

This is a transcript of an article written by Yolande Whittall and published in the November 1999 issue of The Clarion, the Parish Magazine of her Church, St. Mary the Boltens.

The English Garden

‘There’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England.’

North of Skiros, where Rupert Brooke is buried, past the cemeteries of Gallipoli, where the Commonwealth ones look like English country gardens, past sites of forgotten graveyards and hospitals of the Crimean War, across the Sea of Marmara, on an Asian shore of the Bosphorus is a plot of land given by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire to England and known as the English Garden.

Take a boat from Galata Bridge in bustling European Istanbul to Kadiköy; turn left as you leave the landing-stage and walk along the sea front. It is less crowded than the road, but there will be cats. Cats waiting for the fishing boats to come with their catch, only there are few fish now because of the sea’s pollution. There are gypsies in colourful costumes squatting by baskets of flowers while children weave around you waving bunches of roses. They are cheap. Buy some for you may take flowers to the English Garden.

Join the road to cross the railway bridge. The trains at their terminal by the sea move slowly on their way to and from the inland capital. Traffic hurtling towards you thrusts you on to the pavement where people jostle you back to the road. You pass military looking buildings set in generous grounds then, as you turn left down a quiet street, an army hospital. Turn left again and reach the Garden. Recep, the keeper, with a cluster of children, bids you enter. They are Turkish and understand the Turkish notice on the gates. You read the translation: **“Among Those Commemorated Here Are The Men and Women Who Died in War 1854-1856”**. The big square building overlooking the Bosphorus was Florence Nightingale’s hospital.

In their flower bordered cottage Recep’s wife serves coffee. Chickens stray on a green sward leading to the cliff edge. Wander among the stones that stud it, brush away leaves, read: *She hath done what she could thus Sophia Walford, Matron, Barrack Hospital, Scutari. Entered into Rest 30th August 1855.* Leave her a flower; leave flowers, too, for the Nurses near her: *Mary Marks, Died at the Palace Hospital, Scutari, October 8th 1855, aged 47 and Sophia Barnes.*

Heedless of the graves a turkey hen struts over them with her young: *Dr. James A Wishart, Staff Surgeon...aged 33...‘Thy Brother Shall Rise Again’...Erected by his Sister; Edmund Sidney Mason, Esq. MD Ass’t Surgeon, 13 Reg. Light Infantry, only son of Edmund Sidney Mason, Esq. Menton Hall...died...actively*

and faithfully discharging his too arduous professional duties; Alfred Henry Cherry, Esq. Veterinary Surgeon, Royal Dragoons; Dispenser I. Beveridge; Rev. I Lee; --Harvey, FRCS, aged 26 (letters have faded); Alexander M Grigor, MD Deputy Inspector General Army Hospitals died at Scutari, aged 45 years; Edward John Complin, Civil Assistant Surgeon, died deeply lamented, aged 25 years; Staff Surgeon C Hume Reade...his Afflicted Wife and Children.

Bushes and shrubs withstand wind and weather but *Major Robert William Colville, yielding to the severity of a winter campaign with the allied army before Sevastapol, died on the passage from Balaklava to the hospital ship at Scutari...cheerfully terminating his life in his country's service. His bereaved and sorrowing Sister erected this Tomb as a faint Memorial of his Private Worth and Excellence; Henry Croft Singer, Lieut. ...Killed in Collision at Sea...on his Return from the Crimea, Invalided...; A tomb, beautifully inscribed, is Sacred to the memory of Hon Grey Neville...24...surviving by...6 days his Brother...Hon Henry Neville... killed at Inkerman...To the dear Memory of those so loved and early lost, their sorrowing Family inscribe this Stone.*

Scatter flowers.

