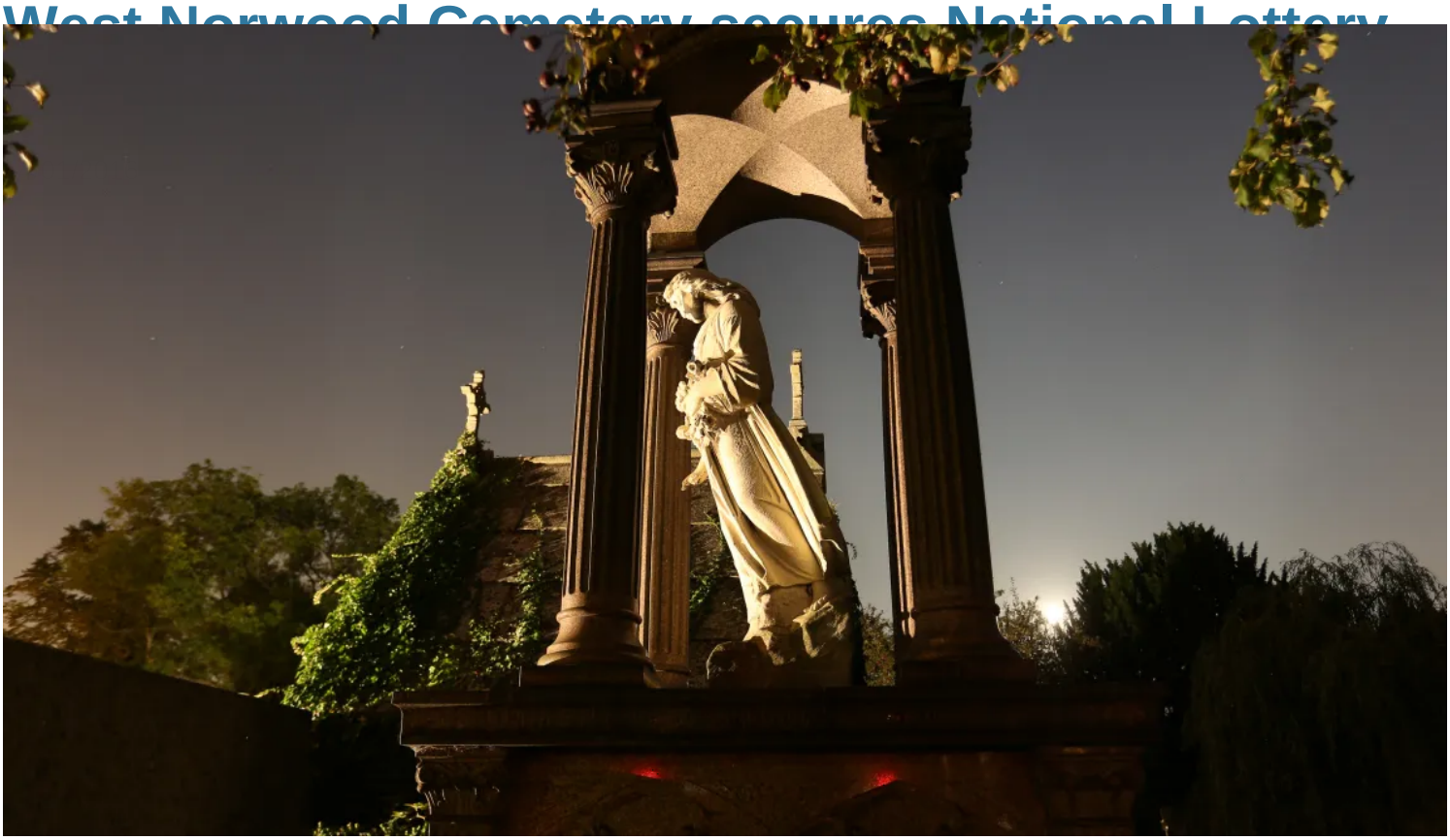
West Norwood Cemetery secures National Lottery



One of the 'Magnificent Seven', West Norwood Cemetery has National Lottery support

West Norwood Cemetery was established by Act of Parliament in 1836 and designed by Sir William Tite. It was laid out in what was then open countryside close to the Great North Wood to relieve the over-full churchyards of the growing city of London.

