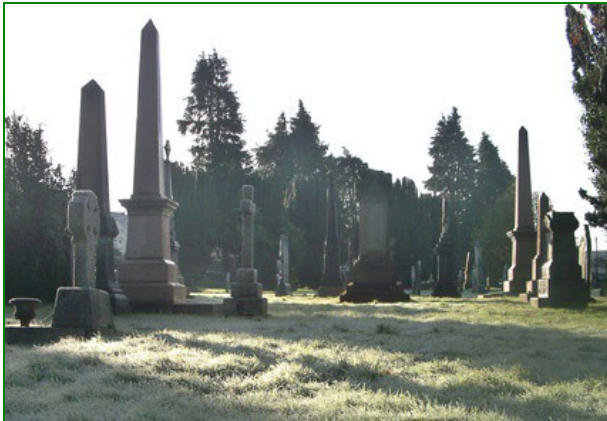
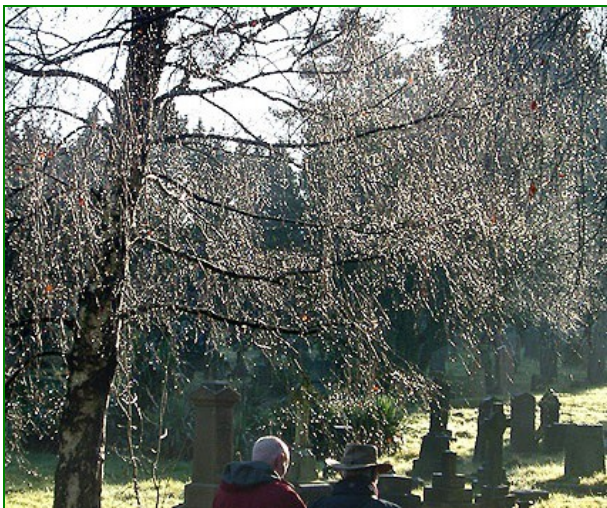


Nature Notes

Apart from record rainfall and gales, **Winter** seems to have passed us by this year, with hardly any frost and only the lightest touch of snow. But still the odd frosty morning, with the sun low in the sky, can completely alter the appearance of the Cemetery. The picture below, taken in Section M, is an example – look how tall the obelisks are!



On the same theme, the Cemetery is a place for all seasons, as it can always throw up transitory surprises, like this tree with a crop of diamonds. Not so surprising: they had all gone by lunchtime!



In January, a number of patches of Wrinkled Club Fungus (*Clavulina Rugosa*) appeared in the Cemetery. You would normally expect to see this in late summer to late autumn, so the unusual timing was, presumably, another reflection on the strange winter weather. This white fungus is edible (but don't try it unless you are absolutely confident of its identity!), typically 4–10 cm high and may be simple or with a few antler-like side branches.



Wrinkled Club Fungus

Despite the strong winds, damage to trees has probably been less severe than in the last few winters, but one casualty in the eastern corner of Section Q, was a multi-trunked fir that exhibited an unusual growth pattern. As can be seen in the image below, the rings are very narrow on the side where the ability to expand was restricted, while those on the opposite side are much wider. The result is that the growth centre (picked out in red) is nearer to the side of the trunk than the geometric centre.



Our last two issues have featured varieties of bean tree. If you wished to collect some seeds, you are probably too late now, as the bean pods now look like pairs of black shoelaces – but they do make the trees look quite distinctive.

We may not have seen much wintry weather, but **Spring** is definitely on the way: the first snowdrops were out by mid January, with daffodils, crocuses and primroses appearing in the next few weeks. While these can be found in many locations, the best patch of crocuses is probably in the most westerly corner of Section N (as pictured overleaf) and primroses are abundant alongside the Whitchurch Road boundary.



A Swathe of Crocuses

Winter Miscellany

Scarcely had our last edition gone to print than Cathays hit the news headlines, as a result of a double knife attack, the first of them within the Cemetery, close to the site of the Catholic Chapel. The assailant apparently made his way through the Cemetery and crossed Fair Oak Road before making a second attack in Tewkesbury Street.

Police descended in force, with numerous vehicles and a helicopter, and sealed off the area. A man was soon under arrest, while the two victims needed hospital treatment but are understood to have recovered. The Cemetery was soon reopened, although a small scene of crime area was cordoned off for a few days.

