



Good News, Bad News

To most of us, the Landfill Tax is a charge on organisations that have waste to dispose of. But there is a good side to it, the Landfill Communities Fund. This allows money to be spent on non-profit projects within a 10-mile radius of a landfill site, as long as they aim to achieve appropriate objectives, which include providing or improving a general public amenity and the restoration of religious buildings or historic structures.

Which brings us to the **good news**: part of this Communities Fund has been allocated to further work on the Cemetery chapels. While the details are yet to be fully worked up, it is likely that attention will focus on one of the chapels and will aim at making the building weatherproof and usable in a practical, if basic, way. Alan Staniforth, Cathays Cemetery Manager is looking after the project. If you have met Alan, you will know that he is very supportive of the Friends and a tremendous ambassador for Bereavement Services, so the project is in good hands. It is appropriate to mention here that Alan has been very ill recently, so the further good news is that he is now back in harness and, we are pleased to say, looking very well.

The subject of our **bad news** is close by the chapels. While the roof of the Bier House had collapsed some time ago, the rest of the structure had look reasonably solid ... until the front wall fell over, without warning.



Collapsed Bier House Wall

The building has been fenced off for safety reasons. This perhaps emphasises the importance of the "stitch in time" that was the re-roofing of the chapels four years ago. While the Bier House can only be described as very poorly now, it still contains some Victorian urinals that are in surprisingly good condition.



Bier House Urinals

There is a cluster of Yucca trees in Section L of the Cemetery that has bloomed magnificently this year. The consensus is that this has been their best year ever. It is not clear if this is a response to this year's weather or a sign of their maturity.



Yuccas in bloom

Another blooming success has been the two specimens of Farge's Catalpas. One of the

rarest varieties of **bean tree**, they originate in China and are distinguished by pale pink blossom. The blossom, which has covered the trees this year, is, sadly, short-lived and the bean pods, up to about two feet long, replace them remarkably quickly. The easiest of these trees to locate is alongside the Fair Oak Road boundary about 50 yards from the gates by the library.



Bean tree blossom



Bean pods

These items remind us that Cathays Cemetery is a significant **arboretum** but, maybe, we should do more to enhance this role by providing more tree labels?

Sticking to the subject of **labelling**, the Friends are pursuing a programme to provide simple crosses with inscribed plaques for notable graves that are currently unmarked. First on the list are Maria Dolores de Pico, eldest daughter of the Spanish Consul and the first interment in the Cemetery, and Thomas Waring,

Surveyor to the Board of Health of Cardiff when the Cemetery was being built. You can learn more about these two individuals from our book, "Cathays Cemetery Cardiff on its 150th Anniversary". Crosses are also being provided at the graves of victims of the Senghenydd Disaster (see feature article below) which are currently unmarked. If you know of other significant unmarked graves, please let us know.

Three issues ago, we reported on the damaged timber edging by the "balloon girl's" grave, so we are pleased to be able to report that the threat from vehicles has been recognised and a **solid concrete kerb** has now been constructed. Hopefully, Louisa will now be able to sleep more peacefully!



New kerb by Balloon Girl's grave

Senghenydd Mining Disaster

At 8 am on **Tuesday 14 October 1913** a huge explosion shattered the peace of **Senghenydd**. The sound was heard as far away as Cardiff. Within hours it was clear that this was a major disaster: indeed, it holds the unenviable record of being the worst mining accident in UK history, with the **loss of 439 lives**. In this centenary year and with nine victims buried in Cathays Cemetery, it is appropriate that we remember the event.

