

Double Yellow Lines!

But it's nothing to do with restricting parking in the Cemetery. We have described the introduction of yellow rattle along the upper path into Section L in previous issues. This remarkable annual seems to defy the odds, to self-seed in largely untended ground and this was demonstrated again this year. But after the yellow borders had faded away in June, we were surprised to find even bigger and brighter yellow borders in July. Ragwort has rapidly colonised the same strips alongside the path, to produce double yellow lines - for the second time this year.



Double yellow lines of ragwort

Ragwort, sometimes known as Stinking Willie, has had a bad press, particularly in the farming and horse-owning community, and, even in the Cemetery, some measure of control may be necessary to stop it dominating areas. But it is very attractive to pollinators and provides a feast for the caterpillars of the Cinnabar Moth (find more on this in Issue 28, September 2016). In the predator hierarchy, the caterpillars may well make a juicy meal for a blue tit, all enhancing the biodiversity of the Cemetery.

At this time last year, we were talking about the parched appearance of the Cemetery. This year has been wetter during the peak growing season, with the result that the conservation areas have grown vigorously so that, in some places, only the tallest headstones can be seen above the vegetation, as the picture of part of Section L below shows.



Elsewhere in the conservation areas, rosebay willowherb dominates, producing a pink screen at head height. Each plant can produce tens of thousands of seeds, fitted with tiny, fluffy 'parachutes' which can disperse over long distances, even on light breezes. It colonises new areas easily, so it is another plant that may need to be managed.



Rosebay willowherb in Section B

A great coloniser of unloved areas, like disused railway lines and abandoned industrial sites is buddleia. Mistakenly, it has identified some parts of the Cemetery as unloved, leading to its appearance in a few locations, such as that pictured on the next page by the bier house.



It is sometimes called summer lilac (for obvious reasons) but, more commonly, referred to as the butterfly bush, because of its magnetic attraction for butterflies. However, while the weather this year has been conducive to plant growth, it seems to have been unfavourable for butterflies, that have been hard to spot this summer.

Less easy to find in the Cemetery is meadow cranesbill, a member of the geranium family which forms small clumps about half a metre high. While it favours alkaline soil, which general isn't present in the Cemetery, memorial stone and stone chip dressings may locally produce suitable conditions.



Meadow cranesbill in Section B

Even harder to find is the tiny scarlet pimpernel (yes, seek him here, seek him there ...). It can't compete with the larger occupants of the conservation areas or, indeed in longer mown grass, preferring the bare soil of cultivated ground. Being an annual, it springs to life opportunistically before bigger competitors take over. In the Cemetery, it survives in places

like lesser used paths or drives, where there is sufficient use to keep any growth down, but not so much as to wear all vegetation away. Its habit of closing its flowers in dull weather accounts for an alternative name of poor man's weather glass.



Scarlet pimpernel

The wild flower garden strips by the Fair Oak Road boundary, found the weather to their liking this year and, by July, were showing a colourful display, as shown below.



In our last issue, we took a discreet look at the sex life of a cypress tree and we continue this theme now. If we look at the black, or Corsican, pine, we again find male and female flowers on one tree. On the left in the picture on the next page are the purple female flowers while, on the right, is a cluster of yellow male flowers.



After fertilisation, the female flowers turn green and slightly sticky and grow, eventually ripening to the more familiar brown. The male flowers shrivel and disintegrate.

Less good news regarding the black pines is that several have been looking shabby for the last couple of years and two have now died. Forming avenues along many of the principal drives in the Cemetery, the loss of these pines is a worrying development. While the cause is still being investigated, the concern is that it could be a disease that would have devastating consequences and materially alter the characteristic appearance of the Cemetery.



Dead black pine in Section O

Another threat to the Cemetery's trees is ash dieback. Its spread towards Cardiff has been inexorable over the last few years and the first case was confirmed in the area last year. Now, several ash trees in the Cemetery are showing worrying signs, although the diagnosis is still to be confirmed.



Dying branches on ash in Section H

This prolific self-seeder is not the most popular tree in the Cemetery and hundreds of saplings are cleared every year. But there are many mature trees so, if (though, almost certainly, it is when) they succumb to the disease, there will be a significant impact on the Cemetery. The problem is caused by a fungus and young trees can be killed in one season, while older trees tend to die gradually over several seasons. A few ash trees have proved resistant to the disease and, with so many in the Cemetery, it will be important to look out for any of these, as they could be important for securing the future of this native tree.

