



September 2011 Issue N° 7

Summer in the Cemetery

In our June edition, we featured the blossom of the Foxglove Tree, seen at its best in late April. A later blossom, which is more appropriate to early summer, is that of the Tulip Tree, which can be found in Section L of the Cemetery. The golden yellow flowers (seen in the picture below) are clearly meant to compliment the sun. This year, possibly, they outshone it.



John Farnhill

Founder member, original Secretary and present Treasurer of the Friends Group of Cathays Cemetery is convalescing at home after a successful kidney transplant. The operation was carried out in the recently opened renal ward at the University Hospital in Cardiff. We wish him well and are looking forward to his return to, and input into, all aspects of the Friends group.

An Englyn ... What's That?

It's a form of strict Welsh poetry dating back to the 13th century. Originally written and performed by Bards or Minstrels, it is nowadays often found on Welsh gravestones.

The most common form, there are eight, plus variations, is known as an Englyn Unodi Union. This consists of four lines. The important thing

is the number of syllables in each line {don't give up now, you've got this far}. The first line must have ten syllables, the second six and the third & fourth lines seven syllables each. It gets even more difficult and rigid because the seventh syllable in the first line sets up the rhyme for the last syllables in lines two, three and four. I didn't say it was easy. Here's an example.

HERE THEY LIE JUST DUST AND BONES, FOOD	
FOR WORMS	10
SQUIRMING MAGGOTS AT HOME	6
ROTTEN ARMS, LEGS LYING PRONE	7
SKULLS WITHOUT THOUGHTS UNDER	
STONES.	7

The seventh syllable in line one [BONES] rhymes with the last syllable in lines two, three and four: HOME, PRONE and STONES.

Obviously nobody would have that on a memorial stone, but I tried to give it a flavour of cemeteries, death and passing time.

Eric Fletcher

Dedication of Memorial to Edmund Savage



On **Saturday 4th June**, more than 100 people

assembled by the chapels for the first part of a ceremony to mark the erection & dedication of a memorial headstone on the grave of Edmund (Edward) Savage, a Rorke's Drift survivor. The assembly was welcomed by Paul Nicholson, on behalf of the Friends, and Martin Birch of Bereavement Services. Bill Cainan, Curator of the South Wales Borderers' Museum in Brecon, then gave a succinct, but graphic, account of the events at Rorke's Drift in 1879.

This was followed by a parade from the chapels to the memorial site, led by the Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Cllr Professor Delme Bowen, representatives of the Welsh Regiment with their goat mascot, Living History representatives and other guests. When everyone had re-assembled by the grave, the memorial was unveiled by the Lord Mayor and dedicated by the Rev. Father Christopher Fuse. Wreaths were then laid by the Royal Regiment of Wales & the British Legion and a floral tribute by the Lady Mayoress.

The headstone, though in the general style of War Graves Commission memorials, is made from polished grey granite and includes the inscription:

PRIVATE
EDMUND (EDWARD) SAVAGE
1858 – 1893
24TH (2ND WARWICKSHIRE)
REGIMENT OF FOOT
A RORKE'S DRIFT DEFENDER

After the formal proceedings, members of the Living History group, in the uniforms of the Zulu War, were on hand to answer questions about Rorke's Drift and to show artefacts from the time. Also one of the chapels was open for visitors to see the building in its partly restored state.

Acknowledgements

The event was made possible through the kind co-operation of Cardiff Council's Bereavement Services. The memorial was produced by Mossfords who generously subsidised the cost of the stone and donations toward the cost of the stone were received from the Welsh Regiment, Firing Line and the Bumstead family,

descendants of Edward Savage. We are grateful to all of these for their help and support.



Louisa Revisited

I'm sure most of you know the sad story of Louisa Maud Evans, probably better known as 'The Balloon Girl'. She was one of the cemetery residents we wrote about in our 150th anniversary book. Thanks to Ms. Kathryn Ashill, a Cardiff based performance artist, Louisa's story will again be told, this time in a modern multi-media format.