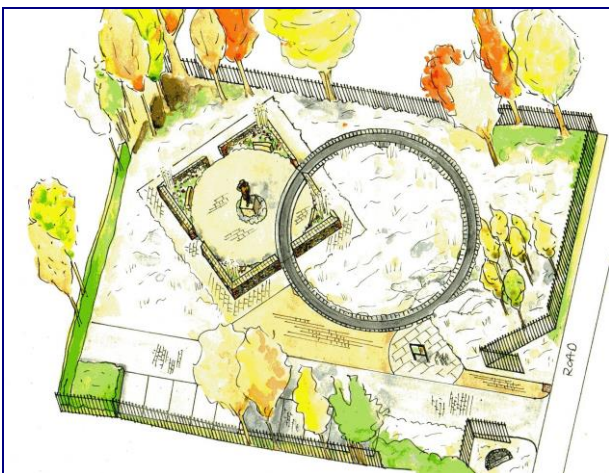
Until now, there have been **3 memorials** to the disaster. The biggest is outside the village's Nant-y-parc Primary School, which is built on the site of the old mine. But this is not a prominent location and can easily be missed. At St Cenydd Comprehensive School, in Caerphilly,

is a list of names of those who died from the explosion, and they have a truck of coal as a memorial. The third memorial is placed in a local pub.



Memorial by Nant-y-parc School

But a **new memorial garden** is being constructed next to the Nant-y-parc school site and is to be opened on 14th October 2013 for the centenary anniversary. This memorial will also serve as the national memorial for all UK mining tragedies.



Plan of proposed memorial garden

In the plan above, the rectangular walled garden commemorates the Senghenydd

Disaster, with a bronze statue of an injured miner being helped by a rescuer as the centrepiece and ceramic tiles listing all of the victims on the top of the wall. The large circle will be paved with stones inscribed with details of all UK colliery disasters, to form the national memorial.



Part of the memorial garden under construction

The above picture was taken less than 2 months before the anniversary. It is clear that the organising committee have their hands full in ensuring that the work is completed in time: the central plinth awaits its statue, the ceramic tiles and inscribed paving slabs await delivery and fixing and most of the peripheral groundworks are still to be carried out.

The explosion was probably started by firedamp (**methane**) being ignited by sparking from electric bell signalling gear or from accidental breakage of a Davy lamp. The initial explosion would have disturbed coal dust on the floor, raising a cloud that then also ignited. The shock wave ahead of the explosion would have raised yet more dust, so that the explosion was effectively self-fuelling. Miners not killed immediately by the fire and explosion would have died quickly from afterdamp, the noxious gases formed by combustion, including carbon monoxide. This combines preferentially with haemoglobin in the blood so that victims are suffocated by lack of oxygen, or anoxia.

On that morning nearly **950 men** were working below ground, their shift having started at 6:00 a.m. Production was undertaken from two shafts, the Lancaster and York. Physically, the two shafts were quite close together, with York

servicing the east side of the workings and Lancaster the west (obviously whoever determined the names had a sense of both history and geographic relativity). However, the underground roadways were linked so that the two shafts provided circulating ventilation: York was the upcast (extracting foul air) and Lancaster the downcast (fresh air drawn in).

The explosion started in the west side workings where, in another historical quirk, the active districts were named Ladysmith, Pretoria, Kimberley and Mafeking, to commemorate the Boer Wars. The blast whipped through the west side passages but, somewhat miraculously, diverted up the Lancaster shaft, dramatically reversing the normal air flow here, driving the cage out of the top of the shaft and destroying the housing at the top. But this saved over 500 miners in the east side, many of whom were unaware initially that anything was amiss and who only appreciated the magnitude of the tragedy after they had been evacuated via the York shaft. This remained operational despite the fact that fire raged a few hundred metres away, preventing rescue access into the stricken west side.

But this wasn't the first disaster at the Universal Mine - twelve years earlier, on Friday 24 May 1901, an explosion had killed about 80 men and there had been but one survivor pulled from the mine shaft. The death toll would have been higher had the explosion not occurred at the end of a shift when most of the miners had been brought to the surface.

The **managers and owners** of the Universal **were prosecuted** after the second tragedy. It was found that recommendations aimed at improving safety made following the 1901 disaster and new safety legislation laid down in the 1911 Coal Mines Act had not been fully implemented. Conditions at the pit had in fact worsened as the increase in production after 1901 had led to rising numbers of workers operating in confined spaces. Evidence showed that the Senghenydd pit was dangerously dry, dusty and gassy but, despite this, production there continued to expand. The manager was

fined £24 resulting in the headline "Miners' Lives at 1s 1½d" while, only after an appeal, the owners were fined £10 with costs of £5 5s. William Hyatt, a miner who survived the explosion, commented: "My father always said there was more fuss if a horse was killed underground than if a man was killed. Men came cheap - they had to buy horses."

