

Autumn 2022

FRIENDS

No. 60

of the
Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome

NEWSLETTER



NEWS FROM THE CEMETERY

In May Amanda Thursfield announced that, after fifteen years' dedicated service to the Cemetery, she would be retiring at the end of the calendar year. The Advisory Committee publicly advertised the post (the deadline for applications was 11 July), aiming to interview selected applicants in September. The name of the new director will be announced in due course after ratification by the Assembly of Ambassadors.

The Director at Buckingham Palace

Defying the uncertainties of air travel in the summer, the Director reached London in time for her investiture with the MBE medal awarded her by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (*Newsletter* 58). HRH Prince William, representing Her Majesty, conferred the award on her in a ceremony in the sumptuous surroundings of the palace.



On 8 July, exactly 200 years after his death by drowning, we commemorated Percy Bysshe Shelley at his grave-side. Several Friends were present. Giuseppe Albano, Curator of the Keats-Shelley House in Rome, recited an extract from Shelley's poem 'Adonais' and the Editor spoke about Shelley's grave. The Cemetery and the Keats-Shelley House laid wreaths.

Our pine trees again in trouble

A phone call at 10.30pm on a Friday evening from one of our neighbours in Via Caio Cestio alerted the Director to an ominous-sounding 'crack' coming from the garden. The upper two-thirds of the trunk of a pine tree at the top of the Zona Prima had fallen across the Aurelian city-wall onto public property, the Via Campo Boario. Fortunately, no-one was injured and the police and fire brigade were immediately on the scene to take security measures. The following morning the tree management company Alberando efficiently cleared away the fallen trunk and branches; the tree-stump in the Cemetery remains to be removed and the minor damage to a restored section of the Aurelian Wall repaired. An expert survey checks annually the health of our trees; it may be the prolonged drought conditions that have caused stress to the pine trees (see *Newsletter* 58).



(Photo: Lara D'Appollonio, courtesy Keats-Shelley House, Rome)



Removal of the fallen trunk in Via Campo Boario

A new harmonium
in the Chapel

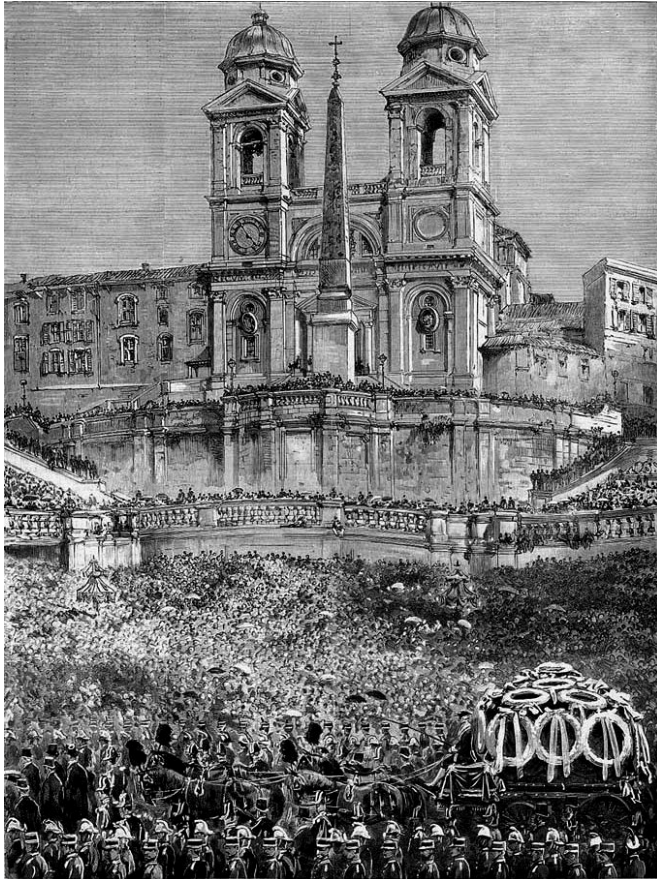
We now have a 'new' harmonium in the chapel, replacing one that was barely usable any more. For arranging this donation we thank Michael Jonas, pastor at the Lutheran Evangelical Church in Rome and member of the Advisory Committee.