Eriophyes tiliae has visited the lime trees close to the library. This tiny mite (less than 0.2mm long - about the size of a full stop on this page) forms the lime nail, or bugle, gall, an erect, oblique or curved distortion rising up from the upper surface of the leaves of the common lime tree. The mites feed by sucking sap and secrete chemicals into the plant tissue that cause the leaves to produce outgrowths of the leaf's

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epidermis. Both red and greenish-yellow galls have been found. The mites live and develop inside the galls whilst feeding on the sap, but overwinter as non-feeding females in crevices in the bark, especially near buds, or underneath bud scales. In the spring, when the host plant comes into growth, the mites begin feeding and laying eggs - at a rate of two or three a day - and there may be two or three generations during the summer with both male and female adults being present. The overwintering females are produced late in the season and will not lay eggs until the following year.



Nail galls found in Sections S and Y

Summer Miscellany

While much has happened on the chapels over the last few years and we have reported developments at the time, early morning sun on the chapels reminded us that not all our readers are local and able to visit the Cemetery, so may be unaware of the overall result of the improvements that have been made. So here is a picture of the front of the chapels, glowing in the sun.



The chapels at Thornhill Crematorium have been undergoing a major refurbishment, taking them out of use temporarily. While alternative

facilities were provided at the Crematorium, it was pleasing to see some people opting to use the Cathays nonconformist chapel as an alternative.

It is gratifying when visitors from overseas visit the Cemetery. Many of these come because of family links to Cardiff, even though they have now made their homes overseas. Others may be visiting the graves of Commonwealth soldiers who died and were buried here. We don't necessarily meet these visitors, but sometimes they leave calling cards, like the Canadian flag placed by a headstone in the World War I war graves plot, shown below.



If you have visited the New Cemetery recently, you may have thought that the trend towards public sculptures to enhance the environment had reached the Cemetery. Just across the drive from the war graves plot is "The Corkscrew", which is pictured below.



Actually, this is completely natural, the result of a tree that was overcome by the weight of ivy twisting up it - but it does suggest that there may be a place for public art in the Cemetery.

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The Cemetery has again met the requirements for a Green Flag and the Green Heritage Award. It would be easy to get complacent about these awards, but the requirements get more demanding each year, so Bereavement Services deserve great credit for their sensitive management of the Cemetery. On a similar theme, the Cemetery has been inspected, after being shortlisted for a national probation service award for the second year in a row. The awards recognise outstanding achievements across a range of categories, where community service teams undertake work. They can be given to probation service staff and partner employees. Probation Service teams now make a significant contribution to the management of the Cemetery to create an environment that is as diverse as possible, all under the guidance of Denise Rogers, our gardener. While Cathays just missed out on the prize, the creditable performance indicates that it is getting closer and, significantly, suggested a few steps that might make the difference. One problem faced by the Cemetery is the lack of natural water (streams or ponds) for birds, bugs and animals. This is now being addressed, while bug hotels are also planned. The remains of the fallen beech are now being retained to help in this respect - but more on this must await a later issue.



Remains of fallen beech in Section H

As usual, the Friends participated in the annual Cathays Street Fayre, with a gazebo erected outside St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School. Despite the weather, the Fayre was well supported and plenty of people visited our stall. As an addition to previous years, a free guided

walk around the Cemetery was provided, led by Ivor Lippett (pictured below by the gazebo).



Glorious Finale – The Battle

In our last issue, we left HMS Glorious in the Norwegian Sea, heading for Scarpa Flow, having just spotted two ships in the distance, at 5:00 pm on 8th June 1940.

While Glorious maintained course and speed, the destroyer Ardent was ordered to close to identify the approaching ships and the order was given for the five Swordfish to be brought up to the flight deck and made ready. But the German ships had seen the British squadron 10-15 minutes before the British ships saw them. They were the pocket battleships Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, that were on their own because the other ships in their squadron had detached to refuel in the occupied part of Norway. They had already altered course to close and steamed up to maximum speed by the time they were spotted.

