

Winter 2023

FRIENDS

No. 65

of the Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome

NEWSLETTER



Pope Francis in an unprecedented visit to the Cemetery on All Souls' Day



Yvonne Mazurek greets Pope Francis, with Amanda Thursfield at right and the Editor at left



The Prefect of Rome after laying a wreath

On All Souls' Day the Cemetery had the exceptional honour of a visit from His Holiness Pope Francis. It was a historic occasion for being the first ever visit by a Pope, whose predecessors 300 years ago had conceded this land for use by Protestants as a burial-ground. His visit followed a eucharistic celebration that he presided over in commemoration of the war dead at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Testaccio. Pope Francis then crossed Via Nicola Zabaglia to the back gate of our Cemetery, where he was welcomed by the Director, Yvonne Mazurek, and presented with a bouquet of red roses. Pope Francis asked that they be placed on the grave of his friend, Giorgio Napolitano, former President of Italy, who had died on 22 September and who, at his family's request, has been buried in our Cemetery.

The Cemetery Statutes allow exceptions to the usual prerequisites for burial (of being non-Catholic, non-Italian and resident in Italy) for 'famous figures internationally recognized for their particular merits or for those who have contributed through work or through benefactions to the dignity and prestige of Rome in particular or of Italy in general.' The family makes a request which, subject to the advice of the Adviso-

ry Committee, is submitted for approval by the Cemetery's President, one of the foreign Ambassadors to Italy.

Soon after the Pope's departure, the Prefect of Rome, Lamberto Giannini, arrived to lay a wreath at the grave of former President Napolitano in the presence of members of his family. The lettering and border of the headstone is done by hand, as is our custom, skilfully executed by Marco Gattuso (see *Newsletter* 45).

These two events on All Souls' Day have led to even greater numbers of Romans, in particular, discovering for the first time this beautiful spot in their city.



OTHER NEWS FROM THE CEMETERY

A helping hand with the garden work

In May 2023 the Cemetery hosted a 'special squad' of gardeners. They were participating in a 'Green maintenance' professional development course financed by Foncoop, leading to a certificate recognised by the Region of Lazio. This special squad, having completed 60 hours of theoretical training in class, did an internship of 60 hours of practice, supervised by a tutor from the Il Trattore social co-operative. They helped the gardeners of Il Trattore who already work there to keep the Cemetery green, by clearing leaves and pine needles, cutting grass by hand, pruning hedges and bushes, and watering and fertilising where needed.

The squad is 'special' for including people in economic difficulty and socially fragile (without a fixed home, with mental problems, long-term



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unemployed, etc.). Thus, they gained new redeeming possibilities, at the same time acquiring professionalism, self-esteem and financial autonomy – fundamental bases for being actively re-inserted into the world of society and work. This project has been so successful that a second one has been organised at the Cemetery for this autumn.



An exhibition entitled 'Hilde in Italy. Art and life in the work of Hilde Lotz-Bauer, a pioneering photographer of the 1930s' will open at the Museo di Roma Trastevere from January to May 2024. Among the highlights will be a selection of her images of rural life in Abruzzo villages such as Scanno, and of life in war-time Florence. The exhibition is curated by Federica Kappler and Corinna Lotz, Hilde's daughter, who with her sister Irene wrote about their parents in *Newsletter* 15. Strongly recommended!

Hilde Lotz-Bauer on the Spanish Steps, Rome.
Photo: <https://hildelotzbauer.net/>



Americans buried in the Cemetery before 1850

In early days not only British but also Americans undertook the long, ocean voyage towards southern Europe to improve their health (this was before they headed for the hot, dry lands of the American Southwest instead). There were at least 16 Americans buried in the Cemetery earlier than 1850. Some were already ill when they arrived in Rome, others fell ill while in Italy. How did their families and friends view the fate of dying in such a distant, foreign land? A new article about early Americans in the Cemetery is posted on our website at

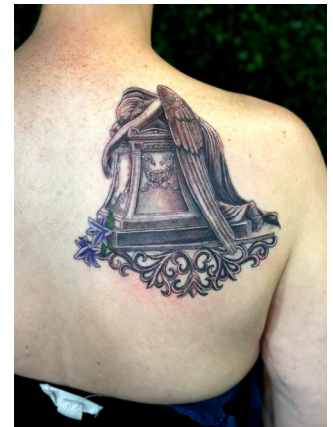
<https://www.cemeteryrome.it/books/reading.html>



James De Veaux (1812-1844),
a painter from Charleston, SC

The 'Angel of Grief' in new media

A recent visitor, Laura Robbins, showed us the image of the Angel of Grief sculpture that she has tattooed on her back in memory of her grandmother. No doubt William Wetmore Story, its sculptor, would have been flattered. A tattoo celebrating John Keats has already featured in these pages (*Newsletter* 29). We await other walk-in visitors to add to the gallery.



