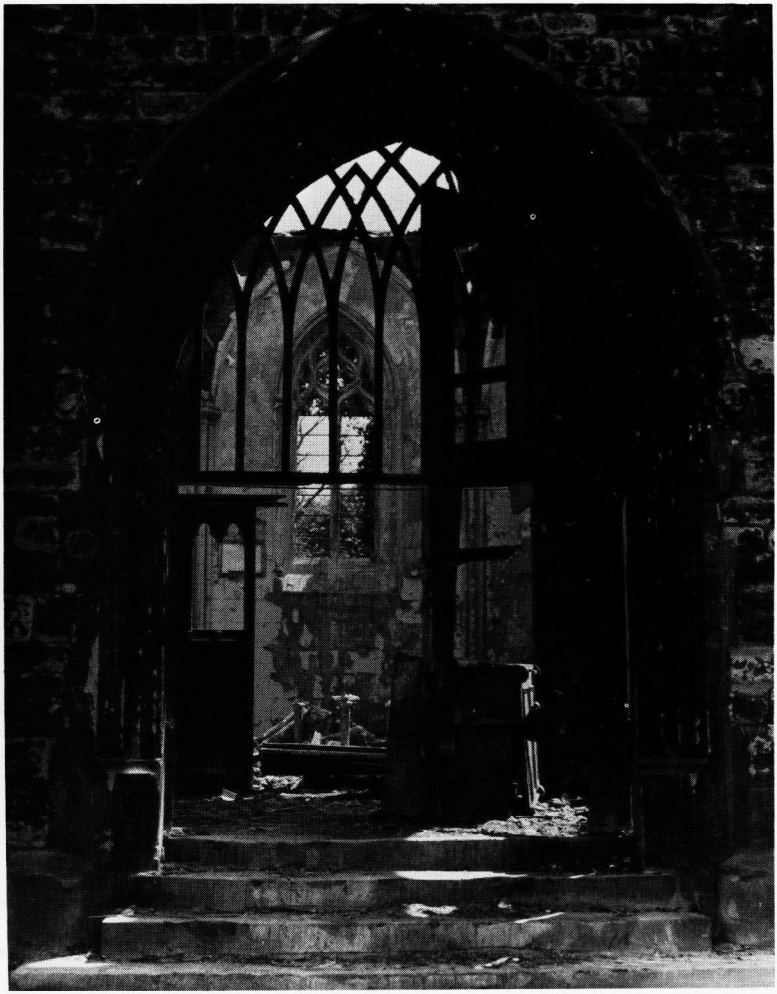

Fig. 23. The entrance to the Anglican Chapel after the fire. (Photograph by Bill Worsfold, kindly provided by the London Borough of Southwark.)