Amadeo Count Preziosi and William Simpson's early paintings of the cemetery show few trees. Now rising above the venerable ones Baron Marochetti's monument is visible from the sea. Four panels between four angels have inscriptions in English, Turkish, French and Italian. A century later a student of the Florence Nightingale School of Nursing in Turkey unveiled a plaque on it *To Florence Nightingale whose work near this cemetery relieved much human suffering...this Tablet cast in Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation Year...has been raised by the British Community in Istanbul.*

Recep's dogs follow you down an avenue strewn with pine needles running parallel to the road. On the beach below was once a catgut factory. The cliff comes closer and then the land broadens to a clump of forest trees. Ahead, *'Where Their Name Liveth for Evermore'* (words from the Bible chosen by Rudyard Kipling), is the glory of the Garden. On the gates, after **1856**, you read **"1914-1918"**. Smooth mown grass sets off border and border of English garden flowers. Roses and rosemary, pansy, poppy, daisy, dahlia, flowers of summer meet those of early autumn, chrysanthemum, crocus. They stand sentinel to headstones giving details, bearing messages: *To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die. A bee buzzes over petunias Gone but not forgotten by all at home and in and out of a foxglove So peacefully he lies, Sleeping in a lonely grave. A forget-me-not Until the Day Break; love-in-the-mist Sleep on, dear lad, in a far-off land, In a grave we shall never see; marigold, zinnia A Musalman Soldier of the Great War, Hindu Soldier.. Honoured Here; lavender A Soldier of the Great War, Known unto God. Small birds, butterflies, men of HMS JULIUS, HMS IRON DUKE, HMS BENBOW, Irish Guards, Australian infantry, Royal Naval Air Service, Gordon Highlanders, Norfolk Regiment, Royal Field*

Artillery, Indian Army, a magnolia tree, shrubs. The altar-like Stone of Remembrance names those buried in distant cemeteries, or without graves. On the gates, after **1918** was written "**1939-1945**".

Once Imperial, now Commonwealth, Sir Fabian Ware's War Graves Commission tends civilian graves. Step over the ivy clad boundary wall, a tall cross attracts you: *Sacred to the Memory of Mary Saxton (Janie), the faithful Nurse and Friend of the Whittall Family for Sixty-two Years.* She was born in Yorkshire. You find the merchant family, who originated in Worcestershire. A knight and his lady, *James William...born Smyrna 1836, died Constantinople 1910...Edith Anna... 'Her Children Arise and Call her Blessed'*. Sons and their wives surround her: *William...Lilian... 'A thought of you and flowers, In the clean air and sunshine of God', Frederick Edwin, CBE, 'It's not farewell, beloved, Only good-night.'* Kenrick Edward... 1878-1963; and a daughter *Florence...widow of Canon F C Whitehouse, Chaplain to the British Embassy and All Saints, Moda; a relative Marie Whittall 1847-1948.* Their spacious graves, their great ages denote gracious living. But not all enjoyed longevity. Not far from Nurse, blanketed by soft evergreens, *From Love to Greater love, is John Reginald Whittall Kernick, aged 7. 'And the People murmured and said, - Who hath plucked this Flower? - And the Gardener answered, - The Master. - So they held their Peace.'*

You find LaFontaines, Benjamin Barker, Harold Madge and an Obelisk: *Charles Simpson Hanson, son of...John Hanson, Esq. of The Rookery, Woodford, Essex, ...departed this life...1874...Deep in the Love of his Wife, Children and Grandchildren and Numerous Relatives. During a residence of 50 years in this country he won universal esteem and reverence. George Baker, born at Totteridge, Herts. 1822...Came to Constantinople...1847 where he died 1905. He was head gardener at the British Embassy.*

You find *The remains of Julius M van Milligan, MD, who closed his pilgrimage on the 1st December 1878. Born 19th July 1800. Graduate of the Edinburgh University, he joined Lord Byron in Greece and after its independence settled in the East and served five successive Sultans as Court Physician.... 'Light of Christ, Shine upon all'. And his son, Edwin: Eminent as an Oculist and an Aurist. Greatly beloved as a Man. He died in 1900 aged 50.*

