

Not Snow, but Still White

It has been a colder winter than last year and there have been more frosty mornings. But there have been no snow-scapes to show off on our first page. However, if you look carefully around the Cemetery, you can always find something that brightens up the scene ... and it may also be white in the middle of winter.

Take a walk round the top left side of the "heart" and you will find Viburnum Tinus shrubs enjoying the shade of the Scots Pine. These shrubs, also commonly called Laurastinus, blossom from the end of autumn right through to early Spring, but are at their best in the middle of Winter, showing a mass of white blossom.



The flowers emerge from reddish-pink buds and the mix of buds and flowers can look equally pleasing during the transition. The blue-black fruits have medicinal properties, but tasting is not recommended: one of the active ingredients can cause stomach upsets, while another may be beneficial for constipation!

Other flowers can be found defying nature. A few blooms of "Elephants Ears" can be found under the cedar of Lebanon at almost any time

of the year, while the first primrose was spotted on our final health walk of 2014, just before Christmas.



Either its body clock has gone wrong or it may have been consorting with one of its hybridised cousins in the primula family!

Much more typical is the purple crocus which could be seen in the last week of January around the tree in the western-most corner of Section N.



Autumn Miscellany

The colder, darker days may not be conducive to outdoor research in the Cemetery, but it is a

Friends FEATURES

good opportunity to browse through archive information, insert names and places into a search engine and, hopefully, combine the results into an interesting story. Of course, these tales appear in due course as features in this newsletter, in talks or in the narrative during guided walks. The personalities and events that come to light can be remarkably varied, with recent examples including a count, a doctor with an almost unbelievable CV, someone who served in the French Foreign Legion and a female member of the SOE.

The other good source of noteworthy stories is from the sharing of information from personal family history research. You can see an example of this on page 4 .

It is good to see the restored chapels being put to good use. As well as being the venue for the AGM (report on page 5), Cardiff University English students used it in February for a seminar linked to an element of their course entitled "Poetry and Memorialisation". The seminar included both discussion and practical research in the Cemetery. This sort of use also highlights the potential of the Cemetery as an educational resource.

Where William Harpur Shaped Cardiff

Following the introduction to William Harpur in our last edition, we continue the story with examples of his work that can still be seen, and appreciated, today.

Working in co-operation with William Wallace Pettigrew, Head Gardener to Cardiff Corporation (and later to become Parks Superintendent), William Harpur was responsible for designing and laying out the infrastructure for Roath, Grange and Victoria Parks. At Roath Park, where land had been donated by the Marquis of Bute (and others) in 1887, the creation of the lake from an area of marshland was a significant engineering feat. There was a grand opening ceremony in 1894.

For Grange Park, the low lying land had to be raised using refuse and scalplings before the park was laid out and planted, eventually opening to the public in 1895. Victoria Park was laid out on the site of the former Ely Common, opening in 1897.

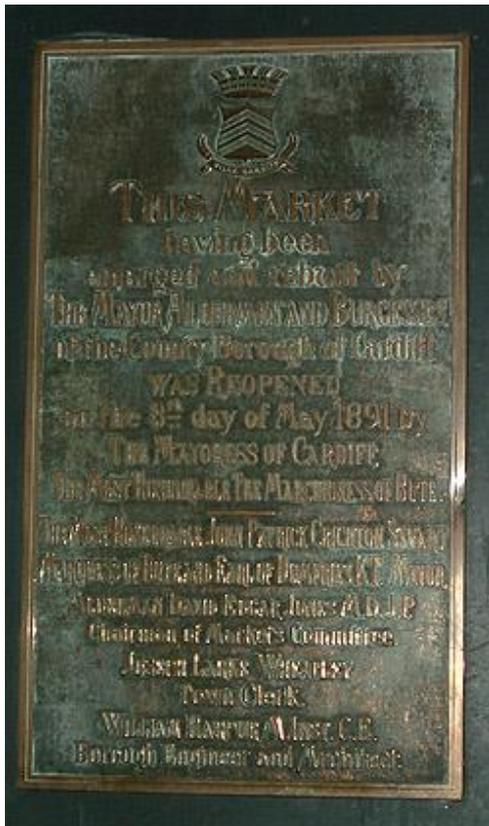


Grange Park

The other park which owes much to Harpur is, of course, Cathays Park. After protracted negotiations, Cardiff Corporation acquired the land from the Marquis of Bute for a prestigious civic centre in 1897. Again working with W W Pettigrew, Harpur drew up plans for the park in 1897 and the area was developed progressively thereafter.