Criminal activity of a different variety was apparent just before Christmas, when at least two small fir trees were cut down, presumably, to be draped with tinsel and lights shortly afterwards.



Two issues ago, in September, we reported that funds were available to restore basic habitability to the **chapels**. You will see from the AGM report (on page 3) that the contract was let in January and we are pleased to confirm that work has been progressing well. The aim is to complete the

present phase of work around the end of March. The pictures below show some of the progress.



New 'floating' floor



*Glazing with polycarbonate
in progress on the episcopal Chapel*

The first opportunity to view the result is expected to be the Tuesday Health Walk, which will be part of the Cardiff Walking Festival, in the first week of May.

While this is only a small first step towards the full restoration of the chapels, providing a sustainable future, it is important that as much use as possible is made of them now, to demonstrate that there is a need that can be fulfilled, to provide positive publicity and, hopefully, to start to generate an income. If you have any ideas in this respect, please let us know.

2014 AGM

The AGM was held on Saturday 25th January in the Meeting Room of the offices at Thornhill Cemetery with 23 people in attendance.

There being no corrections to or matters arising from the Minutes of last year's meeting, business moved quickly onto the **Chairman's Report**. Although there had been no special ceremonies, it had been another busy year, with a full programme of talks, walks and workdays, as well as the weekly Walking for Health. All these – and much more – were reported on in the Newsletter, four issues of which appeared during the year.

The other important medium for keeping the Cemetery in the public eye is the Friends Website. While developments continue, the improvement in this online facility are largely responsible for the increase in enquiries from other parts of the UK and, indeed, from around the world.

The Chairman's Report drew attention to the Calendar for 2014, which was included in the AGM pack, with the hope that the events would be well supported by members and their friends.

The Chairman gave full credit to the efforts of the committee and thanked Bereavement Services, particularly Carmel Thomas, Martin Birch and Alan Staniforth, for their continued help and support to the Friends. He concluded his Report by noting that both he and John Farnhill would like to make way for new blood next year and that it would be very helpful to have a Deputy Chairman, too. The committee is not a closed shop so anyone who thinks that they have something to contribute was invited to make themselves known to the committee.

The Treasurer presented his Report, explaining the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2013, which were made available at the meeting. While turnover had been lower than the previous year, a reasonable surplus had been generated, leaving a year end balance of almost £7,000. Income from book sales (where the remaining stock represents an asset of around £2,750), subscriptions and donations were the main sources of income. Once again, the Treasurer drew attention to the fact that the healthy balance was a reminder that the Friends need to give thought to ways of spending it in accordance with their charitable status.

As a result of the elections at the meeting, the Trustees' **Committee** is unchanged, viz:

Chairman: Bill Mosley

Treasurer: John Farnhill

Secretary: Vacant

Other Trustees: Paul Jones, Ivor Lippett, Chris Marsh, Paul Nicholson, Hugh Payne, Margaret Smith.

The number of trustees is less than optimum, but it is open to the committee to appoint auxiliary officers and, if appropriate, also to appoint them as trustees. It is hoped that this facility will enable the current situation to be improved.

Carmel Thomas provided an update on behalf of **Bereavement Services**, beginning with the splendid news that a contract had been let, "and would start on Monday", to make the chapels habitable. Fortunately, the chapels qualified for a modest Land Tax Grant, which has been secured by Bereavement Services. The work will include a "floating" floor, disabled access, making the windows watertight and installing water and power services. The work is due to be completed by the end of March. It was emphasised that this is not a restoration or adaptation project, which would have required a much more substantial budget and listed building consents.

Carmel also advised that while the Conservation Management Plan had not come to fruition, a Site Maintenance Plan had started with the aim of balancing conservation and heritage interests and the resources of both in house staff and volunteers. As part of the First World War commemoration, poppies would be sown, probably by the Cross of Remembrance in the "New" Cemetery and with Allensbank Primary School being involved. The poppy seeds have been ordered and the variety is appropriately called Lest We Forget.

After a short period of questions and discussion, the formal meeting was concluded (most efficiently, in just over an hour).