Amazingly, Universal Colliery was producing coal again by the end of November 1913 and full production was achieved by 1916. This was, of course, encouraged by World War One and the unprecedented demand for Welsh steam coal, most of it being used to fuel the battleships of the Royal Navy. The owners, Lewis-Merthyr Consolidated Collieries (whose Chairman was Lord Merthyr) prospered. But the boom was not to last much longer - workmen and staff were given just one day's notice of closure in March 1928. However, the site was acquired by Powell Duffryn in order to give extra ventilation to their Windsor Colliery at Abertridwr and later to the Nantgarw Colliery, so the Senghenydd shaft was only finally filled in 1979.

At the beginning of 1891, Senghenydd did not exist as a village - the Aber Valley was almost completely rural. But, later that year, a row of one-storey corrugated iron huts was erected to house the shaft sinkers & railway construction workers. These temporary buildings, known as 'The Huts,' seem to have been still housing families until at least 1914. The lack of housing closer to the mine explains why a number of employees resided in Cardiff and they would have travelled by workmen's train each day.

The **Cardiff victims** were:-

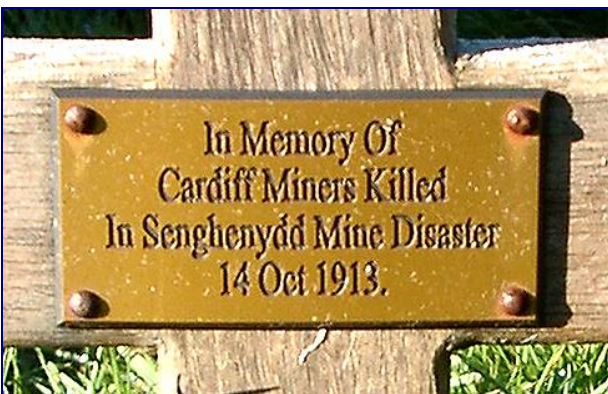
David (aged 17) & Thomas (18) Jenkins of 23 Dalton Street
 William Pain (34) of 63 Coburn Street
 William Robson of 4 Minnie Street
 Charles Peters (22) of 12 North Luton Place
 George Pingree (25) of 30 Coburn Street
 Frank Langmaid (17) of 44 Helen Street
 Thomas Collier (45) of 19 Sophia Street
 Samuel Manfield (16) of 45 Planet Street &
 William (21) Jenkins of 186 Cairn Street.

The two young Jenkins boys, who had only been

at the mine for a few months, share a grave in **Section EF**, William Pain and William Robson are in adjacent graves, while Charles Peters and George Pingree share a grave just a few plots away. Robson, a haulier in charge of a pit pony in the mine, was one of only two injured men brought out alive by rescuers on the day of the explosion, but he succumbed to his injuries on the way to King Edward VII Hospital (later to become Cardiff Royal Infirmary). Robson's is the only one of this cluster of graves with a headstone, but, at the request of the Friends, a wooden cross, with a plaque commemorating the disaster, has been placed between the Jenkins and Pain graves.



Headstone recording William Robson's death



Brass plaque on wooden cross recording the disaster

Frank Langmaid is in an unmarked grave in Section EF. John Collier and Samuel Manfield

are in the older part of the Cemetery, in **Sections R** and **S** respectively. Only the last of these is marked by a headstone. There is no record of William Jenkins in the burial records.



Headstone recording Samuel Manfield's death, with a reference to Senghenydd colliery

On **Tuesday 15th October**, to commemorate the Centenary of the Senghenydd Disaster, our normal Health Walk, will make a point of taking in all of the graves of the Cardiff victims who are buried in the Cemetery. You do not need to be a regular on the health walks to join us, simply meet at **10.30 am** just inside the gates adjacent to Cathays Library. [See also Future Events on page 10.]

John Batchelor - The Aftermath

As promised in our previous issue, we continue the John Batchelor story.

