

University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru



Student Showcase: Drama

**Graveyard Voices:
Podcasting the Heritage of Cathays Cemetery**

Professor Richard Hand



A WORLD OF LEARNING IN YOUR HAND

Being Human is the UK's only national festival of the humanities, led by the **School of Advanced Study, University of London** in partnership with the **Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**, the **British Academy** and the **Wellcome Trust**. There are more than 300 events in the 2015 programme organised by universities, galleries and cultural organisations right across the country. Over 11 days across the UK, **Being Human** demonstrates the strength and diversity of the humanities, and how they can help us to understand ourselves, our relationships with others, and the challenges we face in a changing world. Each university was only allowed to put forward one project to be considered for the Festival and the **University of South Wales (USW)** won a grant from the AHRC for its project **Graveyard Voices: Podcasting the Heritage of Cathays Cemetery**.

Graveyard Voices builds on several years' work that drama and music staff and students at the University of South Wales have done in outreach and community engagement — and pushes it further in its ambition and scope and profile. Since 2014, we have worked closely with Roger Swan (Memorial Manager, **Bereavement Services**, City of Cardiff Council) and Rachel Protheroe (Senior Registrar of Bereavement Services, City of Cardiff Council), and we have collaborated in the Cathays Cemetery Heritage Walks. These highly popular community events have taken place for many years but the University of South Wales was brought in to add a new element of performance: in addition to the local history approach of recounting anecdotes and information, we bring 'history to life' with performers enacting short dramatic scenes and monologues relating to the stories of the people buried in the Cemetery, ranging from the rich and influential, the philanthropic and heroic to the profoundly tragic and emblematic.

For the **Being Human Festival 2015** we have performed our live dramatizations on-site at **Cathays Cemetery** but have added a further dynamic in terms of audio. We were delighted to recruit the community music group **Wonderbrass** into the project, the group's leader **Robert Smith** (USW Senior Lecturer, Popular Music) composing original music for the project and performing it as a soloist or as part of the Wonderbrass ensemble. In addition, we have recorded the dramatic scenes and music so that audiences can experience our creative project anywhere in the form of podcasts, including at the Cemetery itself when performers are not there. We have recorded some of these in the audio studios at the University of South Wales' campus in Cardiff. **Stuart Jones** (Senior Lecturer, Music & Sound Technology) and MSc student Angeliki Mourgala also used advanced binaural technology to record the performers in the Cemetery itself or in either of the recently restored Mortuary Chapels.

The podcasts for **Graveyard Voices** are published by **South Wales on iTunes U**, in the collection **Student Showcase: Drama**.

***Richard Hand** is Professor of Theatre and Media Drama at the University of South Wales. He can be contacted at <http://staff.southwales.ac.uk/users/384-rhand>*

A selection of pictures from the recordings at Cathays Cemetery, courtesy of Professor Richard Hand