From around 1883, Solomon Andrews, one of Cardiff's leading Victorian entrepreneurs (see issue 19, June 2014, of this Newsletter), had been pursuing schemes to redevelop Edward Haycock's market, which dated from 1835, and much of the adjacent frontage of St Mary Street. In 1884 he took a lease on a substantial street frontage, including the market entrance, and proceeded with the erection of a huge new building with four floors which at the time, dwarfed adjoining buildings. This building included the St Mary's Street market entrance which we see today.

In 1890, Haycock's market closed for demolition and, in August of that year, a memorial stone was laid for the new market which was officially opened on 8 May 1891, by the Lady Mayoress, the Marchioness of Bute. A plaque to commemorate the occasion can still be seen near the Trinity Street entrance - but you may have to look carefully to find it!



The new Central Market was designed by William Harpur, consisting of a large wrought iron shed running from the back wall of Market Buildings through to Trinity Street. In all, 349 stalls were provided in the original layout, and there was a raised office for the market superintendent on the ground floor surmounted by a clock tower.



As a chartered engineer, Harpur was active in local professional institutions, presenting papers, etc. He was involved in significant drainage schemes around the city, which were

contributing to improving public health. You can still visit an example of his work at The Pumping Station, Penarth Road (next to the River Ely).



Old Pump House

This red and yellow brick building originally housed pumps, driven by huge beam engines, to help sewage from the western side of Cardiff on its way to eventual discharge to the Severn Estuary off Lavernock Point. If you head out from the city centre for this building, look out for Harpur Street on the right of Penarth Road, just after the entrance to Brains Brewery.



Harpur Street nameplate

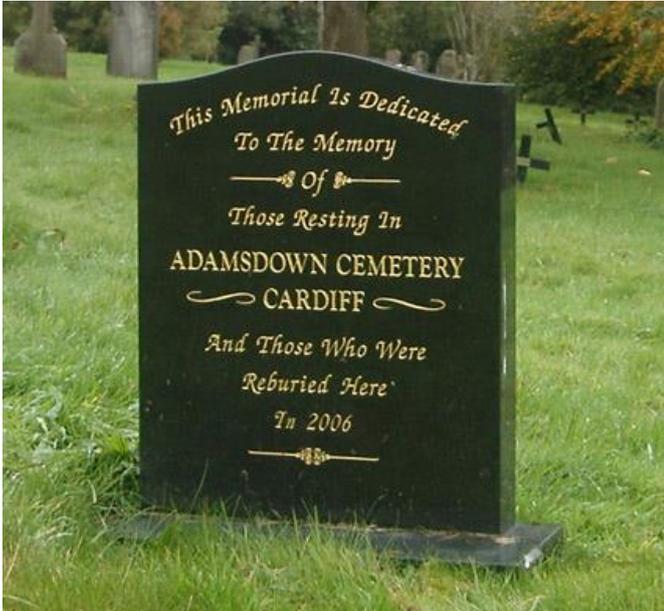
Harpur also takes credit for planning the tramway network and the construction of Lansdowne Hospital, in 1895, as the treatment and isolation unit for infectious diseases.

Does an overgrown grave in Cathays Cemetery and having his name on one of the least significant streets in the city represent adequate recognition for someone who contributed so much of enduring value to Cardiff?

Friends FEATURES

A Mile to a New Home

In the northern part of Section N, there are an unusual number of small wooden crosses. Amongst these you will find a black marble memorial which is dedicated to those resting in Adamsdown Cemetery, who were re-buried in Cathays Cemetery in 2006.