Most of you will be aware of the statue of John Batchelor which stands close to St David's Hall in the centre of Cardiff. It's the one usually adorned with a plastic traffic cone on it's head and not to be confused with the statue at the

end of Queen Street (that's of the founder of the NHS) whose head is a popular resting place for sea gulls. The inscription beneath the statue reads:-

*John Batchelor
B 1820 D 1883
The Friend of Freedom*

It was on 23rd July 1886, some three years after his demise, that friends erected a statue of him in the Hayes. The sculptor, commissioned for a fee of £1000, was **James Milo Griffiths**, of London, and it was cast in bronze at the workshop of James More at Thames Ditton. The statue stands on a 9'6" high pedestal of Cornish granite weighing 12 tons. At the time of erection, the inscription had yet to be engraved.

If the statue was received by some with "the utmost satisfaction", it roused others to fury. The day after the unveiling the following appeared in the correspondence columns of the Western Mail:-

Our esteemed correspondent Censor suggests the following epitaph for the Batchelor statue.

IN HONOUR
OF
JOHN BATCHELOR
A NATIVE OF NEWPORT
WHO EARLY IN LIFE LEFT HIS COUNTRY FOR
HIS COUNTRY'S GOOD
WHO ON HIS RETURN DEVOTED HIS LIFE AND
ENERGIES TO SETTING
CLASS AGAINST CLASS
A TRAITOR TO THE CROWN, A REVILER OF THE
ARISTOCRACY, A HATER OF THE CLERGY
A PANDERER TO THE MULTITUDE
WHO AS FIRST CHAIRMAN OF THE CARDIFF
SCHOOL BOARD
SQUANDERED FUNDS TO WHICH HE HAD NOT
CONTRIBUTED
WHO IS SINCERELY MOURNED BY UNPAID
CREDITORS
TO THE AMOUNT OF
FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS
WHO AT THE CLOSE OF A WASTED AND
MISSPENT LIFE
DIED A DEMOGOGUE AND A PAUPER
THIS MONUMENT
TO THE ETERNAL DISGRACE OF CARDIFF

IS ERECTED
BY SYMPATHETIC RADICALS

The writer was **Thomas H Ensor**, a successful solicitor, staunch conservative, and regular contributor to the paper under the name "**Censor**". In the same edition of the paper appeared the following letter, possibly written by the same hand.

Sir, if the authorities ... desired to frighten away the fish-hawkers and Salvation Army loafers who make the Hayes their happy hunting ground, they could not have taken more effective measures than they have in erecting the hideous effigy now to be seen there. 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever' but John Batchelor "the old election hand" in a pair of oilskin leggings several sizes too large for him is certainly no ornament to Cardiff. The paper that the effigy clutches cannot, of course, be other than the late Mr. Batchelor's "petition in bankruptcy". Then the moral that the statue teaches all bad boys is obvious, "Mind everybody's business but your own, and your caricature will be set up in the back streets as a laughing stock for future generations".

It was signed "An Admirer Of High Art".

The South Wales Daily News of 28th July 1886 describes how **sons of John Batchelor, Cyril and Llewellyn**, had for some days met the train arriving from Penarth about 11 a.m. on which the editor of the Western Mail, Mr Lascales Carr, usually travelled. Rumours had spread and a crowd had gathered by the time Carr arrived. The brothers had sought both Carr and Ensor: Carr was just the unlucky one. The paper continues the story as follows:-

Approaching him when he was halfway between the Station and the Great Western Hotel, Mr. Cyril Bachelor seized him by the shoulder and shouted "Your name is Carr, I believe?" Before the latter had time to reply Mr Cyril knocked off his hat and then excitedly exclaiming "You are the cowardly fellow who has libelled my Father", he drew forth a dog whip, having a short handle and a