For those of you who don't know the details of Louisa's early demise [shame on you for not buying a copy of the book], she - aged only fourteen - was persuaded to rise above the centre of Cardiff underneath a hot air balloon and then parachute out and float back to terra firma. The stunt went disastrously wrong, the wind took her over the Bristol Channel, she jumped and was sadly drowned. Her parachute was found near the mouth of the river Rhymney, her body three days later at Nash, east of Newport.

July 24th saw the more public part of Kathryn's work. It involved a short period of silence at

Louisa's memorial to remember and reflect upon her short life. Although she died over 110 years ago her grave is without doubt one of the most visited in the cemetery.



The large turnout then accompanied Kathryn [festooned with dozens of coloured, helium-filled, balloons] back to the large cedar tree behind the chapels, from which she jumped in a re-enactment of Louisa's jump over a century ago.



Kathryn became aware of the balloon girl's tale

after attending a cemetery Heritage Walk in May 2010. The public performance we saw last July will only be a small part of her finished work, Kathryn is assisted by a creative writer, a poet, a film maker, graphic designers and a photographer.

The completed version will be shown at **St David's Hall** on **Sunday 20th November** and is also to be shown on the BBC community screen in the city centre during November. For more details of Kathryn's work visit her web site and blog at

<http://www.inmemoryofballoongirl.blogspot.com>.

Her work is fully funded by the Arts Council of Wales and supported by St David's Hall, Cardiff.

Heritage Walk on 31st July

There was a record attendance for this walk, ably led once again by Phil Amphlett of Bereavement Services, so much so that it took much longer than usual for folk to gather round at each of the stages. As a result the walk didn't finish until well after 4pm instead of the advertised 3.30pm but at least the wather was kind. Virtually all the explanatory leaflets in the information hut were taken afterwards and a record number of our books were sold.

Erratum

In our June edition, in the article about the Evans family (*From New Zealand to the Friends, via Salisbury*), we inadvertently omitted a word, which resulted in an incorrect relationship. In the fifth line of the third paragraph, the reference should have been to Patricia's *husband's* grandfather, Charles. It appears that within days, this had excited someone pursuing their own family history into thinking that a completely new line of exploration had opened up. We apologise for the error and the confusion caused.

Don't forget to let us have your bits of news or other items for future issues!

Contact the editorial team on 2062 7848
or email <doricwales@o2.co.uk>

Re-Dedication of Bishop Hedley Memorial

This, it is hoped, will take place towards the end of September or the early part of October. The overhanging branches have been removed by Bereavement Services and the work of cleaning and making good any damaged stonework has been completed by Mossfords Monumental Masons. The tomb has been restored by the Archdiocese of Cardiff in association with the Friends of Cathays Cemetery.

An interpretative board will be erected alongside the memorial giving a brief history of the Bishop's life and work. He did much to assist in educational matters [on a personal note the daughter of one of the editorial team teaches at the Bishop Hedley school in Merthyr] and in 1895 he procured permission from Rome for Catholic students to attend Oxford and Cambridge universities, which previously had not been allowed.



The Latin inscription has been translated and will be included on the board. It reads:

Here lie the mortal remains of
John Cuthbert Hedley OSB
[Order of St. Benedict] Bishop of Newport,
a most learned and beloved pastor who,
when close to death, expressed the wish that
he should be buried among his flock.
He died 11th November AD 1915.
Pray for him.

Forthcoming Events

Bat Walk: Wednesday September 7th @ 7pm.

Led by Cardiff Bat Group and the Friends of Cathays Cemetery. The cemetery retains much of its original evergreen planting making it a great bat-feeding habitat. The walk starts at the Chapels in Fair oak Road.

