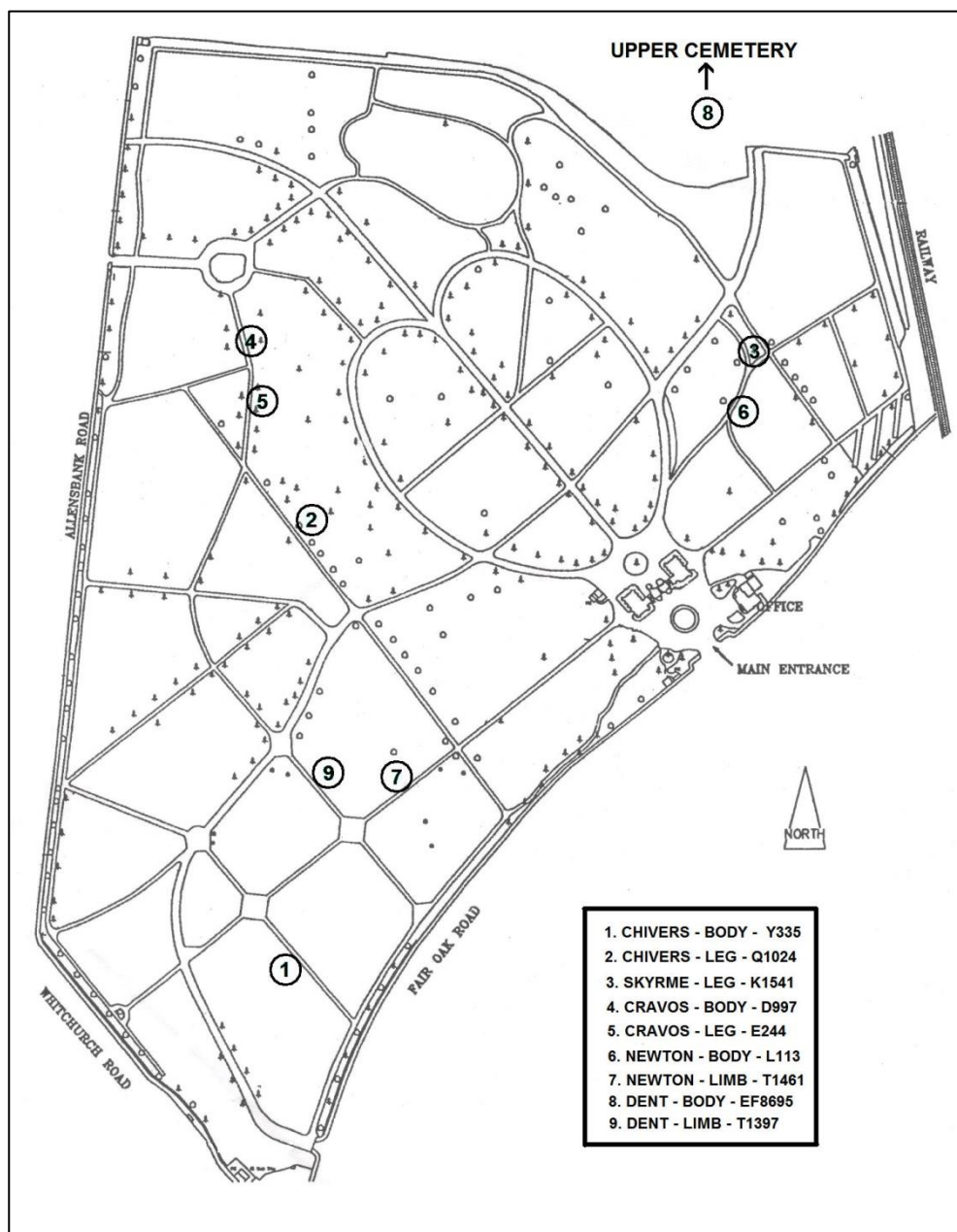


THE FIVE LEGS of CATHAYS



The Friends of Cathays Cemetery



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On 18 June 1815, Henry Paget, Marquess of Anglesey, was struck in the right leg by a cannonball at the Battle of Waterloo. Immediate amputation above the knee was required. Paget exclaimed “By God, sir, I’ve lost my leg!”, to which Wellington responded “By God, sir, so you have!” before turning back to the field. The leg was buried with its own tombstone, which still survives, and became a Belgian tourist attraction.