In recent years the Gothic Revival-style cemetery, which contains 69 Listed Grade II* and II memorials and structures, has faced an increasing threat to its future and long-term sustainability. Lambeth Council and partners now hope to address this through this National Lottery-funded project.

The cemetery project

The project proposes conservation of a significant landscape and built structures and introduction of increased community uses. Proposals to conserve and interpret graves and monuments along with a new visitor centre will tell the cemetery’s rich history. Works to enhance visitor amenities and accessibility will aim to encourage greater public use and engagement in a densely populated London borough where residents suffer a lack of open space.

An activities programme will also be developed to support volunteering and learning as well as design, digital and interpretation materials. This will provide an opportunity to learn about the heritage of the cemetery and explore the stories of those associated with it including many, such as Mrs Isabella Beeton, Sir Henry Doulton, Baron Julius Reuters and Sir Henry Tate, who remain household names today.

The development stage will last up to two years and allow plans to be fully formulated in consultation with local residents, the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery and the wider stakeholder community leading to a full grant application to the National Lottery for funding for delivery of the many improvements envisaged.

West Norwood Cemetery

The South Metropolitan Cemetery (more commonly known as West Norwood Cemetery) was opened in 1837. It was the second of London's 'Magnificent Seven' private cemeteries.

The cemetery's promoter and designer was Sir William Tite (1798-1873), a President of the Royal Institute of British Architects and MP for Bath 1855-1873. Tite was also architect for the Royal Exchange in the City of London and railway stations including Carlisle and Vauxhall.

For the cemetery location, he chose a 40-acre hilly site enclosed from the Great North Wood (hence Norwood), with rolling countryside, ancient trees and winding paths. The cemetery quickly gained a reputation as the 'Millionaires' Cemetery' attracting a refined clientele.

People buried in the cemetery include: cookery writer Isabella Beeton (1836-1865), Sir Henry Bessemer (1813-1898), inventor of the steel-making process, architect Sir William Burges (1827-1881), pottery manufacturer Sir Henry Doulton (1820-1897), Sir Hiram Maxim (1840-1916), inventor of the machine gun, Baron Julius de Reuters (1816-1899), founder of the news agency, artist David Roberts (1796-1864) and sugar magnate Sir Henry Tate (1819-1899).

A significant feature of the cemetery is the section consecrated by the Greek Orthodox Church near the Chapel of St Stephen. This enclosure includes monuments and mausolea inspired by classical Greek architecture. A further enclosure in the south-east corner was leased by the City parish of St Mary-at-Hill to replace its churchyard.

The cemetery also includes catacombs which hold 1,500 coffins and are currently in very poor condition. They are likely to be the subject of separate bid to the Heritage Lottery under the Heritage Grants programme.

Councillor Jane Edbrooke, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, said: “I welcome this funding which will help protect one of Lambeth’s important historical sites. The cemetery has a fascinating past and I hope this project will see more people encouraged to visit and learn more about the borough’s history.”

Today’s news comes as part of a £32m funding announcement for parks and cemeteries across the UK. Head of HLF London Stuart Hobley said on behalf of HLF and BIG: “Cemeteries like West Norwood provide important connections to our history, our community and our natural heritage.

"However we use them, public open space is such an important part of our metropolitan life and I’m delighted that National Lottery players’ money will help to make another of London’s historic cemeteries magnificent once more.”

Notes to editors

To date, more than £776m of money raised by National Lottery players has been invested in parks since 1996.

Parks for People applications are assessed in two rounds. A first-round pass is given when HLF has endorsed outline proposals and earmarked funding. A first-round pass may also include an immediate award to fund the development of the project. Detailed proposals are then considered by HLF at second-round and as long as plans have progressed satisfactorily and according to the original proposal, an award for the project is confirmed.

Further information

HLF Press Office: Rebecca Lamm on tel: 020 7591 6207 and via email: Rebecca.Lamm@hlf.org.uk; or Katie Owen on tel: 020 7591 6036

Big Lottery Fund Press Office: Anupa Devi on tel: 020 7211 1888 and via email: Anupa.Devi@biglotteryfund.org.uk

London Borough of Lambeth Press Office: Lawrence Conway on tel: 020 7926 0474 and via email: LConway@lambeth.gov.uk; or Trevor Uprichard, on tel: 020 7926 6221 and via email: TUprichard@lambeth.gov.uk