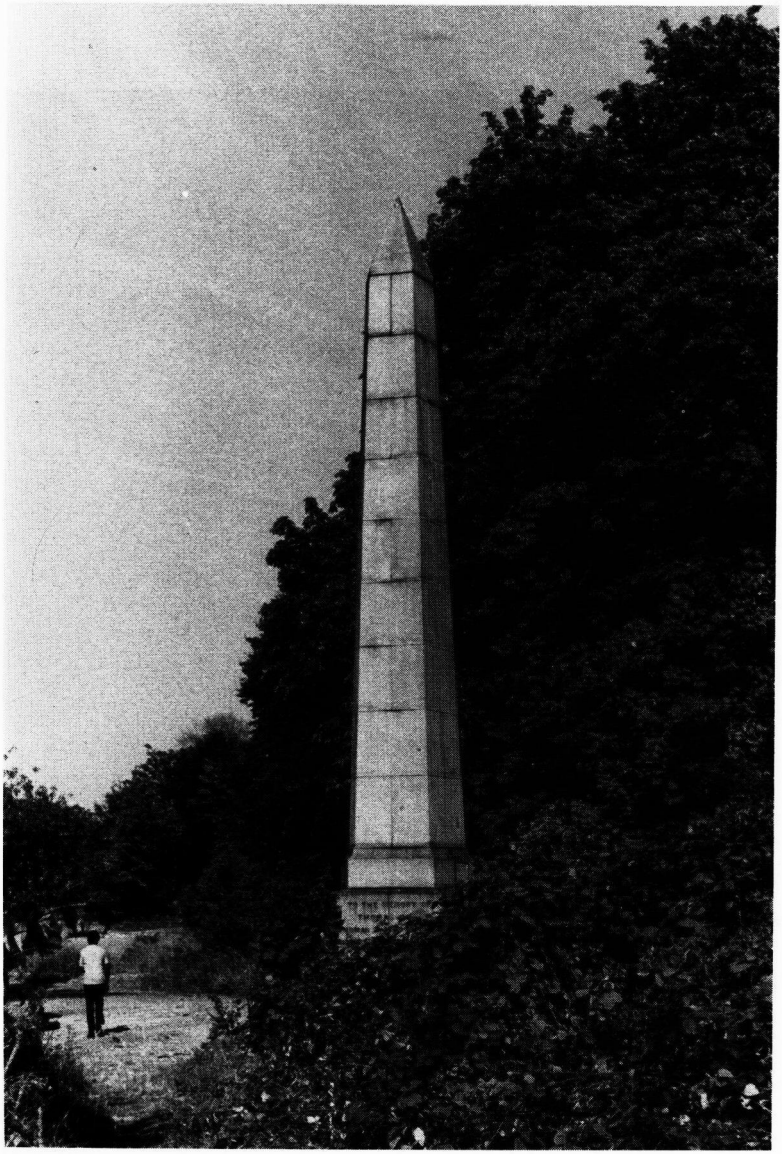

Fig. 24. The obelisk of 1851 to commemorate the Scots Martyrs to the cause of Parliamentary Reform. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl.)

Fig. 25. The Interior of the Main Catacomb, showing damage caused by vandals. The long barrel-vault and cross-barrel-vaults can be seen (Photograph by Ian Williams, kindly provided by the London Borough of Southwark.)

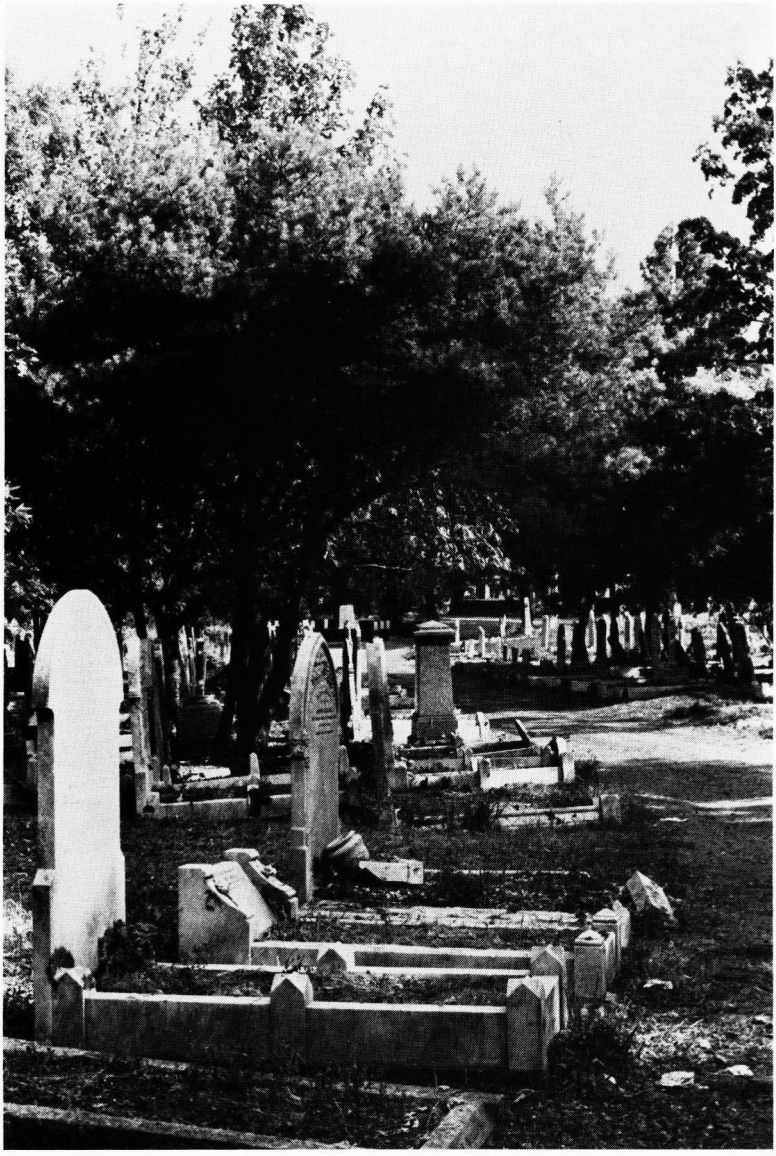

Fig. 26. General view on one of the serpentine paths, showing the cleared undergrowth. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl.)