It was discovered that Samuel Chivers had a leg buried in Cathays Cemetery and for many years, the Friends thought this was a unique event in the Cemetery history. Little did we know that a few years later we would find four more limbs.

1 Samuel Chivers (1843-1917)

LOT Y335/Q1024



In April 1883, Samuel Chivers was involved in an accident with a horse drawn cart on the Cardiff Road, where he and Mr Edward Rees were thrown from their trap while on their way from Pontypridd. As a result, Dr Edwards of Taffs Well amputated Samuel's leg the following morning. That leg being buried in Cathays Cemetery on 16th April 1883. The site is now marked with a wooden cross, though it is a recent addition.



Samuel and his family were then living in Richmond Road. His occupation was listed as a Vinegar Brewer. One may remember the Chivers Vinegar factory near Ely Bridge, still there in the 1950's. Some years later Samuel and his ever - expanding family, Mrs Chivers, twelve children, a cook plus domestic servants, moved to Llandough, near Penarth. Originally, it was thought that Samuel was buried, minus his leg, in Penarth. But research showed that in November 1902 Samuel's son, Harold C Chivers, died aged 25 and was buried in Cathays. Thirteen years later, in 1915, Samuel's wife, Mary, was buried in the same grave, Y 335. Finally, two years on, in 1917, Samuel himself was interred in the same grave. He was 73 years old and had been living in Sully Road, Penarth.



Source www.archiveswales.org.uk

The Company S. Chivers and Co. Ltd was incorporated in 1895 to take over the malt vinegar brewers established by Samuel Chivers in the 1880s, originally at East Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Samuel Chivers worked in partnership with Isaac Padfield. Samuel's two sons Ernest Clifford Chivers (1874-1937) and Samuel Leonard Chivers (1885-1957) continued the partnership, with the Chivers family holding a two-thirds interest, and the Padfield family holding a one-third interest in the company's shares. The company later moved to Wroughton Place, Ely, and extended manufacture to jams and pickles. The use of 'S. Chivers and Co. Ltd' was dropped after the Second World War for the sale of jam and marmalades in favour of 'Golden Grove'. During the war years the vinegar brewery business was transferred to British Vinegars Ltd.



The plain replacement headstone marking the Chivers family burials.

2 Edith Fanny Skyrme (1867-1924)

PLOT K1541

It had been thought that the interment of a solitary leg, that of Samuel Chivers, was quite unusual. However, in 2014, the Friends found that Cathays Cemetery was exceptional in having another buried leg. The Burial Register for 23rd January 1883, recorded the interment of “Leg of Female” for Miss Skyrme of Richmond Terrace, Park Place (the road now called Museum Place). Thanks to Cardiff Bereavement Services, a wooden cross with a bronze plaque now marks the grave.

A newspaper article headline explained the event of how Miss Skyrme became separated from her leg:

Terrible Accident in the Gelly (sic) Pit
Melancholy Termination of a Pleasure Trip
Lady Visitors Crushed by a Tram
Shocking Injuries to Miss Skyrme and Miss Cassy John