Re-interment memorial

The land for Adamsdown Cemetery was donated to the people of Cardiff by the Marquis of Bute and the first burials took place in 1848. Thanks to the rapid growth of the city, aided in no small way by epidemics of typhoid and cholera, it filled rapidly and closed to new burials in 1872, although burials in existing graves continued until 1925. Of course, Cathays Cemetery became the replacement public burial place. Almost 1,500 people were interred in Adamsdown Cemetery during the Victorian era. The cemetery chapel later became Adamsdown library, but this was destroyed by fire in 1968.

Sometime around 1970, the headstones were moved into small arcs in the corners and in the centre, to create a large open space. The site became known as Cemetery Park. By 2006, the park was looking decidedly run-down, so was given a facelift. The makeover included a new entrance from Moira Terrace, a memorial path, new trees and seats and a games and activity

area designed by and for local youngsters. But the work meant that some bodies buried near the new entrance had to be exhumed, for which a Home Office licence was obtained. The exhumed bodies were re-interred in Section N of Cathays Cemetery.

Greater Love ...

We are indebted to one of our members, Susan Hughes, for this story about her grandfather, William James Cann. It is appropriate to tell it now because, in part, it relates to the Christmas Day truce in World War 1.

William told his daughter, Susan's mother, about sharing food with the Germans in the trenches and singing carols. The German troops were very young, just boys, and wanted to show pictures of their parents and rural home villages. Presents were exchanged and William was given several carved daggers in exchange for tobacco. The following day they had to shoot at each other, which William found very hard to do, and he felt very sorry for the children whose bodies lay in no-man's land. He was decorated for his service during the war and his medals are believed to be still in the family ... and in Cardiff.

As if four years in the trenches was not enough, William was posted to Ireland, so did not return to Cardiff until 1919. This was, of course, the start of the Irish War of Independence. In response to the IRA's guerilla tactics, British troops ("Auxiliaries") were drafted in to support the Royal Irish Constabulary ("Black and Tans"). The Auxiliaries were to become notorious for ill-discipline and reprisal attacks on civilians. Not all of the soldiers were like this and it is clear that William was very troubled about being ordered to shoot Roman Catholic families. His response was to knock heavily on the front doors and count to ten loudly, to give the occupants a chance to escape from the back! However, he recalled that some officers were much more bloodthirsty, ordering the killing of whole families, including children,

often using fixed bayonets. It is little wonder that this resulted in long lasting resentment and entrenched sectarianism.

When William finally returned to Cardiff, he had severe trench foot. The doctor surgically removed his leggings and shoes and ordered him to spend as much time as possible sitting outside in the back garden, to let the air and sun reach his feet, to assist healing. But this was impractical, as he had to return to work on the railway so, thereafter, he always suffered with painful feet.

On 17 March 1938, William was working as a bridge repairer at Ynysgau Railway Cutting, near Llantwit Fardre, when one of his colleagues decided to cross the line to relieve himself - but he had not heard an approaching train. William rushed across the line to save him but both were hit. William was decapitated, while the other man survived but a few hours.

William was given a military funeral at Cathays Cemetery and the nearby streets were full of people. The coffin was lowered into the grave with a Union Jack and his military uniform on top, while the Last Post was played. The address, most appropriately, included the well known lines from St John's Gospel - "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."



William was born in Cardiff on 20th November 1890 and baptised the following year at St Andrew's Church. He married in 1911 and lived

at 185 Rhymney Street, Cathays. His grave, which is pictured above, can be found in the New Cemetery, close to the north side of Section E-P.

While it can be relatively easy to find stories about people who have been prominent in business and politics, some of the most fascinating and poignant stories, like that above, relate to everyday people and may only come to light when someone researches and documents their own family history. If you have a story, related to Cathays Cemetery, that you would like to share, please get in touch.

Recent Events

This is the quiet time of the year, so the only recent event to report is:

The Annual General Meeting

On 24th January 2015, around 20 people attended the **AGM** held, for the first time, in the newly restored chapels.



Meeting in Chapel

In welcoming everyone to the meeting, the Chairman said that he was especially pleased that it was taking place in one of the chapels, which look very different today compared with when the Friends were first formed in 2006. The minutes circulated prior to the meeting were confirmed as a true record of the 2014 AGM. There were no matters arising that would

Friends EVENTS

not be covered by other items on the agenda.