Keep Wales Tidy Cathays Cemetery Project

Immediately after the AGM, Richard Weaver, Project Officer for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, talked about this new project. His role is to support groups on conservation projects and keeping Wales tidy is definitely not restricted to clearing litter!

A lot of ideas were mooted, including doing something different with the roundabout at the main entrance, smartening up the area around the chapels (commensurate with their return to active use) and creating artistic display pieces around the

Friends NEWS

Cemetery (possibly including a slice of the stump of the giant Holm Oak). An open discussion followed with many ideas about the future of the entrance roundabout, having the wild flower garden elsewhere, restoring the remaining chapel pews, labelling trees and providing more section markers.

It was hoped to get things in motion around March this year, but a lot more discussion is needed to firm up on plans. If you have any ideas about this, why not let us know?

Can You Help?

If you think you have something to offer, please feel free to talk to any of the committee members. You will be welcome to attend one of the meetings to see what goes on and how you might help.

Transcription of the old **Burial Diaries**, which was a talking point at the last AGM, is taking place, but it is a big job and more help would be welcome. The task involves the copying of long-hand information from digital images into a standard spreadsheet format. Essential to obtaining the optimum accuracy is the checking of the transcription by someone else, followed by a third person verifying any amendments picked up. Ideally, the work would be done in small teams, with interchanging roles. Also, the main element of the process requires the use of a computer.

We would like to hear from anyone who can offer assistance to improved working of our group and/or with the transcription of the old burial records. So **PLEASE** see the form at the back of this newsletter for further information and respond if you can.

Membership Renewal

Your committee is also anxious to avoid wasting time & money communicating with members who are no longer interested or, perhaps, have passed away. So a **reminder** about renewal is also contained in the form attached to the back of this newsletter.

Archibald Hood – the Family

If you take the drive from the chapels, through the centre of Section M, you will find the tallest obelisk in the cemetery about 10 metres off to the right. It is distinctive not just because of its size: it is also made from a particularly attractive fine-grained grey granite. The inscription on it will tell you that this is the memorial to **Archibald Hood**

and some of his family.

The memorial was erected on the death of his wife, **Cochrina Walker** (Walker was her maiden surname) on 27th March 1891, at the age of 65.



The Hood obelisk

Hood rose, largely through his own endeavour, from humble beginnings in Ayrshire to become a wealthy and respected engineer and business man, who exhibited a **social conscience** that set an example for his age. Early in his working life, he became friendly with William Walker, a coal pioneer in South Ayrshire, eventually marrying his eldest daughter Cochrina. They had **4 sons and 1 daughter**, who we look at below.

Robert Raeburn Hood (1856–1915) was born in Tradeston, Glasgow. His primary education was at Rosewell in Midlothian and he then went to Clifton College, Bristol. It is thought that he studied Mining Engineering at Edinburgh University. He became manager of the Gilfach Goch Colliery and then represented the Glamorgan Coal Company's interests **overseas**, including South America. It was while carrying out these duties that he died at **Santiago**, Chile, where he is buried, although he is remembered on the Hood obelisk. He never married.

William Walker Hood (1857–1923) was born in Rosewell, and educated at the local school, then

at Clifton College. He studied Mining Engineering on the Continent and became General Manager of the Glamorgan Coal Company's collieries in the Rhondda Valley. His home was *Hen Glyncornel*, Llwynypia, where he played a prominent part in the life of the Valley. *Hen Glyncornel* survives as a nursing home today.

He made a special study of **mining rescue methods** and established a reputation for his fearlessness and devotion in rescue work, during which he had a number of hairbreadth escapes. William and his father were the first to use the watering of coal dust to reduce the risk of gas explosions. One of his special interests was the School of Mines at Treforest, in the establishment of which he played a prominent part.

On the death of his maternal grandfather, he inherited Ballochmyle Colliery in Ayrshire and worked this until the seams were exhausted. On the death of his father, in 1902, he became the Glamorgan Coal Company's Managing Director until it was bought out by the Cambrian Coal Company in 1908. He also held a directorship of the Lothian Coal Company and was Vice-Chairman of the Barry Railway Company.