It appears that eight young women had prevailed upon the colliery manager, Mr Daniel Thomas, for some time to take them underground and he eventually acceded to their request. As well as the manager, the party included four other men, who were there to look after the women and, in some cases, satisfy their own curiosity. They descended about 700-800 feet down the shaft to the main level and had walked about 300 yards along this, when a tremendous roar was followed by a fully loaded tram crashing through a ventilation control door about 15 yards ahead of them. All members of the group tried to get out of the way and ended up in the coal dust and debris on the floor. All were badly shaken and bruised, but Miss Skyrme and another lady were more severely injured. It seems that some others in the party fainted when they saw the nature of the injuries. The two women were quickly evacuated by tram and were soon being attended by doctors on the surface. On hearing the advice that amputation was necessary, Miss Skyrme's father, the postmaster at Pentre, sought a second opinion from his own family doctor, who arrived from Cardiff the following day. However, he concurred with the original advice and the local doctors carried out the operation, under chloroform, straight away. Within days, the leg was buried in Cathays Cemetery. In those days, amputations were much more traumatic medical procedures than they are today so it was touch and go for a few days as to whether Edith would even survive. However, luckily, she was young and strong, though she remained at the house of Mr Rubert Boddicombe, fireman at the colliery, for a month until she was deemed well enough to make the journey by train to the family home in Cardiff



Edith Fanny Skyrme was born in Ystradfydwg in 1867 (so only 16 when the accident occurred) to Edward and Frances Skyrme. Her father was both grocer and postmaster in Pentre. When she was born, Edith already had three older brothers, Henry (who went on to become a doctor), Frank (who became a clergyman) and Charles (a chemist). Two more daughters - Kate and Clara - and three more sons -- William, Richard, and Harold (another chemist, who developed the Shurzine Antiseptic Healing Ointment that was used extensively to treat soldiers' wounds in World War One) - brought the total number of Skyrme children to nine. Another daughter, Alice, died when just a few months old. They were obviously quite well off, as the 1881 census shows they employed two domestic servants. Their son Richard died aged just 7, in the last months of 1882 so the family would only just have been recovering from that tragedy when Edith's accident happened.

In 1900, Edith married 39-year-old Arthur Thomas Haddock, a coal salesman of Whitchurch. Edith's father Edward did not survive to see his daughter marry, as he died in April 1894, at the age of 64, and is buried opposite Thomas Waring. A daughter, Margaret Frances, was born the year after the marriage. Again, tragedy struck, as Arthur died of pneumonia in the first months of 1907. For a time Edith and daughter, Margaret continued living in Whitchurch, and then lived for various periods with some of her brothers in England, and with her sister Kate and her family in Cathedral Road, Cardiff. She died in Cardiff at the end of 1924, aged 57. She was buried with her husband in St Mary's Church graveyard in Whitchurch so was never reunited with her limb.

3 Charles Cravos (1865-1936)

PLOT D997/E244

Charles Cravos began his business career with the firm of R. W. James and Co., and later served for some time with Loveridge and Co., Ltd. When he was about 35, in partnership with his brothers, Stephen and Joseph, he opened a ship's stores business at the docks under the name of Cravos Bros. In 1914, they became shipowners. For many years, he was a leading personality at Cardiff Docks and had a large house in Cathedral Road. As a shipowner, in his office he would have a liqueur from every country in the world so if you were a Portuguese ship owner he would give you the best Port, if you were from Brazil etc. The problem was that occasionally he drank the lot.

ORDER.

No. 71508

Wednesday
Date 1906 o'clock M.
Name *Friend of Charles*
Age *Gravos*
Quality *Housekeeper*

Late Residence *Penylan Rd*
Parish *North*
Letter *E* No. *244*
Purchased _____ Order _____
Mode of Interment _____
Mr. *E. Gravos* 24 April 1906 Received of _____

Interment	24
Digging	
Extra	

The 1906 Order for the plot where the leg was buried.

Courtesy of Cardiff Bereavement Services

But he is best remembered for another reason. When he was 13, he was hit by a cricket ball and, many years later, it turned gangrenous. According to family history, they did not have any anaesthetic so they gave him a bottle of rum, knocked him out, put him on the kitchen table and sawed his leg off. When he came around they realised they had not taken off enough so they knocked him out again and took more off. The leg was buried in 1906 in plot number E244, unmarked, about 25m away from his other remains.