Arrival of the harmonium

The funeral of Lord Vivian, British Ambassador, in 1893

In the spring of 1892, Hussey Crespigny Vivian, a career diplomat aged 57, took up his new post as British Ambassador in Rome. His wife Louisa, twenty years younger than him, and their three young children joined him at the Embassy residence, the Villa Torlonia (or Villa Bracciano) at Porta Pia. The couple enjoyed great popularity in Rome, Louisa being admired for her beauty and for her impeccable dress-sense. As a diplomat Lord Vivian had a mixed reputation. *The Times* newspaper commented in its obituary: 'He was certainly much fonder of horses than of chanceries ... but he was a man who could always be relied on in an emergency'. His death *en poste*, little more than eighteen months after his arrival, came as a shock to everyone.



The funeral of Lord Vivian at Rome (*The Graphic* November 4, 1893)

Official biographies state that Lord Vivian died from pneumonia. But ever since his arrival in Rome he had shown symptoms of throat cancer. Guests at meals noticed that he took no solid food. The Embassy's preferred doctor was Axel Munthe who had recently started his own practice at Piazza di Spagna, 26, in the very rooms where John Keats had died. Suspecting cancer, Munthe accompanied the Ambassador and his wife to see a specialist in Germany, whose advice differed slightly from that of Munthe. For Munthe's biographer, Bengt Jangfeldt, the Vivian case was the first one to cause people in Rome to question Munthe's medical expertise. Rather than informing Vivian that his disease was incurable, Munthe believed in reducing his patient's anxiety by avoiding any explicit diagnosis.

The Ambassador's death one year later was marked by an event that brought the centre of Rome to a standstill. A funeral cortège left the Embassy at Porta Pia at 10.00am on 25 October heading for the Anglican All Saints' Church in Via del Babuino. The photographer Felici took an 'aerial' view of the procession entering a Piazza Barberini packed tight with crowds standing on the ground and at every window. Preceded by a military band, a troop of mounted Carabinieri were followed by the diplomatic corps in their various national colours, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the President of the Senate and other dignitaries. Admiral Seymour and the commanders of two

British battleships docked at La Spezia preceded the hearse that was drawn by four horses. Immediately behind the hearse – an indication of the strong bonds between Italy and Britain – there walked the Prince of Naples (the future King Victor Emmanuel III) with George, the 15-year-old son and heir to Lord Vivian, and Colonel Slade of the British Embassy, representing H.M. Queen Victoria. They were followed by other government ministers, the Mayor of Rome, members of Roman high society and, finally, the English community. As in Felici's photo, the *Graphic* magazine's artist depicted the huge crowds in Piazza di Spagna amassed on the Spanish Steps and on the balconies above as the cortège passed. Arriving at the Anglican church a little after 11 o'clock, the cortège dispersed and the funeral service started.

There are two elements to the Vivian grave (Zone 2.17.3): a Celtic cross (the family are of Cornish origin) with interlace decoration and, in front, a bronze wreath laid on a marble cushion. The wreath is inscribed 'AS A MARK OF SINCERE ESTEEM FROM HIS SOVEREIGN', that is, Queen Victoria. Prominent too is the name of Rome's famous bronze foundry, FOND. NELLI ROMA. The ambassador's widow Louisa is also buried here, having died at Monte Carlo in 1926.

Nicholas Stanley-Price



3rd Baron Vivian



The Vivian tomb, detail of wreath.

WHO THEY WERE

Drago Popovich, a Montenegrin shipowner in Trieste

Adjacent to the diagonal path that bisects the Zona Prima stands a monument to Drago Popovich (Zone 1.4.35), a 'Dalmatian' and a 'citizen of Trieste' as the inscriptions reveal. Born in 1799 in Risan in the beautiful Bay of Kotor in Montenegro, he went to Trieste for nautical studies and in due course became one of the city's leading shipowners. Acquiring Austrian citizenship, he was also a proud member of the Serbian community in Trieste, protecting the rights of his co-nationals and of fellow adherents to the Orthodox Church. For example, in 1827 he and his brother Spiro supported their Greek co-religionists in their War of Independence from the Ottomans by sending a ship to fight with the British, French and Russians at the battle of Navarino in southwest Greece.