Latterly he had his home at '*Tredean*', a country mansion near Devauden, Monmouthshire and also owned '*Invergeldie*' at Glenlednock in Scotland. In March 1923, while travelling home by train from London, he inadvertently **opened the carriage door**, fell from the train and was killed instantly. At the time of his death he was engaged in experiments in the use of electricity in agriculture. He was buried with his parents in Cathays Cemetery. He was unmarried.

The formative years of **James Archibald Hood** (1859–1941) mirrored that of his elder brothers but, after Clifton College, he also had some education in Paris, at a mining school in Mons, Belgium, and in Germany, as well as at Edinburgh University.

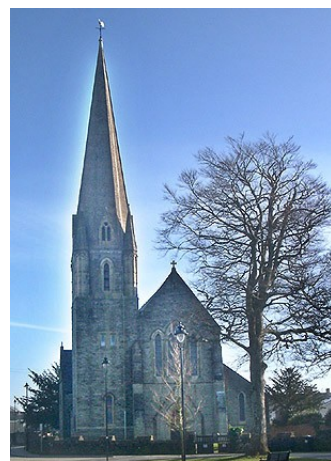
Unlike his elder brothers, he did marry (though relatively late in life), in 1903. His wife, **Violet** was the daughter of Matthew Montgomerie Bell, an Edinburgh JP. They lived initially in the Hood family house in Rosewell and had **5 daughters**. While one of these died in childhood, the others all married and had children, so the line continues, though not with the Hood name. One of the daughters, **Jean**, married Sir Philip Dundas, 4th Baronet of Arniston in Midlothian, while the youngest daughter, **Celia**, ended her days, as Mrs

Noel Baskett in Auckland, New Zealand. On the death of his brother William, James inherited his country house, '*Tredean*'.

James Archibald was General Manager of his father's collieries in and around Rosewell and, on their amalgamation with those of Lord Lothian to form the Lothian Coal Company, he became its first General Manager. On the death of his father, he became Managing Director, and in 1911 Chairman and Managing Director. In 1924, he gave Heriot-Watt College (now incorporated in Edinburgh University) £15,000 to found the **Hood Chair of Mining**. He was created an Honorary LL.D of the College in 1928 and, at various times, held numerous directorships in industries as diverse as papermaking, electric power and motor vehicles.

James Archibald died at his home, *Midfield House*, Lasswade also in Midlothian, and was buried in Hawthornden Cemetery, Rosewell, joining his wife and the daughter who died in childhood. He is **not mentioned** on the obelisk in Cathays Cemetery.

The birth and education of **Archibald Hood** (1861–1897) followed that of his brothers but, after Clifton College, he studied medicine and went on to become a GP in Bridgend. He married **Constance** Edwards and they had a son, **Frederick**, who was ordained and went on to become the Principal of Pusey House (Anglican Centre in Oxford) and Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, and also a daughter. Archibald died as a result of a **riding accident** at Laleston and was buried at Nolton Churchyard, but he is also remembered in Cathays Cemetery, on the Hood memorial.



St Mary's Church, Nolton, Bridgend

Eliza Agnes Walker (Ella) (1864–c.1950) was also born in Rosewell and went to the local primary school. She married Mr Walter Shirley and they had two sons and three daughters. One son died at school age, and the other was killed in WW1. On the death of her father, Mrs Shirley became a Director of the Lothian Coal Company, and at that time resided at *The Woodlands*, at the top of Leckwith Hill (locals may remember this

Friends FEATURES

large property in its more recent guise as a nursing home). Their youngest daughter, **Beryl**, became Mrs Heard and her daughter, **Jacqueline**, married Dr Arthur Lysaght, who was a distinguished surgeon at Cardiff Royal Infirmary for many years.

While it is not unlikely that Archibald Hood hoped that his legacy would include the dynastic continuance of the **family name**, it is implicit in the story of his children why there is no evidence of that today. Of course, we have yet to deal with the man himself – but you will have to await future Newsletters for that.

The Halifax Explosion

It all started with an email from Bill Gibbard, who had emigrated to **Australia** nearly 50 years ago. He described walking through Cathays Cemetery in the early 1950s and remembering a prominent memorial on the main drive to a victim of "The Halifax Explosion". He had the names of two victims listed as coming from Cardiff, but these had not shown up on the burial register, presumably because the bodies had not returned for interment. Two years earlier, on a visit to Cardiff, he had walked the main drive with Alan Staniforth, but had failed to find the memorial. Did the Friends have any idea where it was?