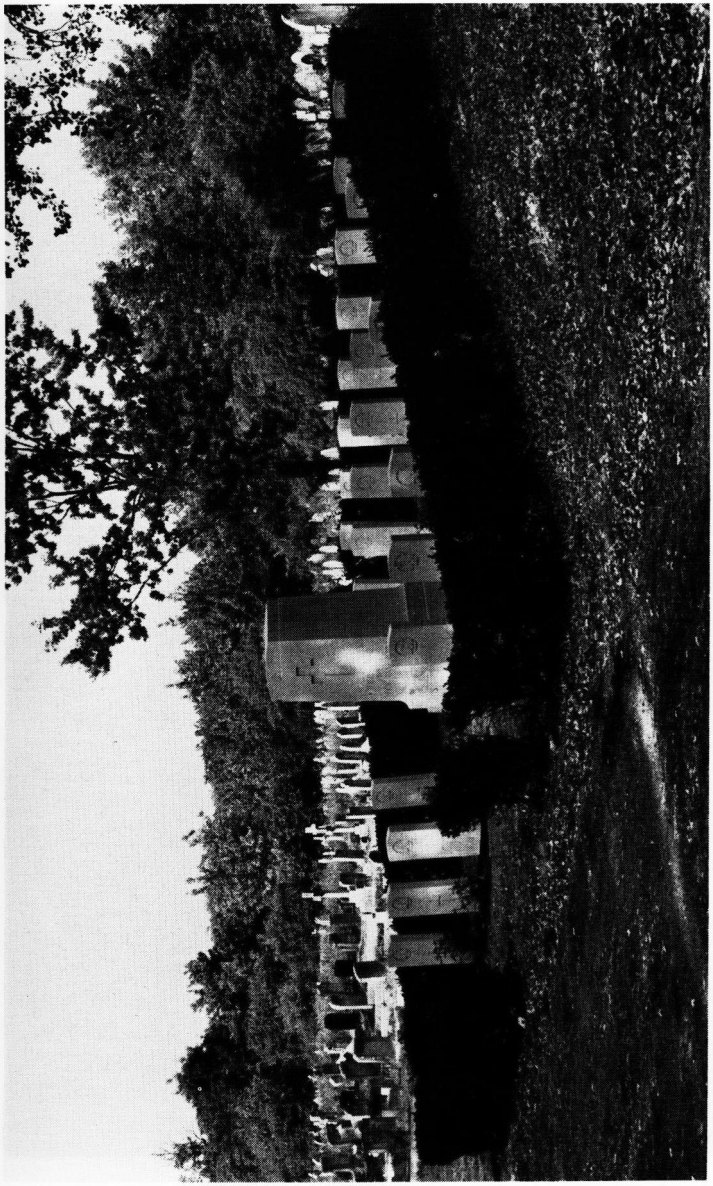

Fig. 27. Commonwealth War Graves Section. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl.)