By 17:15, Scharnhorst's senior gunnery officer had confidently identified the British aircraft carrier, escorted by two destroyers. Ardent was closing in on the German ships making light identification signals but, shortly afterwards,

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as a result of the lack of response to its signals, reported back to *Glorious* and got ready to attack. Its intention was to harass the pocket battleships, to provide *Glorious* and *Acasta* with more time to sail away.

Around 17:20, "action stations" were sounded on board *Glorious* and the 2 destroyers. *Glorious* commenced transmitting her enemy report and position and activities to bring the *Swordfish* on deck and make them ready to take off commenced. But only three planes were ready to be taken up from the hangar and these were armed with anti-submarine bombs, rather than torpedoes, so needed to be re-armed. *Acasta* took up station between *Glorious* and the enemy and started creating smoke cover.

When *Ardent* closed to around 12 km it prepared for a torpedo attack. At 17:27, *Gneisenau* opened fire against *Ardent*, hitting the No. 1 Boiler room with the first salvo. *Ardent's* speed was immediately reduced and she started to zig-zag in her own smoke, while shooting her 120 mm guns. Shortly afterwards, she fired her first salvo of torpedoes at the German ships and one of them narrowly missed *Scharnhorst*.

At 17:32, *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* opened fire on *Glorious* with their main 280 mm artillery at a range of about 26 km. Shortly afterwards, the first two *Swordfish* were getting ready to be launched, now armed with torpedoes. But, before they could get off, *Scharnhorst*, with her third salvo, hit *Glorious*. This was from a distance of just over 24 km, which was the greatest distance for a gunfire hit on any enemy warship achieved up to that time. (To put this into a local perspective, imagine the attacker, moving fast, just off Cardiff, hitting a rapidly fleeing target, close to Minehead.) The shell penetrated the flight deck and burst into the upper hangar starting a big fire. The aircraft present on the main deck fell overboard, while the big hole in the middle of the deck meant that no other aircraft could be launched. Splinters pierced a boiler casing

causing a temporary drop in steam pressure from 2 boilers, but steam was built up again.

Acasta opened fire on the German ships with her 120 mm guns, while continuing to provide a smoke screen for *Glorious* and, as much as possible, for herself.

Ardent was zig-zagging and dodging in and out of her own smoke, while firing her 120 mm guns and preparing to launch more torpedoes, but she continued to receive hits from the extremely accurate fire from the German ships. In the course of a few minutes, just after 17:40, two more sets of four torpedoes were fired at *Scharnhorst*, both requiring the battleship to take avoiding action to prevent a hit. By now, *Scharnhorst* had concentrated its attention on the destroyer, while *Gneisenau* was giving all of its attention to *Glorious* with its 280 mm guns.

By 17:50, *Glorious* was on fire and listing heavily to starboard. Then she received another 280 mm hit that wrecked the bridge, killing the captain and most of the bridge personnel.

By 18:00, *Ardent*, after many hits was operating at low speed (15 knots) and listing heavily to port. Despite this, she continued firing and launching torpedoes for another 20 minutes, though suffering increasing damage from the attentions of *Scharnhorst*, until she capsized and sank. After she had disappeared below the surface, carley floats with survivors were seen all around. The pocket battleship had managed to evade all of the 28 torpedoes fired at her (the calm sea and clear conditions must have helped in this respect) but suffered relatively minor damage, which reduced her speed.

At 18:18, *Glorious* became clearly visible and the *Gneisenau* took full advantage, though still firing at a range of 20 km. *Glorious* received another 280 mm hit, in the centre engine room: the ship began to lose speed, developed a starboard list and commenced a slow circle to port. From this point on the aircraft carrier was doomed, as it became an increasingly easy

target for the Gneisenau's speed and fire power.



Glorious nearing the end (picture taken from Scharnhorst)

. Shortly before 18.30, Acasta turned to attack the German ships with torpedoes, needing to close to an effective firing range of about 7 km. Scharnhorst steered a course to confront Acasta directly and was soon scoring hits with her secondary artillery (150 mm) - at this stage, the German ships were confident enough to conserve ammunition for their main armaments. Acasta adopted similar tactics to Ardent and her second set of torpedoes resulted in a hit on Scharnhorst, putting its starboard engine out of action, taking out a gun turret, flooding magazines and rendering the radar unserviceable.

Ten minutes later, Gneisenau fired her last broadside at Glorious and switched to target Acasta whose torpedoes were the real danger at that moment. Gneisenau, carefully keeping out of torpedo range, laid intense fire on Acasta scoring repeated hits with its secondary armament.

