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## Autumn Highlights

Many of the trees in the Cemetery are evergreen, while the deciduous trees may make their autumn transitions at different times and are often at their best for just a few days. But these autumn highlights can be glorious if you glimpse one.



The Tuesday morning Health Walking Group has just had its third anniversary. Numbers have increased slightly this year and the party has occasionally been boosted by visitors to the city, including some from overseas. Perhaps surprisingly, poor weather doesn't significantly affect attendance and no walks have been cancelled through lack of numbers or inclement conditions.

This year, on the Tuesday before Remembrance Day, it was decided to read out a "roll of honour" of those buried in the First World War section, by the Cross of Remembrance in the northern part of the Cemetery. All members of the walking group participated, with each reading out about 8-12 names from the headstones.

*At the going down of the sun,  
And in the morning,  
We shall remember them.*



*Walkers distributed around the graves  
for the reading of names*

The "Balloon Girl's" grave has been increasingly at risk from vehicles wearing away the adjacent path edge. In an attempt to stop this erosion, a timber edging strip has been placed but, sadly, has itself been damaged by a vehicle.



*Damaged timber edging near grave of Balloon Girl*

A few yards from here, in Section G, one grave has been brightened by a lone fuchsia. It is not known if this is a chance result of self-seeding or a deliberate planting, but it certainly stands out in an otherwise bland area of the Cemetery.

Once again, fungi have come into their own at the end of autumn. Whether it is "fairy rings" up to several metres in diameter (and seemingly happy to accommodate tombs and memorials within them) or small clumps on stumps or the roots of trees, they make a fascinating sight. Identification may be more of a problem but we

think this one is Plums & Custard, which is descriptive of its distinctive colouring and definitely **NOT** an invitation to eat.



*Lone fuchsia in Section G*

### **Tuesday Morning Health Walk**

No walk will take place on Christmas Day or New Year's Day, for fairly obvious reasons, so the first walk of 2013 will be on **January 8th**.

### ***Advance Notice***

#### **Annual General Meeting**

This will be held at 1pm on **Saturday January 26th** in the Meeting Room in the new Office building at Thornhill, with refreshments to follow. We hope to hear some definite news then about the Conservation Management Plan. Full details for the AGM will be circulated in the New Year. Everybody is welcome.

## ***25th Anniversary of the Friends of Arnos Vale***

We were pleased to receive an invitation to the event, on 7th October, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol. Paul Jones attended as our representative and here is his report.



*View in Cemetery*

25 years ago, the then owners of Arnos Vale Crematorium & Cemetery issued a notice to the relatives of people buried there to remove their loved ones as the Cemetery was to close its gates and be developed into new housing.

This prompted a **Friends action group** to be set up to maintain a constant vigil, aimed at keeping the cemetery open and the bulldozers out. Thanks to their efforts, we have today an idyllic area of tranquillity in the centre of Bristol, with exquisite buildings, tombs and memorials, as a record of the Victorian Era.

As the Cemetery had always been a private venture, the Council was persuaded to make a compulsory purchase order on the property and the restoration of the chapels and gatehouse buildings started in earnest. The improvements even included a **glass coffee-house**, built next to the Nonconformist Chapel.

**Ten grave re-dedications** were planned by the Friends for the anniversary day, with unveiling by the Mayor of Bristol. "Remembered Graves", as they were called, included people like William Budd, a physician & pioneer in the study of infectious diseases, and Gronow Davies VC, awarded the Victoria Cross in the Crimean War.



*The Coffee-house*

In the afternoon, David Napier lead a **guided tour** of the main works carried out and financed by the Friends over recent years. These included re-pointing of monuments to the likes of Mary Carpenter, a social reformer in education and prisons.

In the Nonconformist chapel, attendees were treated to a display of the "before and after" photographs and reports on the major events and achievements in the long history of the Friends. To conclude there was a presentation and the cutting of a cake made specially for the occasion.



*Anniversary Cake*

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## **Recent Events**

**28th October Heritage Walk:** Timed to be just before Remembrance Day (but not to clash with it), this guided walk was enjoyed by 40 people. The guide, Phil Amphlett of Bereavement Services, visited a selection of memorials commemorating mainly people of Cardiff who lost their lives in World Wars One and Two, but also took in the grave of **W<sup>m</sup> Llewellyn Rees**, a

survivor of the Charge of the Light Brigade.