A few days later, a workday provided the opportunity to ask a few other members ... and the explosion rang a bell with John Farnhill. The memorial was soon found, despite being obscured by a holly bush. Heading towards Allensbank Road on the main drive from the crossing at the lowest point, it is a short distance up on the left. Being a workday, we were equipped to clear the bush and the relevant panel was revealed to read:

In
Loving Memory of
WILL
Beloved son of
Thomas and Mary Rich
Who lost his life in
**THE HALIFAX
EXPLOSION**
Nova Scotia
December 6th 1917
Aged 24 years



The Rich memorial

But what was this Halifax Explosion? The deep natural harbour in Halifax was extremely busy as an assembly point for convoys across the Atlantic. The French ship, **SS Mont Blanc**, had arrived on 5th December, fully laden with explosives and high-octane fuel. The harbour was protected by submarine nets which were raised at night and the ship was too late to enter, so had to wait in the approach channel overnight. At the same time, the Norwegian ship, **SS Imo**, had been delayed from leaving after stopping to re-fuel. At first light, as soon as the submarine nets had been lowered, both ships moved off, anxious to make up for lost time, into what was the narrowest part of the channel. The hazard was compounded by the Norwegian ship recklessly ignoring the speed limit and 'rules of the road'. In the inevitable collision, the French ship was holed, volatile fuel oil escaped and vapour ignited. The ship was quickly engulfed in flames and the whole crew, recognising what would happen next, abandoned ship.

20 minutes after the collision, the ship exploded and was completely blown apart. An area of more than 400 acres was completely destroyed by the explosion, while the **harbour floor was exposed** momentarily by the volume of water that vaporised. A tsunami, formed by water surging in to fill the void, rose up 60 ft above the harbour's high-water mark. Over 1,600 people were killed instantly while 9,000 were injured. Every building

within a 1.6-mile radius, **over 12,000** total, was destroyed or badly damaged. Hundreds of people who had been watching the fire from their homes were blinded when the blast wave shattered the windows in front of them.

The blast was the **largest man-made explosion** prior to the development of nuclear weapons and became the standard by which all large blasts were measured. Indeed, a report on the bombing of Hiroshima, described the explosive power of the Little Boy bomb as seven times that of the Halifax Explosion. The comparison does not end there – look at archive pictures of the devastation (easy to find on the Internet) and they look very much like the aftermath of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan.

Returning to the memorial for **Will**, we can see that his sister, **Maud**, died in 1926, his mother, **Mary**, in 1951 and another sister, **Ivy**, in 1992. But there is no mention of his father, **Thomas**.

There must have been another sister, **Annie**, as her son, **Albert Dring**, is recorded as having been killed in Greece in December 1944 and buried in Athens. At this stage of WW2, Greece had been liberated, but battles broke out between rival factions in Athens and civil war ensued. The 6th Airborne Division were there as peacekeepers, but became involved in intense street fighting, suffering heavy losses, including all of its company commanders. The Division was also involved at Pegusus Bridge, so maybe Albert Dring's story is worthy of further research.

Bill Mosley

Sadly, we have to report that our chairman, Bill Mosley, died suddenly, and completely unexpectedly, on Saturday 15th March. He had only been elected to his third term of office at the end of January and, as you will see in evidence elsewhere in this newsletter, had continued to be committed to Friends' activities. Indeed, one of his last tasks was to put the final touches to this edition of "Not So Grave News", which was ready to be issued ... until it became necessary to insert this item.

Bill was a very hands on Chairman and will be sorely missed. To those who knew him well, he was not just a member of the Friends, he was a good personal friend.

Recent Events

It is the "quiet season" on our calendar of Events, but the last few months have included our most important event of the year, **the AGM**. This is reported on separately on page 3.

On **Wednesday 12th February** **Bill Mosley** and **Gordon Hindess** gave a talk to **Lisvane Historical Society** on "**Cathays Cemetery and The Friends**". Unfortunately, the weather was particularly poor, so attendance was low, but those who braved the elements felt that it was well worth the effort.