WHO THEY WERE

Lady Page-Turner, her landmark monument and her portrait by Richard Cosway



Unknown artist, *The grave of Jules de Guimps*, ca. 1859 (detail)

Five years after it opened, visitors entering the New Cemetery would have seen a massive new tomb silhouetted against a tower of the Aurelian city-wall (Zone 1.16.12). A cuboid 'Roman'-style monument rests on a three-stepped pedestal which itself stands on several courses of a brick base. Surmounting this monument of some 3m. in height was a tall, slender cinerary vase in marble that made the tomb even more conspicuous. It is recognisable in early artwork and photos, for instance the paintings by Gustavo Witting and Julius Zielke (*Newsletter* 63) and the view of De Guimps's grave (*Newsletter* 45; detail shown here). An inventory of 1830 lists the Page Turner tomb 'con vaso cinerario sopra'. When the urn disappeared is not known.

The tomb's inscription tells us that, as a 'tribute of filial love', her affectionate daughter Anna had the monument erected to the Dowager Lady Page Turner (1753-1828), widow of Sir Gregory Page Turner. Sir Gregory (1748-1805) at the age



The Page-Turner monument today

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of twenty had inherited the title of 3rd Baronet of Ambrosden in Oxfordshire – he added ‘Page’ to his Turner surname in 1775 after being left property by a great-uncle. Soon after inheriting his title Sir Gregory made the Grand Tour in 1768-69 with a student friend, Richard Paul Jodrell, and the experienced William Patoun as their guide. He described his travels in letters written to an uncle, James Leigh. The portrait of him painted in Rome by Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787) has become a classic image of the Grand Tourist. The artist has typically inserted a view of the Colosseum, books, a copy of Nolli’s map of Rome and a bust of Minerva, a prop that he used for several of his Grand Tour portraits. Sir Gregory’s stance recalls that of the Apollo Belvedere statue. Back in England, from 1784 to his death he was Member of Parliament for Thirsk in Yorkshire, but his main interest, facilitated by his great wealth, lay in life as a country gentleman at his house at Battlesden in Bedfordshire (he had his other house at Ambrosden demolished).

Compared to Batoni’s portrait of Sir Gregory, now in the Manchester Art Gallery, the painting of his wife by Richard Cosway (1742-1821) is little known since it remains in the family’s possession. Cosway was a leading portrait painter of this era, known especially for his miniatures. He exhibited this portrait in the Royal Academy’s annual exhibition in 1787 under the title ‘Portrait of a Lady and Child’ (the Paul Mellon Centre in London holds preliminary sketches). Five years earlier, Sir Gregory had married Frances Howell from Emneth in Norfolk whose father had apprenticed her as a milliner in St. James’s in London. Visiting the exhibition accompanied by Sir Joshua Reynolds, King George III is said to have commented critically on ‘a want of refinement in Cosway’s sitter’, ‘formerly the buxom milliner of St James’s Street’. Cosway has depicted Lady Page-Turner in a dramatic stance drawing attention to her newborn daughter Frances



Richard Cosway, *Lady Page-Turner and daughter Frances*, 1787 (family collection)



Pompeo Batoni, *Sir Gregory Page-Turner*, 1768 (image courtesy of Manchester Art Gallery)

(1787-1804) lying in her cradle. Frances was her second child, following the birth of her son and heir Gregory (1785-1843).

Anna who dedicated the monument in Rome in 1828 was in fact the youngest of their five children, but two of them had already died young. As the tomb inscription explains, she was the wife of Henry Winston Barron, member of an Irish Catholic family from Waterford who later entered British politics. In his book *Queen Victoria and Italy* (1859), he mentioned having visited Rome for long periods on three occasions. Possibly one of those coincided with the death of Frances Page-Turner, and his wife’s dedication to her mother of one of the most distinctive monuments in the early years of the New Cemetery.