The well-researched tour concentrated on the Regimental Insignia that can be found on all War Graves Commission headstones in Cathays Cemetery, but also visited the memorial to **John Cleal**, a victim of the Zeebrugge Raid, whose special headstone was funded by public subscription. As well as identifying the various regiments, examples of their activities during the wars were described.

**13th November Lecture, "Who Put the Stones Over the Bones?"**: Our Annual Public Lecture, held jointly with Cardiff University's School of History, Archaeology & Religion, was given by Simon Morgan of Mossfords. The histories of memorial masonry in Cardiff and the firm Mossfords, were skilfully intertwined. The name Mossford has been associated with memorial masonry since **1821** and this was put into historical context, when we were reminded that this was the year before Napoleon died in exile on St Helena and 8 years before George Stephenson successfully demonstrated his steam locomotive at Liverpool.

We learnt that in **1863** there were **no** memorial masons in Cardiff but, by **1900** there were **25**. However, the last century has seen so much decline so that there are **now** only **3 or 4**. Initially, intense competition led to take-overs and mergers, then restrictions on the size and design of memorials reduced the need for individual craftsmanship. But the biggest cause of the decline was the **advent of cremation** - in 1900, less than 1% of bodies were cremated while, today, about 75% are.

Three sons of the original mason Mossford came to South Wales to open memorial businesses and two of these, **William** and **FT**, set up in Cardiff, in competition. These two firms **only came together in 1985**, by which time Mossfords was in the hands of the Morgan family, Simon himself being a fourth generation monumental mason.

Lest this sounds a rather dry lecture, we should record some fascinating examples of **symbolic images** on Victorian monuments, the

accompaniment of **sound effects** (the tapping of a hammer on a chisel), an excursion to the construction of the **Mormon Tabernacle** in Salt Lake City, some pictures of memorials in Cathays Cemetery that look somewhat different today, and the tale of a £31,000 memorial stone ... that resided on the finger of the widow!

Special guests, Mr & Mrs Clive Mossford (of the William Mossford family) were included in the audience of nearly 40.

### 26th October & 24th November Workdays:

Attention has been directed at catching up with new seedlings and shoots of ash trees in Section K, which have thrived on during the wet summer. But with the looming threat of Ash Dieback Disease (which has not been found in the Cemetery thus far) one wonders if a more benevolent attitude should be taken to this particular tree.

The second of these workdays was arguably the wettest one experienced by the Friends - it started in the rain and the conditions just got worse: yes, a decidedly soggy experience. Despite this, the number of volunteers was much as usual and further good progress was made.

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## *The Corys*

In January, **Dyffryn House & Gardens** will pass into the care of the National Trust. This reminds us of one of the most influential families in Cardiff at the height of its boom years. We remember, too, that some of the family are buried in Cathays Cemetery.

While there is much information about the family available, because **Cory** is a common surname and the names Richard and John recur through the generations, we have to be careful in researching the family history. The Cardiff story starts with the **arrival of Richard** (1799-1882) from the West Country **around 1838**. He was the owner of a small vessel trading between Cardiff, Bristol and Ireland, but he opened a ship chandlery in Cardiff, near the Custom

House. At the same time, he brought over his wife and three young sons.

While still in their teens, **the two elder sons, John and Richard**, joined the business, which then traded as **Richard Cory & Sons**, describing themselves as ship brokers, ship owners, coal merchants and exporters. When Richard Cory (the elder) retired in 1859, the business was re-named **Cory Brothers & Co** and it became a limited liability company in 1888. The following year, its new home, **Corys' Buildings**, opened on the corner of Bute Street and Bute Place.

Among the many prestigious buildings in the commercial heart of 19C Cardiff, this is one of the grandest and remains today as a grade II listed building, which is being incorporated into the Merchant Place re-development as Cory Chambers.



*Corys' Buildings*

John and Richard became **coal owners** in their own right with the purchase of **Pentre colliery** in the Rhondda, **in 1868**. Other collieries in the Rhondda, Cynon, Neath and Ogmere valleys were later acquired, and the brothers also became the **largest private wagon owners** in the UK. With the universal demand for Welsh steam coal for shipping, and especially after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the firm established coal depots, offices and agencies around the world. By **1908** they had **118 depots** on all the major shipping routes. John was also

a founder and vice-chairman of the Barry Docks & Railway Company.