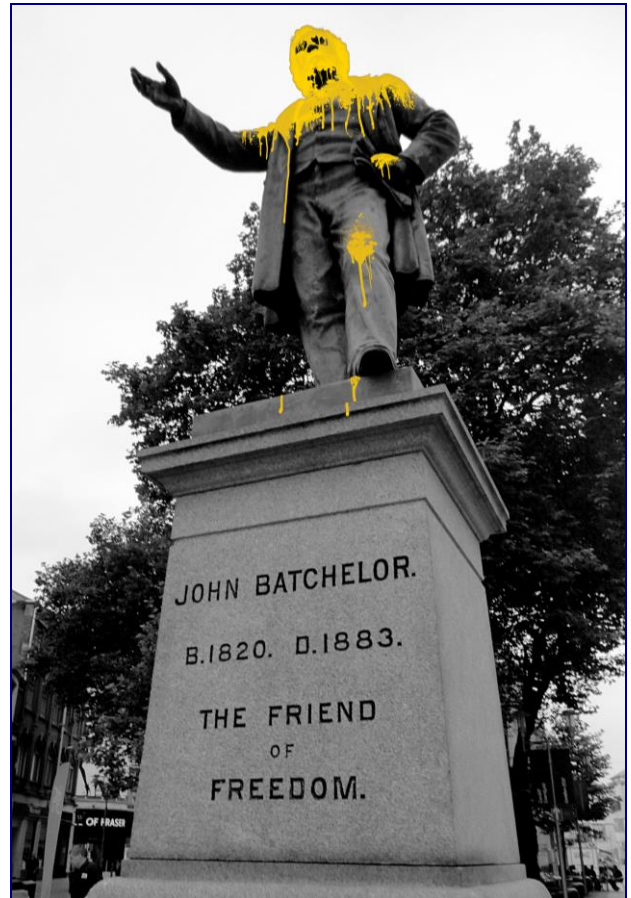
long thick thong. Raising his strong right arm he brought the lash down upon the shoulders of his cringing victim, who is said to have appealed for mercy, but whose cries went unheeded. Again and again the thong twined round the body of the alleged libeller, who in sheer madness and pain closed with his assailant and thus prevented his arm from having full play. After some hugging in which Mr Batchelor freely used his fists Carr was thrown to the ground, but so tightly did he clutch the garments of his antagonist that he also fell, the latter however being the uppermost.

A vast crowd had by this time collected. After the two men had regained their feet besmeared with mud from head to foot, the editor of the Tory newspaper rapidly pulled off his coat and offered to fight either of the Batchelors. Mr. Llewellyn, who up to this time had been a passive spectator to the affray, then stepped forward and offered to oblige the pugilistic Mr. Carr, but the spectators interfered and both gentlemen were held back. Mr. Carr was in a short time hurried away to his office, and taking a cab the Messrs. Batchelor were driven to their place of business at the docks.

Later the same day, Mr. Morgan Morgan, acting for Carr, took out a summons for assault and the case was heard before a deputy stipendiary magistrate the following week. Following lengthy argument, the magistrate concluded that the assault had been proved, but was of a somewhat trifling nature and because of great provocation. **The two Batchelor sons were fined a shilling (5p).**

After the erection of the statue the authorities had great difficulty in preventing it being vandalised. A special police guard was set up but this didn't stop a **William Thorn**, a few months later, throwing yellow paint and coal tar over it. Thorn was a respectable man but his political leanings were rather strong. He was tried and **found guilty**, but gained the sympathy of the judge who required only that Thorn enter into a recognisance to **pay £15 to a**

charity of his choice. He chose the Hamadryad Hospital Ship, the old man of war devoted to the care of seamen.



*The statue as it might have appeared after the vandalism
[Courtesy of Eric Fletcher; vandalism by Matt Soden]*

But there is a sequel to these affairs ... which we shall deal with in our next issue.

Businessman & Philanthropist

During the city of Cardiff's period of economic success at the turn of the twentieth century, when it was rightly acclaimed as the greatest coal port in the world, fortunes and reputations were made by many who were involved in the trade of black gold. One such individual was **Claude Percival Hailey**, who was energetic and influential, as well as extremely well liked and admired by his associates.

If you follow the grass path from the Monkey Puzzle tree near the main entrance into Section M, you will find his **modest headstone** on the right just before you reach the end of the Section. Strangely, his is the only name on the

headstone. We know that his 3 children all died away from Cardiff, one as far afield as Sicily. But where is his wife's final resting place?