Cemetery Walk: Sunday September 18th @

2pm [not at 12 pm as wrongly advertised in Capital Times]. This is your chance to discover the history of the "New" extension to Cathays Cemetery. This walk will be led by the Friends group and is an opportunity to learn more about famous residents and events from Cardiff's past. The walk will include the World War 1 memorial and war graves section pictured below.

The walk starts at the main gates in Allensbank Road and parking is available on the main driveway inside.



On the same day, as part of the **Open Doors Programme for 2011** in Wales, the chapels by the Fair oak Road entrance will be open from 10am to 4pm. This is a chance to view the roof restoration work which was undertaken two years ago ... and to gain an understanding of what remains to be done. For those who wish to combine this visit and the walk, an extended walk will start from the chapels @ 1:30pm.

War Graves Walk: Sunday October 23rd @

2pm. A walk led by Bereavement Services, exploring headstones from both world wars and hearing stories about some of the service men buried in Cathays. This walk will take in the new Edward Savage memorial which is described

earlier in this newsletter. The walk starts at the Chapels in Fair oak Road.

TALK

Simon Morgan [Mossfords]:

Cathays Cemetery - Through the Eyes
of a Stonemason's Chisel

on **Tuesday September 13th @ 7pm** in Room 4.45 of the University's Humanities Building behind Colum Road.

ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Tuesday November 8th @ 7pm by **Prof. James S Curl** in the **Wallace Lecture Theatre**, University Buildings, Colum Road:

Transformations:

Landscape Garden to Cemetery

Professor Curl is a member of The Royal Irish Academy, Visiting Professor at the University of Ulster and Senior Research Fellow at Queens University Belfast. [Directions to the lecture hall will be posted at the university entrance.]

Friends' Notice Board

Work Days

Saturday 24th September (*This is also the date of the Glamorgan Family History Society's Fair in Cardiff Central Library, where the Friends will have a stall.*)

Saturday 29th October

Saturday 26th November.

All at 10 a.m. Meet at the Chapels.

The Picnic

It was a bit of a family get together, I think there were nine of us, and our daughters had the idea of going for a picnic, something we as a family had not done for, oh I don't know, could be thirty years. My wife chose the site, after all it was her birthday. She chose well. We were sheltered from the gusts of wind blowing off the Irish Sea by a thick stone wall. It was as though we were sitting in our very own eco-climate. For a few seconds I was a child again, lying in the long grass out of the wind watching the clouds scudding across the sky.

We had brought all the usual ingredients you need for a successful picnic. Baskets were opened, plakey bags emptied. Sandwiches, apples, bunches of grapes, red and green, bread rolls, home-made cake. Flasks of tea and coffee, cans of garish-coloured drinks for the grandchildren, not allowed those at home but today is a special day, their Gran's birthday. Only a couple of rolls left, a few grapes, a half-eaten apple. Amazing how much seven grown ups and two children can eat in a short time. A bottle of rosé appeared as if by magic. The grandchildren, no doubt fired up by their high sugar drinks, were tearing around shouting and laughing, playing some made-up game involving an empty sandwich box and shells from the beach. We adults lay back against the wall, wineglasses in hand and tried to keep awake. One of our son-in-laws gave up the fight, found his own stone to rest against and soon was snoring gently, oblivious to the world.

Somebody suggested, my niece I think, that what we needed was a walk along the cliff path or, at least, a brisk walk on the beach. I said I'd stay, clear up the picnic stuff and finish the last of the wine. I carried the empty flasks, paper plates and wineglasses back to the cars. I returned back through the gate into the graveyard, kissed my fingertips and traced the outline of my wife's name on her family's memorial. Fighting back the tears I wished her a happy birthday and suggested that such a family gathering could well become an annual event. Promising to visit her again very soon I joined the others on the beach. Life goes on, as does death.

*The dead love summer most -
when the living come, in dresses or shirt sleeves,
to picnic by their graves. The dead relax, bask,
as sunlight heals their stones, their dates, their
names.*

[Taken from the poem "Fine Weather" by Carol Ann Duffy]

Ray Arrowsmith