He took on a chauffeur and bought four Rolls Royce's one for each season: he had a black one for winter, brown for autumn and a pink topless one for summer. It is said that every time he saw another one-legged man in the street he would stop the car and challenge him to a race. Charles Cravos died in a Cardiff nursing home in 1936 at the age of 81.



Charles Cravos Monument

4 Amelia Newton (1865-1936)

PLOT L113 / T1461

Born Amelia Evans in 1848 in St David's, she married Henry Newton, a man ten years her senior, in July 1881, in Cardiff, at the age of 34. Henry was born in Fitzhead in Somerset and, as his father George died when he was still young, he began life as a labourer on the family farm. At some stage he moved to Cardiff and became a publican. A son, George Henry was born in 1886 but he died the following year when just six months old, and there were to be no more children. At that point, the Newtons lived in 1 Tyndall Street, in Cardiff, though they later moved to 6 Harriett Street. It seems a larger house than its neighbours in the street but the 1891 census shows that they shared the house with another couple. Amelia's claim to fame is that her leg was buried in Cathays Cemetery on 26 April 1915 in plot number T1461, an unmarked grave. It is not known how Amelia lost her leg, but she was in her late sixties, at the time, so perhaps it was through illness rather than accident. Her husband Henry died the following year so life probably became something of a struggle for her, coping alone and without a limb. It seems she had no family and few friends to care for her as, when she died in July 1923, she bequeathed her

personal effects of £122 7s 8d to Edwin Godfrey Jones, the postman. Amelia is buried with her husband Henry and both her tiny son George and a niece, Annie A Jones, who are also commemorated on the headstone. This is in the Anglican part of the Cemetery, but her leg is in the Nonconformist area.

5 William Dent (1848-1912)

PLOT EF8695/T1397

ORDER
89542

Date 21 Nov 1912
Name William Dent
Address 72 St John's Rd
Bath
Letter T 1912
Purchased 7/6
Mode of 0
20 Nov 12
Jones Stone

...	...	26
Digging	...	/
Extra...	...	/
...	£	26

The 1912 Order for the plot where the leg was buried.

Courtesy of Cardiff Bereavement Services

William Dent was from Heworth and worked as a forgerman. His wife was Janet Anderson (1851-1885) a native of Wallsend, Northumberland. The couple married in 1871 and at the time of the 1881 census were living at 5 Caroline Street, Jarrow. We have no knowledge of how he lost his leg.

William's second son of three, was also named William. Born on 18 August 1879 in Jarrow. His mother died in 1885 and his father married Mary Jane Cuthbert in South Shields in 1887. This family lived at 29 Park Road, Jarrow at the time of the 1891 census and a daughter named Mary had been added to the family. A further boy and girl were born in Jarrow before the family moved to Cardiff, where a further child was born in 1900. At the time of the 1901 census William was living with the family at 117 Splott Road, Cardiff and he was working as a blacksmith.

William (Junior) joined the Royal Navy on 22 August 1901 at the age of 22 to serve for 12 years. At the outbreak of war William was serving on HMS Venerable, a pre-dreadnought battleship, that took part in defensive and offensive operations with the Channel Fleet. Between April and July 1915 William served on HMS Vernon which was used to carry out torpedo trials and to train new recruits for the Navy.

On 19 August 1915 William (Junior) was transferred to the crew of HMS Barham, a Queen Elizabeth-class battleship built for the Royal Navy during the early 1910s. She participated in the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916 as part of the Grand Fleet. William died on 2 June 1916 of wounds received in the action. He was buried in the Naval Cemetery at Lyness, Isle of Hoy, Orkney, Scotland. William died at the age of 36 leaving a widow, Alice Maud Dent nee Douglas, who was living at 17 Clegg Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire when she was informed of his death.

William Dent (Junior) was awarded the Star, Victory Medal and British War Medal for his service in World War One.