Ivan Aivazofsky (1817-1900), *Sea battle at Navarino on October 20 1827, 1846*



The monument to Drago Popovich

Speaking Serbian, Italian, Russian and Greek with basic Turkish, Popovich continued to run a flourishing business between Trieste and the Sea of Azov. All was to change, however, with the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853. Out of solidarity with their co-religionist Russians, the Popovich brothers refused to rent their ships to the Anglo-French alliance for use in the war against Russia. As a reprisal, the supposedly neu-

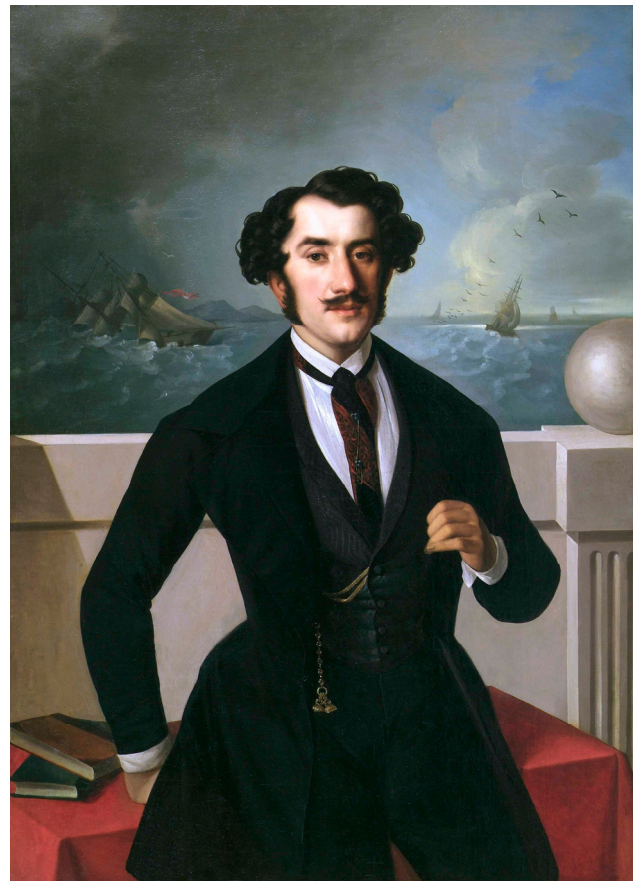
tral Austrian authorities in Trieste prevented the Popoviches from setting sail to protect their properties in Kerch. As a result, Drago's house and facilities there were pillaged by the allies. Facing financial ruin at war's end, Popovich sold the family house in Trieste and, although no longer young, went back to sea to recoup his fortunes. Another Serbian merchant from Trieste, Spiridione Gopceovich, was also ruined. He had stockpiled in Azov a huge quantity of grain for export which then was spoiled when the year-long siege of Sevastopol prevented him from shipping it. History repeats itself.

Popovich died in Rome in 1887 in the house of his only child. Eugenio (1842-1931) had fought with the Garibaldini at Aspromonte and later at the battles of Monterotondo and Mentana. He had exchanged his Austrian citizenship for Italian and married a Torinese. Having studied politics and law, he became a prolific journalist, promoting irredentist causes. He had not forgotten his father's Serbian roots, however. In Trieste he had been at school with Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, the future King. Enjoying the support of Eugenio over the years, the King eventually appointed him Consul of Montenegro in Italy. The epitaph that Eugenio devised for his father's tomb could have applied also to himself:

VOLLE LIBERTÀ / AI POPOLI D'ORIENTE / MORENDO / SALUTÒ ROMA REDENTA

He wanted liberty / for the peoples of the East / On his deathbed / he hailed Rome Redeemed.

Nicholas Stanley-Price



G. Tominz (1790-1866), *Portrait of Drago Popovich*, c. 1830-1835, Trieste, Civico Museo Revoltella

Another sculptor in Rome's 'white, marmorean flock': Florence Freeman



Lorenzo Suscipi, *Florence Freeman*, c. 1860s, carte-de-visite, Athenaeum, Boston

sional women artists at that point in American history.