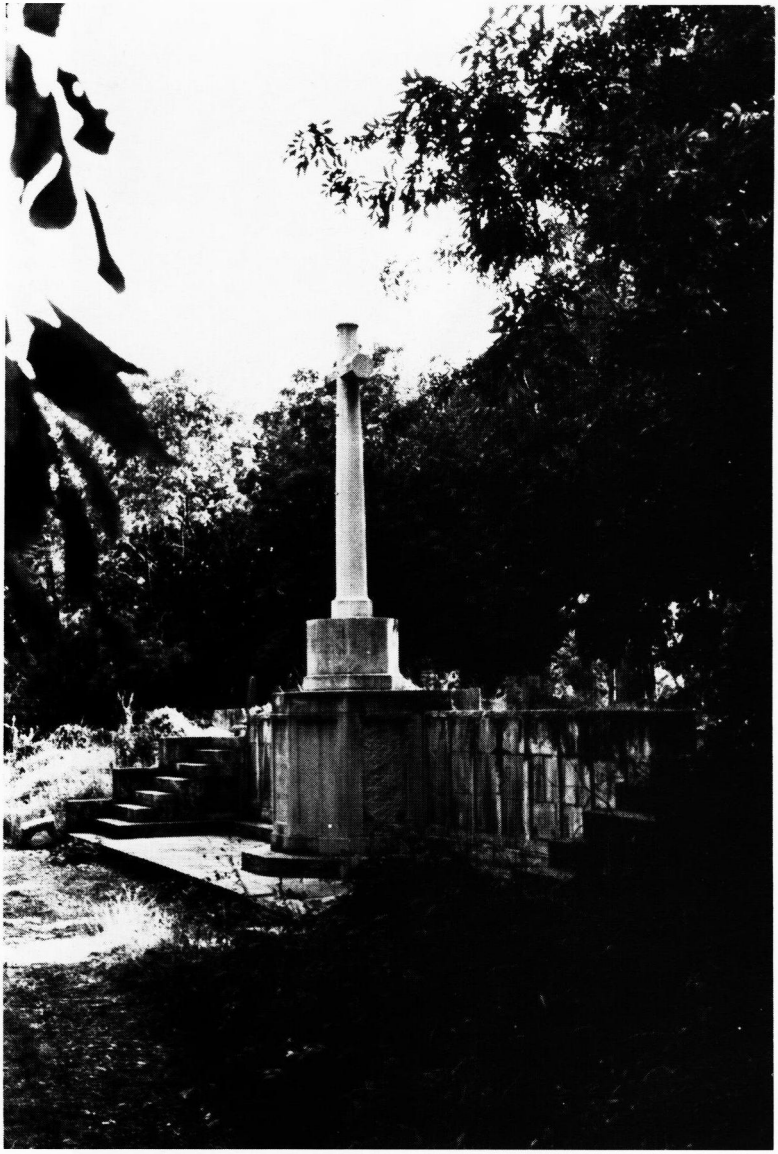

Fig. 28. A War Memorial. All the bronze plaques have been stolen. (Photograph of 1976 by James Stevens Curl.)

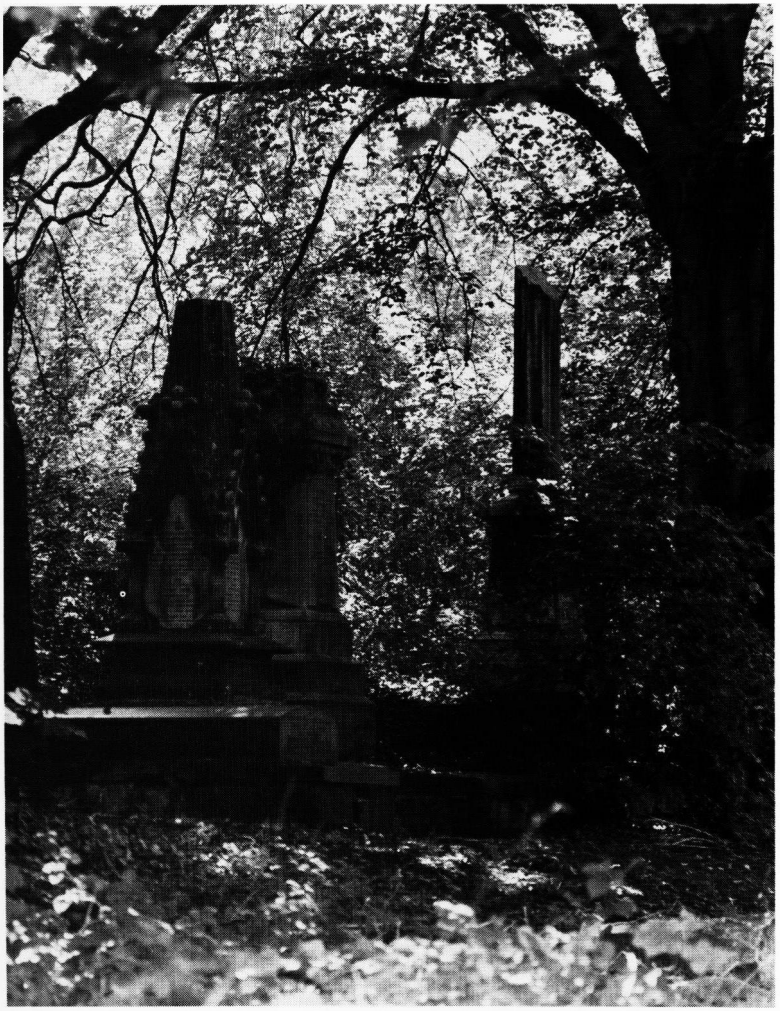

Fig. 29. Monuments over brick graves. (Photograph by Bill Worsfold, kindly provided by the London Borough of Southwark.)

Fig. 30. Substantial terra cotta mausoleum in the Romanesque style. (Photograph by Bill Worsfold, kindly provided by the London Borough of Southwark.)