There are Jane, 1807-1872, and Georgina, 1818-1877, daughters of Major Thomas Walsh and Arabella, his wife. *For more than 23 years Miss Walsh, aided by her Sister, conducted with sound discretion, unwearied zeal and distinguished success an Institution opened under the protection of Sir Stratford Canning, British Ambassador at the time, and subsequently established by the munificence of HIM Sultan Abdul Mejid. The great object for which she sacrificed her ease and native home was to offer means of liberal education to young girls without distinction of race, creed or rank. Her recompense in dying was the firm belief of the Blessing of God which has so far aided the noble work would continue to rest on its progress and ensure its invaluable results.*

There are the three Miss Lynes who spent their working lives as governesses in Constantinople, later Istanbul. Said a Turkish gentleman to an English resident, 'Send no ambassadors for your Miss Lynes are the truer representatives of your country'. Two tortoises were knocking against their father's grave near the Crimean officers as though trying to read *Sergeant William Lyne, Royal Engineers, for 54 years Custodian of this Cemetery*. Florence Nightingale, we are told, saved his life in her Scutari hospital by delegating a nurse to sit with him to see he did not choke on his swollen tongue.

Toss flowers to the expatriates and startle a black cat sunning itself on a minister's tomb.

Charles Nollet, Lieut, RN, late of HMS ALBION...died at the Royal Naval Hospital, Therapia, January 1855. Sister McKenzie ran this hospital on the European side of the Bosphorus near the Black Sea. When the cemetery there could no longer be maintained, graves, Crimean and older, were brought here. Scrape off moss, bird droppings, words are legible: Sara Farman, died April xxvi, 1839, aged 6 months: Frederic, Infant son of Joseph and Mary Ann Morris, died 1848; Henry Baillie Hamilton, Naval Cadet HBMS AGAMEMNON.. died at Therapia aged 14...'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter'. In memory of Robert Malcolm Dewar, Youngest son of James Dewar, Esq. of No. 6 Charles Street, Lowndes Square, London, Naval Cadet of HMS VULTURE who departed this life off Balaklava on the 24th day of November 1856 aged 13 years. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord'. Lay a flower by each child.

Lay more on memorials – *Officers and men of the Royal Navy and Marines buried at Therapia...erected by their Countrywomen, AD 1855; on the family coat of arms Edmund Montray Lyons, Esquire Captain in Her Britannic Majesty's Navy (...son of Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons, Baronet, GCB, Commander in Chief of the British Fleet in the Black Sea), who died at Therapia...June 1855...having been mortally wounded on the 17th of the same month in a night attack on the Sea Defences of Sevastopol while commanding HM's Steam Frigate MIRANDA...as...Senior Officer of the British and French force in the Sea of Azof...achieved a series of brilliant and most important successes. Cut off in the prime of life the path of the highest earthly honours opening before him he died as a hero and a Christian should die. The Officers and Ship's Company of the MIRANDA having placed a memorial of the love and respect they bore their Captain in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, this monument is erected by his Brother Officers and Friends in the Black Sea Fleet to mark the last resting place of one whose public and private virtues call forth their admiration and affection.* Lay them on skull and crossbones *George Wolf, Seaman...HMS ACTAEON...departed this life 1831...erected by his Shipmates as a tribute of sincere respect; Patrick McKinnon, Seaman, HBM Ship TARTARUS...1848, aged 23...'We left him on a foreign shore'...; Charlotte...beloved and devoted*

*wife of Jonathan Hardy, Esq. HBM Consul Cancellier at this Residence....;
Eleanor, beloved wife of Major Gould Weston, Crooke Hall, Lancashire.*

Rooks caw in the tree hiding the railway station as you approach the south gate.
Kasim, devout Moslem, devoted gardener, now retired tidied this part of the
Garden.

Beneath its turf, unmarked, lie unknown soldiers of the Crimea - "dust whom
England bore, shaped, made aware, Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to
roam." Spread flowers over them. A solitary stone, engraved with a cross,
stands *Sacred to the memory of Trumpet Major Francis Johnson, 12th Royal
Lancers, ...erected by the non-commissioned Officers of the 13th Light Dragoons
as a mark of respect.* Leave your last flower.