These women lived in Rome for years at a time, and they naturally had connections to the Cemetery. They would have attended funerals and visited the grounds, especially to see the celebrated graves of Keats and Shelley. Hosmer designed a marker for Edinburgh native Elizabeth Dundas (d. 1862), and Stebbins did the same for Bostonian Katherine Appleton (d. 1863) (see *Newsletter* 27). But only one of these women, Florence Freeman, was actually buried there. Freeman was part of Cushman's circle for many years – her first trip to Italy was taken with Cushman as chaperon – and she lived in Rome from 1861 to her death in 1883. Newspaper reports about Freeman's sculpture appeared with some regularity on both sides of the Atlantic, and these, as well as guidebooks, directed travellers to her studio, which over the years moved around the artists' quarter between Via Margutta and Vicolo di San Niccolò da Tolentino. She was prolific, but today we can only identify three of her marble sculptures: a bust of Sandalphon gifted to the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a statuette of a seated putto with a lamb which appeared on the art market in 2019, and a chimneypiece with a Yule log scene in the former home of Bostonian Mary Tileston Hemenway. These diverse objects speak to Freeman's efforts to capture clients in Rome's competitive market as well as her awareness of the popularity of domestic ornament among Anglo-American travellers. She contributed work to the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, as did many of her friends, including Foley, the painter and Dante scholar Sarah Freeman Clarke, and the painter Caroline Carson (*Newsletter* 12).

Despite these successes, as the years passed Freeman was increasingly alone: Foley died in 1877, Clarke returned to the United States in 1878, and Hosmer spent much of her time in Britain. Freeman fell ill with what was described as consumption in the summer of 1883, and she died on August 8. In the absence of family, her banker in Rome, James Clinton Hooker, and consular officials took charge of her estate and burial, as they did for Caroline Carson (Zone 2.15.2) in 1894. Hooker himself died two years after Carson and was also buried in the Cemetery (Zone 1.12.37). Unusually for this period, there survives the bill of expenses for Freeman's burial, total-

ling 497 francs, which John Trucchi as undertaker and custodian of the Cemetery submitted to the U.S. Consulate as paid. The two most expensive items were the chestnut wood coffin (107 francs) and the underground brick vault (120 francs).



The headstone visible in Giuseppe Primoli, *The Protestant Cemetery under snow*, March 1891, aristotype, Fondazione Primoli, Rome (detail)

But where in the Cemetery was her grave? Freeman's plot has been subject to exhumation and re-use since her death but an analysis of old burial inventories and photographs reveals where it was located. She died two days after the German painter Johann Riedel (1799-1883) and they were buried in adjacent plots. As a distinguished painter Riedel was honoured with a monumental tomb designed by the Italian sculptor Giuseppe Sacconi that survives today (Zone 1.5.48). Freeman instead received a simple round-topped headstone, part of its inscription visible in a photo taken by Giuseppe Primoli in 1891. This evidence proves that Florence Freeman, as an important but now little-known member of Rome's Anglo-American community in the late nineteenth century, died and was buried in the Eternal City.

See: <https://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring22/new-discovery-finding-florence-freeman>

Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, Wellesley College, USA, and Nicholas Stanley-Price



Giuseppe Sacconi, *Monument to August Riedel*, 1888, after restoration in 2009

HOW TO BECOME A FRIEND

This Newsletter is made possible by the contributions of the Friends of the Cemetery.

The Friends also help fund the care of the trees in the cemetery and the restoration of tombs. Please can you help us by becoming a Friend? You can find a membership form at:

www.cemeteryrome.it

THE NON-CATHOLIC CEMETERY IN ROME

via Caio Cestio, 6, 00153, Roma

Director: Amanda Thursfield

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm
(last entrance 4.30pm)

Sunday & Public Holidays: 9.00am - 1.00pm
(last entrance 12.30pm)

Tel 06.5741900, Fax 06.5741320

NEWSLETTER of the Friends of the Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome

Nicholas Stanley-Price, EDITOR
Anka Serbu, GRAPHIC DESIGN
Grafica Di Marcotullio, PRINTER
ROME, 2022

Contact: nstanleyprice@tiscali.it
Disponibile anche in versione italiana