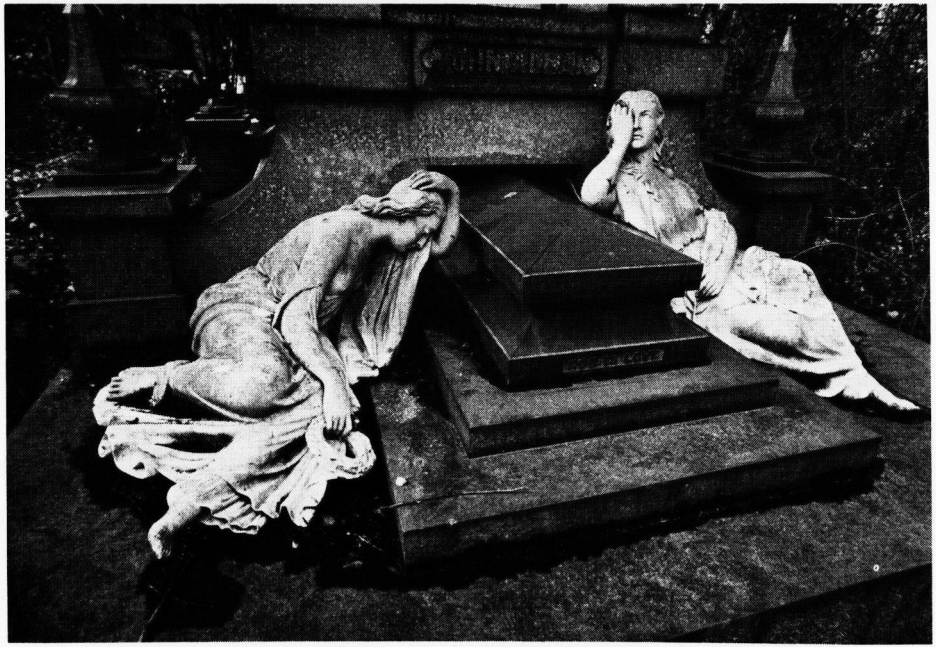

Fig. 31. Mourning marble figures by the granite vault of John Allan. (Photograph kindly provided by the London Borough of Southwark.)

Fig. 32. Memorials vanishing into the undergrowth. (Photograph kindly provided by the London Borough of Southwark.)

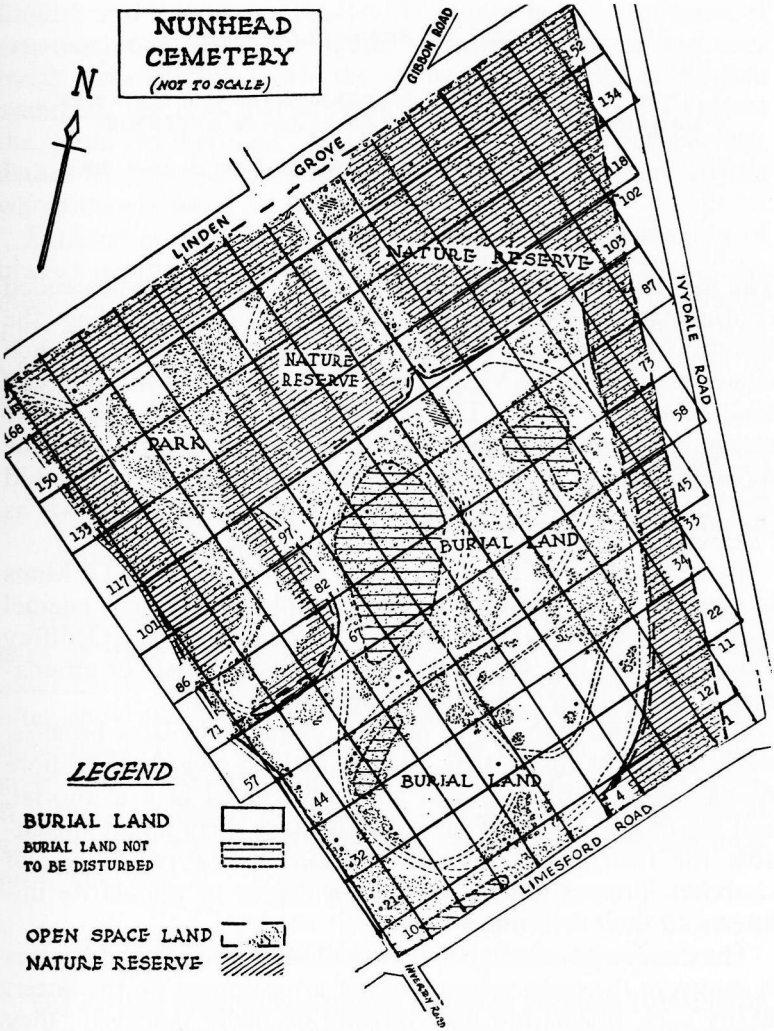

Fig. 33. Southwark Council's proposals for Nunhead Cemetery 1975.