Around 19:10, Acasta was burning, listing heavily and unable to manoeuvre, but was still firing her guns and scored a hit on the Scharnhorst's "B" turret. About the same time, Glorious disappeared beneath the surface, although, again, lots of carley floats with survivors were seen around her sinking place. Two minutes later the order to abandon ship was given on Acasta. A couple of minutes later, the German ships

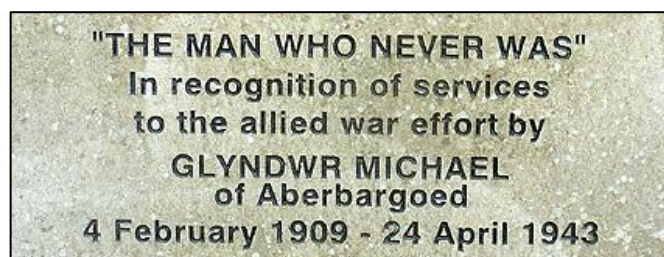
ceased firing and carley floats were seen around Acasta. On board Gneisenau, orders were given to put the war flag at half mast and stand to attention to honour the skillful and brave crew of the Acasta.

The German pocket battleships turned and headed for the relative security of southern Norway.

The story will conclude in our next issue. We should acknowledge that the precise timing of events is thanks to the detailed logs of the German ships and the diligent research of The HMS Glorious, Ardent & Acasta Association (GLARAC).

The Man Who Never Was

The unique memorial pictured below can be found about half an hour from Cardiff, in the small Garden of Remembrance, on the main road through Aberbargoed. The inscription on the memorial stone is repeated on a brass plate on the gate.



The story is told in a 1950 book (with significant inaccuracies), another in 1953 and a film in 1956. But it was only as recently as 2010 that another book on the subject convincingly identified the body used. Glyndwr is buried in Huelva Roman Catholic Cemetery, in Spain. The grave is marked by a private memorial but, nevertheless, is inspected regularly by CWGC staff to ensure that it is in good order. The headstone declares it to be the grave of Major William Martin, of the Royal Marines, who died on 24 April 1943, when the plane he was

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travelling in crashed into the sea off the coast of Spain. Thus the elaborate deception (which was successful), to make German intelligence believe that the allied invasion of Italy would strike initially at Corsica and Sardinia, is perpetuated today.

Originally from Aberbargoed, Glyndwr had an unfortunate life, struggled to hold down a job and eventually drifted to London, where he was homeless when he died on 24 January 1943 (note that the memorial doesn't use this date, but the fictitious one attributed to Major Martin, in Spain). The St. Pancras coroner had been asked to keep an eye out for the body of a suitable male with no next of kin and Glyndwr fitted the bill. A false identity was created and the body of Glyndwr, dressed in the uniform of a Royal Marine, was set adrift off the Spanish coast, with a briefcase containing fake documents.

The back story built for Major Martin had him born to parents living in Cardiff, so perhaps there is a virtual grave in their memory in Cathays Cemetery.

Recent Events

Walks

On successive **Tuesday evenings, June 4th and 11th**, and the **intermediate Sunday afternoon**, **Roger Swan of Bereavement Services**, provided a guided walk which linked dramatic sketches performed by the **A48 Theatre Company Ltd**, the combined result being billed as **Cathays Cemetery Heritage Walk: Trails & Tales**. These 'graveyard voices' spanned from the Victorian era well into the 20th century and ranged from the rich, heroic or esteemed to the profoundly tragic and emblematic.



William Jones JP and his cook/housekeeper

Although there were three performances, the writers of the scripts, from **Living Lines**, had excelled themselves, so that there was little overlap between the presentations, with different itineraries and a total of around 25 playlets. Even where grave locations used in previous years were visited, completely new acts were presented. With Roger providing some of his own stories, a musical recital at the start and refreshments at the end, this was a hugely enjoyable series of events.



Roger Swan tells the story of a Cemetery Manager from 100 years ago

Although the weather threatened briefly on a couple of occasions, it was not sufficient to spoil the occasion. The word about the quality of the entertainment provided is clearly spreading, to the extent that a total of about 180 people enjoyed this year's performances ... and have put a note in the forward planning section of their diaries to come again next year.