Richard Foulkes, a Manchester Art Gallery volunteer guide/ researcher, and Nicholas Stanley-Price. For the Batoni portrait, see <https://manchesterartgallery.org>



The Von Daehns and the Russian Imperial family

At the top of the Zona Seconda (2.20.17) lies the family plot of a Finnish-Russian family closely related to the Russian Imperial house prior to the 1917 Revolution. Woldemar (Vladimir) Carl Von Daehn (1838-1900) was born at Sippola in the Grand Duchy of Finland, an autonomous part of the Russian Empire. After twenty years as an officer in the Russian army, he returned to Finland in 1882 as Governor of Viborg County. His abilities and his good standing with the Tsar allowed him quick promotions, becoming a Senator and eventually, in 1891, the Minister-Secretary of State for Finland. Woldemar married Princess Nina Svyatopolk-Mirsky (1852-1926), whose brother, Prince Pyotr Dmitrievich-Mirsky, was later the Russian Interior Minister during the infamous 1905 General Strike known as “Bloody Sunday”.

Woldemar resigned for health reasons in 1898 and two years later died in Rome. He and Nina had five children, none of whom had children of their own. Their eldest son, Dimitri Vladimirovich Von Daehn (1874-1937), had a



Lili Dehn with her son Alexandre

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Dunbar D. Beck (1903-1986), *Ketounia Dehn*, 1929, photo of painting (Fellows' Works collection, American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive)



Albert Edelfelt, *Woldemar von Daehn*, 1889 (Helsinki University; public domain)

distinguished career in the Russian army, serving in Austria-Hungary and Italy in 1906-1911. In Tiflis in Georgia in 1903 he married Sofya Vladimirovna Sheremeteva (1883-1955), daughter of Vladimir Alekseevich Sheremetev, Major-General in the Imperial army, and Countess Elena Grigorievna Stroganova, granddaughter of Tsar Nicholas I. Sofya was friends with the entire Imperial family and managed friendships between the feuding families of Tsar Nicholas II and the Mikhailovich clan, headed by the Empress-widow Maria Feodorovna. Following the Revolution, the surviving Romanovs were living at Yalta in the Crimea – Dimitri and Sofya were housed nearby as were other Russian aristocratic families such as the Fersens (see *Newsletter* 6) before all escaping into exile in Europe.

Woldemar and Nina's youngest son Petr Vladimirovich Von Daehn (1882-1971) was well-known in Italy as Peter de Daehn, the librarian at the American Academy in Rome. In Russia he had been the last commander of the 17th Nizhny Novgorod Dragoon Regiment and then a commander in the Combined Regiment of the Caucasian Cavalry Division in the army of A.I. Denkin. His wife Ketevan (Ketounia) Dmitrievna Staroselskaya (1879-1962) also lies in the family tomb. The couple rented rooms in their house to visiting Fellows of the Academy and offered them Italian lessons. One of the Fellows, the artist Dunbar Beck, painted a striking portrait of Ketounia (see photo).

Elsewhere in the Cemetery lie many others related to the Von Daehns and to the Sheremetevs. The brother of Sofya Von Daehn, Sergei Vladimirovich Sheremetev (1880-1968), fought in the Russo-Japanese war. In 1905 he commanded a company of the Life Guards Preobrazhensky Regiment, until being seconded in 1911 to the Governor of Kiev, F.F. Trepov. Evacuated during the Civil War, he lived in exile in Paris but died in Rome, as did his second wife, the American Stella

Webber (1888-1969; Zone V.6.20). So too did many Sheremetev cousins of Sofya (tombs at Zones V.12.2, 1.8.34 and 3.2.4.17). Her great-uncle Victor Stroganov (1831-1856) died young of tuberculosis and has an elegant monument in the Zona Vecchia (V.2.6).

Finally, at Zone 2.11.28 stands the grave of Lili Von Dehn (1888-1963). Brought up on the family estate of Revovka in southern Russia, in 1907 in Yalta she married Carl Alexander Von Daehn, a distant cousin of Dimitri Von Daehn (see above) and an officer on the imperial yacht, the *Standart*. In her popular book "The real Tsaritsa", published in 1922 and available in paperback and on Kindle, Lili Dehn described the close relations she enjoyed with the Empress-widow Alexandra Feodorovna, who became godmother to the Dehns' son, Alexandre. Lili was with the Imperial family at the outbreak of the Revolution, and witnessed the Tsar's abdication and the family's imprisonment by the new provisional government. Her book aimed to refute rumours circulating in Europe about the influence of Grigori Rasputin over the Imperial family's affairs. Her route to Rome was a circuitous one: having escaped to England where the couple had two more children, they returned to her father's estate in Poland where her husband died in 1932. During WW2 she emigrated to Venezuela, then to the USA, before dying in Rome in 1963.

Graham Finley, great-greatgrandson of Anna, aunt of Woldemar Von Daehn, with the editor

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

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