Claude Hailey headstone

He was born on **20 September 1875** and grew up as part of the Congregational Church in Charles Street, attending Howard Gardens School. He began his career, at the age of 18, in the secretary's office of the old Taff Vale Railway Co and, in 1896, joined Sir Joseph Davies at the docks. This firm specialised as financial advisers and as railway rating and parliamentary experts. Later the firm published a series of publications which included the "*South Wales Coal Annual*", the standard authority on the coal trade of South Wales. Claude Hailey was at one time **director of about 30 companies**, including the Celtic, North's, and South Rhondda colliery companies. In 1914 he succeeded Sir Joseph Davies as secretary to the South Wales Coal Freighters' Association, and was one of the secretaries of the Cardiff Coal & Shipping Exchange Co.

He married **Gertrude Seward** and settled in Llandaff, residing in The Parade (some references suggested that it was Westbourne Crescent, which is contiguous with it). Today, we might regard this as Whitchurch but, nevertheless, it was an address entirely suited to his position and status. Despite his undoubted business acumen, he was always concerned foremost with the welfare & well-being of employees and not necessarily commercial performance and balance sheets.

As a **sportsman** he excelled, winning the South Wales Tennis Championship 3 times. Golf, cross-country running and billiards also appealed: clearly fresh air and recreation were

considered vitally important to this office bound administrator.

The **Congregational Church** dominated his private life, for as well as being a deacon, he was choirmaster & organist at Christ Church, Llandaff; the latter being built at the turn of the century on land he had donated. He was a man of obvious intellect, deep religious conviction and always with concern and compassion for his fellow man; in fact, stereotypical of the late Victorian/Edwardian gentleman of means.

The residents of Llandaff North will be forever indebted to this mild mannered, quietly spoken, individual for the donation of the land that became **Hailey Park**. It was created in 1926 by Cardiff City Council after Mr Hailey bought agricultural land and donated it to the residents of Llandaff North for recreational purposes. The benefaction would equate to over £1million today. Perhaps he also saw some personal advantage accruing from this gift - The Parade sits atop the escarpment above Llandaff North Station, enjoying views across the Taff Valley ... over Hailey Park!

Claude died at his home, Wycliffe, The Parade/Westbourne Crescent, Whitchurch, on **20th March 1938**, aged 63.

Recent Events

Walks

12th June Cardiff Civic Society Walk: Like the Heritage Walk in April this was another event that was unfortunately spoilt by rain. Nevertheless, about a dozen members of the Civic Society managed to brave the weather, and were accompanied by three of the Friends. The walk was led by Bereavement Services and followed the Heritage Walk route. As usual **Phil Amphlett** provided the gathered company with his excellent commentary. Those members who attended felt other members of the Civic Society, who may have been deterred on this occasion by the weather, could be interested in

the walk on a future date.

On **11th June**, the Friends were delighted to welcome Dr Peter Sturgess, a professional ecologist, who led an evening **Biodiversity Walk** around the cemetery. The weather was kind and more than 35 people attended.

Times have changed a lot since those 'nature walks' I remember being taken on in junior school. All I remember was being taught was how to recognise a few tree leaves and throwing 'sticky-buds'. But then there wasn't much nature in my part of the industrial West Riding.

Today they call it 'Biodiversity', and it covers much more than just identifying species. Areas such as the cemetery are considered as an entity with the variety of species, the relationships between them, the impact of humans and other factors being brought together to build a complete picture of the site. Cathays is fortunate to have a site where little has changed over 150 years, allowing animal and plant life to flourish.

Peter did know his species though. Every bit of green from the smallest moss to the largest tree had a name, as did every insect and bird, whether its common English name or instantly forgettable Latin one. And I never knew there were so many sorts of grass!



Peter Sturgess with his large audience in Section L

Everything was placed in its context. He recognised that the cemetery was once farmland by the types of grasses he found, the bees we saw were not the normal 'British' ones but rather foreign incomers which may be a sign of climate change, and he commented on the stand of the invasive Japanese Knotweed on the railway embankment that is threatening the cemetery.