Enthralled audience by the Balloon Girl

On **Tuesday June 25th**, **Gordon Hindess** led the Friends' **Midsummer Walk**. As usual, the objective was to highlight some of the more recent research discoveries relating to the Cemetery and the resultant anecdotes included the first baby born in Mount Stuart Square, a purveyor of magical pills and potions, a rag and bone man, a victim of 'friendly fire' in the Second World War, a nursemaid to royalty and the tragic end to a drunken cab ride. The route also took in a number of the interesting specimen trees in the Cemetery.



Gordon at one of the graves visited in Section M

Despite a threat of rain (that fortunately didn't materialise) more than 50 people attended and enjoyed this walk, which ended with refreshments in the Anglican chapel.

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

Unfortunately, for operational reasons, our July workday had to be cancelled, leaving us with just the June one to report on. Despite this, we were able to carry out some overdue clearance around the grave of John Cleal, one of our First World War naval heroes, and trim the shrubbery around a shaded seat in a quiet corner of the Cemetery.

Fancy an hour or two in the fresh air with friendly company? If so, come along and give it a try. If you prefer, you can help with the recording of memorial inscriptions. **We meet by the chapels at 10 am** and work until noon, with a break for elevenses. Tools and gloves or materials for recording memorial inscriptions are provided. Our workdays are on the last Saturday of the month, so the next dates are **28th September, 26th October and 30th November**. Note that there will not be a workday in December, because of the festive break.

Weekly Health Walks

These gentle walks take place regardless of the weather and last for about an hour. They are social occasions and include anecdotes related to the Cemetery and discussion of the flora and fauna that presents itself. As the appearance of the Cemetery changes with the seasons, there is always something new to see and talk about. The walks start just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library at 10.30 am every Tuesday morning** and all are welcome. At the end of the walk, we adjourn to a local hostelry for a chat over tea or coffee.

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Future Events

Open Doors Event

On **Sunday September 15th**, the **restored chapels will be opened to the public from 11 am to 4 pm**. In addition, at **11 am**, **Roger Swan** of Bereavement Services will lead a **short guided walk**. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about this interesting Cemetery and to see how the restoration of the chapels has progressed over the last ten years or so. There will be plenty of people on hand to answer any questions you may have.

Talk and Walk

On **Sunday October 20th at 11 am**, **Roger Swan** of Bereavement Services will present "**A Brief History of the Victorian Cemetery**" in the nonconformist chapel, followed by a short walk in the Cemetery, highlighting some of the heritage of the site. **Meet at the chapels**, just **inside the main entrance in Fair Oak Road** and allow about an hour and a half.

Talk

On **Tuesday November 19th at 7 pm**, the **Bill Mosley Memorial Lecture**, entitled "**A Brief History of the Victorian Cemetery**" will be delivered by **Roger Swan**, of Bereavement Services. Roger has pursued a keen interest in this subject, so a well-informed talk is guaranteed. The lecture will be given in **Room 2.01 of the John Percival Building, Cardiff University**, in Colum Drive (behind the buildings on the east side of Colum Road). There will be a **£5 entry charge** for this event.

Christmas Memorial Service

On **Sunday 8th December, at 2:00 pm**, this service will be held in the **Wenallt Chapel, at Thornhill**, with refreshments to follow. This is an opportunity for everyone to come together to remember their loved ones. While there is no charge to attend, Christmas Memorial Tags will be available, with all donations going to Tenovus Cancer Care.

Publications

Books (about 100 pages, full colour):

Cathays Cemetery on its 150th Anniversary - £5
Hidden Histories: Tales from Cathays Cemetery - £10

Themed guides (12 - 20 pages, black and white, unless indicated otherwise):

Tragedy at Sea - £1.00
First World War Soldiers - £1.00
Builders & Architects - £1.00
The Five Legs of Cathays
Murder at Cathays - £1.00
The Turners & Other Builders - £1.00
Restoring the Chapels - £1.00

The books are also available by post, with an additional shipping cost of £3: in the UK, by sending your name & address and a cheque payable to "Friends of Cathays Cemetery" for the book price plus postage and packing to:-

Friends of Cathays Cemetery
c/o Bereavement Services
Thornhill Cemetery
Cardiff CF14 9UA

For orders from outside the UK please email us for a costing.

There are also several free publications which can be downloaded from our website in pdf format.

And 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