By seizing the opportunities offered by the demand for steam coal and improved methods of transport, the family prospered immensely. But they were also **great benefactors**, assisting all kinds of movements which helped social, educational and moral reform causes. Richard Cory (the elder) became a leader of the United Methodist church in Cardiff, John was a Wesleyan and Richard (the younger) a Baptist, but all gave assistance to the temperance movement and the Salvation Army. For many years before his death, John Cory's benefactions amounted to nearly **£50,000 a year** and, in memory of his work for the people of Cardiff, his bronze statue, designed by Sir William Goscombe John, was erected in the city in 1905. It is in the Gorsedd Gardens and shows him with a Bible in his hand.



*John Cory statue in the Gorsedd Gardens*

It was **John Cory** (1828-1910) who had the **present house at Duffryn** [or Dyffryn], St Nicholas, built. There had been houses on the site since the Middle Ages and John acquired the estate from the Bruce-Pryce family in **1893** and promptly set about rebuilding the house. On his death, the house passed to his third son, **Reginald**, a distinguished amateur horticulturist, who was largely responsible, with the landscape architect **Thomas Mawson**, for creating the fine **Grade 1 listed gardens** that surround Dyffryn House today. The estate was leased to

Glamorgan County Council in June 1939 and stewardship passed to the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council as a result of local government reorganisation. A 50-year lease to the National Trust takes effect in January. Initially, the gardens will be re-opened to visitors while there is a longer-term plan to restore and open the house.

In 1907, John would have seen another of his children, **Sir Clifford**, created 1st Baronet of Llantarnum Abbey, where he had made his home. He died childless, so the baronetcy died with him. The house was requisitioned during World War II but then, more appropriately to its name, became the property of the Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy, in 1946. But Clifford is perhaps best remembered for the financial assistance that he gave to the 'Ton Pentre Temperance' brass band, which changed its name to **'The Cory Band'** in consequence.

Walk into section L on the higher path from the chapels and you cannot miss a prominent red granite obelisk on the right marking the vault of Richard (the younger) Cory family.



*Cory memorial obelisk*

As well as **Richard**, who died in 1914 aged 84, the vault also holds his wife, **Emily**, who was 87 when she died in 1919. In addition, the memorial records five children who died in infancy and a sole son, **Richard Vivian**, who reached adulthood but was interred in Bloemfontein, where he died from wounds received in action in 1900. It would appear that there is plenty of spare room in the vault.

## Searching for Ole

In the south-east corner of Section E-G is an area of Scandinavian graves, which includes 4 of Norwegian sailors marked with official memorial headstones. All four died on 2nd January 1941, the date of the Cardiff Blitz. But looking carefully at one of these, and doing a little arithmetic, shows that **Ole Pedersen** was **76 years old**. Could he really have been a serving sailor?



*Inscription, translated into English, reads:-*

Here rests Norwegian Seaman  
OLE PEDERSEN  
11-11-1864 2-1-1941  
For Norway 1939 - 1945

Checking convoy records indicated that there was indeed a Norwegian merchant ship, the *Braganza*, in port, having arrived from Halifax, Nova Scotia four days earlier. However, the *Braganza* appears to have survived the raid unscathed, as it was soon off to South America with another convoy.

Further searching of Norwegian naval records, gives his rank as civilian and includes an address of 217 Bute Street. At a meeting of the Welsh Norwegian Society, we find a lady who had been a young girl in 1941, but whose father had managed the Norwegian Seamen's Mission at the time. She recalled that the Mission had been hit during the raid and had a vague recollection of a janitor who had survived the initial blast, but had died when he went back into the burning building to try to rescue those still inside. It would be nice to think that this hero was Ole Pedersen.

But what we have is an incomplete jigsaw. Can any of our readers provide the missing pieces to finish the picture?

## Future Events

### Work Days:

Our first two Saturday workdays in 2013 are @ **10am on 23rd February and 23rd March**, meeting by the chapels [there are no workdays in December or January].

### Talk

At **7pm on Tuesday 12 March** in Room 4.45 in the Humanities Building, Colum Drive (behind Colum Road): **Cathays Cemetery - Home of Cardiff's Hidden History** [Like the Midsummer Walk, this talk will aim to present some of the results of more recent research by the Friends of Cathays Cemetery].

## Vacancy on Editorial Team

As mentioned in the last issue we still have a vacancy on our newsletter team. If you would like to join the team, or just to find out what would be involved, please contact Bill Mosley ([bill.mosley@virgin.net](mailto:bill.mosley@virgin.net)) or Gordon Hindess ([gordon.hindess@uwclub.net](mailto:gordon.hindess@uwclub.net)).

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