Throughout the walk, Peter maintained his enthusiasm for his subject, answering countless questions from the participants and only occasionally admitting to a lack of knowledge (eg slugs & snails!).

Even the final short detour, as light was fading, to look at the area around what was the great Holm Oak that fell down last winter (Newsletter 14) lasted getting on for half an hour as a whole new habitat was explored.

I'm sure we'll have a return visit.

John Farnhill

Heritage Walk on 14th July "One Sunny Day"

Starting at the Chapels with the wild-flower display in front of the Chapels in full bloom, we were once again treated to an excellent Guided Tour of the "Old" Cemetery by Phil Amphlett of the Bereavement Services. This time in the blistering heat of our high summer, 42 people clad in shorts and t-shirts bore the brunt of the soaring temperatures to hear the tales behind the weathered monuments in the earliest sections of the Cemetery. Surrounded by bees and butterflies we all made the most of a perfect day.



Walkers by the Irish Famine memorial

Workdays:

Turn out on **Saturday 29th June** was relatively low, reflecting both conflicting attractions on the day and, particularly, the end of the university year - so our fit and enthusiastic students were missed. This underlines the principle of not holding workdays in the summer. But some useful tidying-up was done all the same.

Future Events

Talks

On **Tuesday 10th September**, **Tony Whyman** from Cardiff Metropolitan University will give a **Lecture** on "**Redundant chapels & churches - the dilemma for re-use**". Tony has used the chapels at Cathays Cemetery as a project for his students and has a wealth of knowledge about what has been achieved elsewhere. The lecture will take place at **7 pm** in Room 4.44 in Cardiff University's **John Percival Building** [formerly the Humanities Building] in Column Drive (behind Column Road). This is one of our **Open Doors** events.

This year's **Annual Public Lecture** [in conjunction with Cardiff University's School of History, Archaeology & Religion] will be held on **Tuesday 19th November** at **7 pm** when **Rosie James** will talk about "**The Victorian Parks - an enduring legacy**". Many of you will remember that Rosie gave our Open Doors lecture last year and that she is an excellent speaker, with a thorough knowledge of her subject. This meeting will be held in **Room 2.01** of the **John Percival Building** in Column Drive again.

On **Sunday 22 September** (another **Open Doors** event), there will be another opportunity to have a look in one of the **chapels** between **11 am** and **2.30 pm**. In addition, the **Cemetery Office** in the Lodge will be open for enquiries about the location of family graves, while the Friends will be on hand to guide you to individual plots. Any members of the Friends who can come along for part of the day to help show visitors to those plots will be most welcome.

On **the same day** there will be a **Guided Walk** in the "**New**" **Cemetery** (north of Eastern Avenue) at **2 pm** led by the Friends. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about famous residents and events from Cardiff's past. It will include the World War 1 memorial and war graves section which will not be visited on 27th October for the Insignia Walk mentioned below. The walk starts at the **main gates in Allensbank Road** and **parking** is available on the main driveway inside.

Walks

Just a reminder - the **Health Walk** takes place **every Tuesday morning**, starting just inside the gates adjacent to Cathays Library at **10:30**. It is a sociable and friendly stroll, with occasional diversions to explore or talk about significant memorials or features. The walk takes around an hour, but the talk continues in a local cafe, if you have the time and inclination. We look forward to your company.

The **Insignia Walk** will be led by Bereavement Services at **2 pm** on **Sunday 27th October**, meeting by the chapels, as usual. While this walk will look at a wide range of military insignia to be found on headstones, it will also relate stories of some of the servicemen buried in the graves and their regiments.

Work Days:

Vegetation has thrived this year, so there is plenty of work awaiting you during our workdays which will be held on the last **Saturday** of each month - **28th September, 26th October & 30th November**. Meet by the chapels at **10 am** and help us make a difference for a couple of hours. Tools and friendly banter are provided.

Odd Epitaphs

Mary Chowder (20th century)

*Here lies the body of Mary Chowder,
She burst while drinking a Seidlitz Powder;
She couldn't wait till it effervesced,
So now she's gone to eternal rest.*

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.

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 & lots of other information on our website at
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