In reporting upon another successful year, the Chairman emphasized that this, as always, was a reflection on the efforts of members. But he also emphasized the importance of 'new blood' in taking the organisation forward. While we were sitting in one of the year's success stories, it was appropriate to thank Bereavement Services, particularly Carmel Thomas, for their role in undertaking this restoration work and for all the other assistance given to the Friends. It was noted, too, that the Friends role was crucial in obtaining grants, such as that from the Landfill Communities Fund.

It was still the aim of the Friends that one of the chapels be restored to a traditional role, as there was still a demand for such facilities that could be fulfilled on this site. A sustainable role needs to be found for the second chapel and a further meeting towards this end was planned soon. In the short term, it was hoped that the bell tower could be tackled next and it was felt that the Friends would be able to contribute towards this, if appropriate. It would be good to restore the bier house, which is one of the few surviving examples of its type, but, at the present time, the cost of this looked prohibitive ... unless someone knows a rich benefactor!

The Chairman summarised the main activities of the past year, underlining the complementary roles of the Friends and Bereavement Services. For example, while the latter organised the tree planting, in December, the funds depended upon a grant application by the Friends. He also noted the continued support from Mossfords and Morgans Consult which, in the last year, had been evident in the preparation of new 'badging' for the Friends, new posters and display panels, and the assembly of things for the forthcoming exhibition in the Cardiff Story. A new supporter, in the form of the Tesco (Gabalfa) Community Team had helped already with the provision of meeting facilities for Trustee meetings and holding a Car Boot Sale that had raised nearly £400 for our funds.

The Chairman closed his report by re-affirming his thanks to Martin Birch, Carmel Thomas and the rest of the Bereavement Services team for their unstinting support, thanking the newsletter team and wishing Jim Lister, one of our most consistent supporters, a speedy recovery.

The Treasurer was pleased to record another year with a healthy surplus (£1323), leading to an even stronger balance of £8278. He summarised the main items of income and expenditure. The anniversary book continued to be a useful contributor, despite the inevitable declining trend in sales. This had been partly offset by having it now available on the internet, thanks to Paul Jones. The stock of books is around 550, which represents an asset value of about £2500 and around 10 years of sales, at the present rate. Attention was also drawn to the appreciable benefit which things like the administrative support provided by Bereavement Services and the provision of rooms for talks by the university represented. The Treasurer closed his report by thanking the auditor, Nick Davey.

All nominees for the new committee were members of the existing committee and there was no competition for officer roles, so the elections were quickly dealt with by a unanimous show of hands. The new committee comprises Paul Nicholson (Chairman), John Farnhill (Treasurer), Paul Jones, Ivor Lippett, Chris Marsh, Hugh Payne and Margaret Smith. It was emphasized that volunteers, especially with specialist skills, could be readily accommodated at all times, in either committee or non-committee roles.

Carmel Thomas reported on behalf Bereavement Services and passed on the apologies of Martin Birch, who was unable to attend. She echoed the Chairman's comments about the complementary and cooperative nature of their relationship with the Friends. The collaboration with the university in the running of dramatised trails had been a great success and the Green Flag assessors had been

most impressed with Cathays Cemetery. In the coming year, wild flower planting (in conjunction with two other Cardiff cemeteries) would continue, Victorian shrubs would be planted and the provision of tree identification labels would be commenced. This was helped by having a staff member who was studying horticulture. They were also looking at providing an improved floor surface in the chapels. Following the successful wreath-laying service in 2014, it was expected that this year's commemoration of World War 1, would include the laying of a special memorial stone on the grave of a Victoria Cross awardee.

The Question and Answer session and Any Other Business merged into one and covered diverse subjects, including:

- the welcome and successful community involvement with Allensbank Primary School, which had been particularly evident at the Remembrance Day service. It was hoped that other Cardiff schools could become more involved.
- the possibility of a collaboration between the Friends, Glamorgan Family History Society and Bereavement Services in combining their records into a readily accessible common database. The discussion identified a number of legal, financial and practical problems that would need to be resolved, but the Committee were given the backing of the meeting to enter into discussions on this. It was recognised that progress towards this desirable objective would have to be a very long term project.
- in expanding on the possible financial implications of the above, it was noted that the healthy state of the Friend's accounts owed much to the generous support in kind from other sources, but that this might not pertain in the future and the Friends might have to develop an independent income stream.

