

HISTORY OF THE GARDENS

St. George's Gardens is almost 300 years old. It was one of several burial grounds planned in (then) open countryside to relieve pressure on London's churchyards, which were so overcrowded that they had become a health hazard. The new burial ground of 1713 was for the parishioners of two churches, St. George the Martyr, Queen Square and St. George Bloomsbury, not then built. Among the hundreds of famous and forgotten buried here over the years, many in unmarked graves, are Oliver Cromwell's granddaughter, Anna Gibson, and eight officers in the Young Pretender's volunteer force, executed in 1746. The first recorded case of body snatching, which became a lucrative trade, also happened here in 1777. The Chapel of Rest, by the Handel Street gates, was added in 1806 and a wall was built to divide the two burial grounds.

Very run down and with no more spaces, the grounds closed in 1855. In the 1880s, as a result of a London-wide campaign to invigorate disused burial grounds, it became a much loved local park in the Victorian fashion with paths, benches and flower beds, safeguarding the chest tombs and gravestones.

By the mid 1990s, no longer looked after by a permanent gardener, the Gardens were again in a bad state. Local residents, concerned by the deterioration and vandalism, formed the Friends of St. George's Gardens in 1994. In 1997, the Gardens were one of a group of Camden's historic parks to receive lottery funding under the new Urban Parks Programme. The restored Gardens reopened in Spring 2001.

FRIENDS OF ST. GEORGE'S GARDENS

Anyone interested in the use, upkeep and history of these unique gardens can join FoSGG. We raise income through membership subscriptions and donations and use the funds to pursue our original objectives.

FoSGG also holds an annual St. George's Day Event to commemorate the proud history of the Gardens and to celebrate their continuing role as a haven of calm in a busy neighbourhood.

We still have plenty to do to ensure that the Gardens remain the pleasant and safe "outdoor sitting room" that their Victorian designers envisaged.

Please join us by filling in the membership form overleaf.

The aims of the Friends of St. George's Gardens, agreed at the founding meeting on 14 July 1994, are as follows:

- To restore and improve the quality of St. George's Gardens.
- To ensure that Camden Council, which has day-to-day responsibility for the maintenance of the gardens, monitors contracting work to the highest standards.
- To liaise with all the bodies responsible for the gardens and their maintenance.
- To raise awareness of FoSGG and of the gardens themselves as a public amenity.



Detail. Tomb of Anna Gibson.

*Artwork by Karen Humpage.
Designed by Solo Digital.*

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I/we would like to become a member of FoSGG or renew membership. Enclosed is a cheque payable to "Friends of St. George's Gardens".

£6 (Single/Family) £3 (Concession)

*Tick appropriate box

I also enclose a voluntary donation of £ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel. No. _____

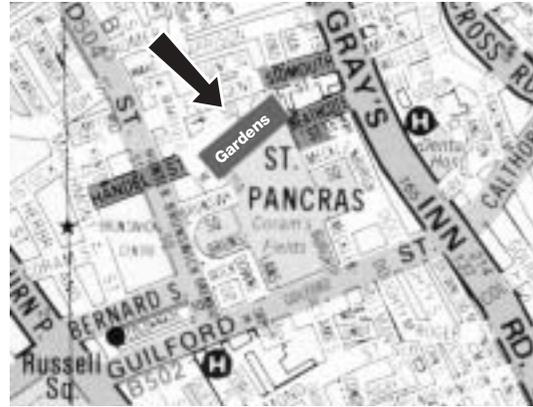
E-mail address: _____

Please contact me by post or by e-mail

Signed: _____

Date: _____

The completed form should be sent to:
Friends of St. George's Gardens,
c/o KCBNA,
62 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB



Entrances to the Gardens are located on Handel Street, Sidmouth Street and Heathcote Street, WC1.

Friends of St. George's Gardens
is affiliated to
Kings Cross-Brunswick Neighbourhood Assoc.
Registered Charity No. 1083901
62 Marchmont Street
London WC1N 1AB

Our website: www.friendsofsaintgeorgesgardens.org.uk
Email: info@friendsofsaintgeorgesgardens.org.uk



Tomb detail.

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