This was the first time that the Friends have given a talk, so this was a successful opening performance, which it is hoped to build on. Educating the public in the history and heritage of the Cemetery is one of the aims set out in our Charity Constitution, so this is seen as an essential tool for meeting this commitment. If you know of any other group that would appreciate a similar talk, please let us know.

Our Regular Events

Weekly Health Walks:

These friendly walks resumed after the festive season break on 7th January and continue to be well supported. We have been privileged to take the occasional peek at the ongoing work in the chapels, provided that this has not conflicted with operational or safety considerations at the time.

All are welcome on these well-supported health walks, whether on a regular basis or just occasionally. Just turn up at **10.30 am on a Tuesday** morning, meeting just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library**. We walk every week, regardless of weather, except on the one or two Tuesdays closest to Christmas/New Year. The socialising on the walk continues with a chat over tea or coffee in a cosy local café afterwards.



*Walkers pause to hear about
another cemetery resident*

Friends EVENTS

Looking ahead, we will again be participating in the **Cardiff Walking Festival**, so the walk on **Tuesday 6th May** will be a special one. Although the distance walked will much the same as normal, there will be more commentary about the Cemetery and its residents (but significantly different from last year's). Because of the commentary, the duration of the walk will be longer (about 1½ hours). As in 2013, it will be a joint event with Cathays Library, where we will finish at around midday for tea or coffee and biscuits. It is emphasised that you do not need to be a regular on the health walks to attend this event.

Monthly Workdays

After our winter break, Workdays resumed on 22nd February, with a productive attack on recent growth in Section L. In addition, recently discovered re-interment graves containing remains from the former Ebenezer Chapel graveyard in the city centre, were cleared and tidied. The chapel stood close to the junction of Paradise and Union Streets, which disappeared under the original St David's Centre development around 1978. Of particular note is that original headstones were also moved, so that Cathays has a few memorials recording deaths that pre-date its opening in 1859. (We hope to return to this subject, in more detail in a future newsletter.)

The next Workdays will be held on the **last Saturday of the month**, in March, April, May and June. Enthusiasm is more important than skill or strength and tools and gloves are provided. We **meet by the chapels at 10 am** for a couple of hours so, if you fancy some gentle exercise in the fresh air, with good company, come and join us. It can be much more satisfying than the chores at home!

Future Events

Talks

On **Tuesday 25th March at 7 pm**, **Dr David Jenkins**, from the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea, will give an illustrated talk on **"Last Port of Call – Shipowner's Graves in Cathays Cemetery"**. This talk will not be given at our usual venue, so please note especially that it will take place in the **Small Chemistry Lecture Theatre (Room 1.122), Main Building, Cardiff University, Park Place**. The Port of Cardiff is quite quiet today, but things were very different a century or more ago. You may be

surprised at just how many shipowners there were in Cardiff ... and found their way to Cathays Cemetery.

On **Tuesday 6th May at 7 pm**, **Alan Thorne** will give a lecture about **"Solomon Andrews"**. This time we will be in the usual building, but a different room – so again note carefully that it will be **Room 0.31, John Percival Building, Cardiff University, in Colum Drive** (behind Colum Road). Solomon Andrews was a 19C entrepreneur and businessman, perhaps best known, in Cardiff, for his pioneering involvement in bus and tram services and, in the Cemetery, for a quite massive headstone.

Guided Walks:

On **Sunday 6th April at 2 pm**, **Phil Amphlett** of Bereavement Services will lead a **Heritage Walk**. This is a very popular walk and an excellent introduction to the Cemetery.

On **Tuesday 24th June at 7 pm**, there will be a **Midsummer Guided Walk**, led by the Friends. Take advantage of the long evening to find out more about the Cemetery and history of Cardiff.

On **Sunday 13th July at 2 pm**, there will be another opportunity to catch the **Heritage Walk**, again led by **Phil Amphlett** of Bereavement Services.

All these **guided walks will start** from just **inside the main entrance in Fairoak Road**.

Digital Newsletters?

Would you like to have future issues by email rather than by post? If so, please let us know and we will arrange with Bereavement Services for this to be done.

Finally...

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

Contact the editorial team on 2061 2164
or email <gordon.hindess@uwclub.net>

You can find past Newsletters, the latest news of events and lots of other information about the Cemetery on our website at
www.friendsofcathayscemetery.co.uk