- Nick Davey advised that the burial records of the old Ebenezer Chapel in the centre of Cardiff, which he had mentioned at last year's AGM, had now been found.
- with the chapel being decidedly chilly for the meeting, it was suggested that some of the Friends' funds could usefully be used for the purchase of some form of space heater. Subsequent discussion indicated that the problem may only be one of teething trouble with the existing system, for which this was the first real test.
- the general view of the meeting was that the new timing of the AGM (morning, instead of afternoon) was better.
- it was noted that the last workday before Christmas had seen the Friends cutting out some holly and it was wondered if this could be put to good use, possibly raising money. While this appears logical, there are a number of possible problems associated with it, but it was agreed that it should be looked into further.

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

Our only winter workday was spent clearing brambles and other scrubby growth in Section O, around the large holm oak stump. With an excellent turn out, the improvement was clear to see. But we are now entering the period of rapid new growth, presenting an increasing challenge for the Spring workdays scheduled for the **last Saturday** of the next three months, that is **March 28th, April 25th and May 30th.**

All help is appreciated, so please join us if you can for a couple of hours of undemanding exercise in a friendly environment. We **meet by the chapels at 10 am**, tools and gloves are provided and we even have a half time refreshment break.

Friends EVENTS

Weekly Health Walks

We meet just inside the gates adjacent to **Cathays Library** at **10.30 am** every **Tuesday morning**, regardless of the weather. The walks last between 40 minutes and an hour and are taken at a leisurely pace, pausing occasionally for a cemetery related anecdote. With an emphasis on sociability, everyone is welcome both on the walk and, afterwards, when we adjourn to a cosy local café for a chat over tea or coffee. You don't need to book or come regularly - all you have to do is turn up: we look forward to seeing you.



health walkers passing Section D

Future Events

Talks

On **Tuesday 10th March at 7 pm**, **Gordon Hindess** will give an illustrated talk entitled "**Cathays Cemetery - World Tour**". The venue will be **Room 0.31, John Percival Building, Cardiff University, in Colum Drive** (behind Colum Road). Come and see how a stroll in the Cemetery leads to a variety of anecdotes in exotic places around the world.

Please note that the date of the above talk was given incorrectly in our last newsletter, so check your diaries to make sure that you have the entry on the right day.

On **Tuesday 5th May at 7 pm**, **Peter Robinson** will give an illustrated talk on the **Boer Wars**. Taking place about 20 years apart and falling at the end of the 19C (with the second just running into the start of the 20C) their history

has perhaps been overshadowed by later conflicts. But there are place names that are familiar because of events at this time, you may be familiar with the memorial in Cathays Park and there are, of course, links to people commemorated in Cathays cemetery. The venue will again be **Room 0.31 John Percival Building, Cardiff University**.

Guided Walks

On **Sunday 12th April at 2 pm**, Bereavement Services will lead their ever popular **Heritage Walk**, starting from the chapels, just inside the **main entrance in Fairoak Road**. This is an opportunity to learn about the history of the Cemetery and some of its residents.

Our evening **Midsummer Walk** this year will be on **Tuesday 23rd June at 7 pm** and led by the Friends. While it will also start at the chapels, the route and content will be quite different from the April Heritage Walk, highlighting some of the more recent discoveries about the Cemetery.

Exhibition

On **Monday 1st June**, the Friends biggest off-site event to date will open - **an exhibition show-casing the Cemetery, in The Cardiff Story**, the museum in the Old Library. The exhibition, which will run for several weeks, will include especially prepared posters, artefacts (like burial diaries) and images that show the many facets of the Cemetery. The aim will be to provide a taster of what Cathays Cemetery has to offer and, hopefully, encourage more people to visit.

Correction

On page 9 of our last issue, we used the phrase 'to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War'. We should have used the word 'commemorate' and apologise if this slip caused any distress.

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

www.friendsofcathayscemetery.co.uk