

Nature Notes

The Cemetery's response to the mild winter (did we have a winter at all?) has been to display its Spring clothes up to a month earlier than last year. For example, the foxglove tree blossom which usually appears in mid May, came out before the end of April, while the first bluebell was spotted at the end of March.



The first bluebell, Section GR

The Spring flower displays and extent get better and better each year. You can now find greater numbers of Lady's Smock or Cuckoo Flower (scientific name: *Cardamine pratensis*).



This delicate signature flower of the season seems to appear from nowhere overnight ... and disappears almost as quickly!

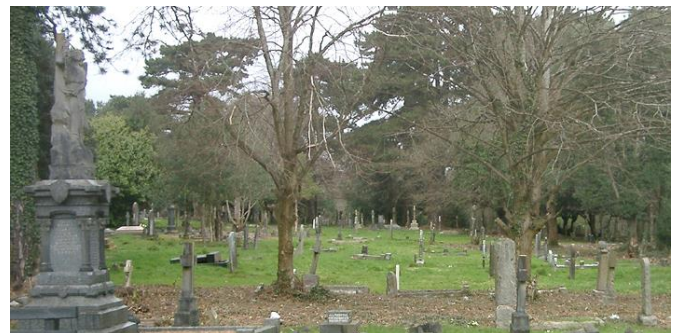
Spring Miscellany

Work continues on the chapels, although the glazing is taking longer than expected, with templates having to be made for every pane. However, the improvement in light levels is already a big advance - it is now possible to appreciate the fine stone carving on the corbels supporting the roof and the window tracery. Ramps for disabled access have been provided in the porte cocheres, and work on the external doors is underway.



Corbel, Anglican Chapel, and new access ramp

We reported in our last issue that Bereavement Services were now implementing a Site Conservation Plan and evidence of this is in vistas that have been opened up. This work complements that undertaken by the Friends on their workdays. And there is no doubt that the increasing spread of wild flowers mentioned previously is one of the benefits resulting from the clearance work that has been done.



Newly opened vista in Section J

Friends TOPICAL

If you take the upper path into Section L from the chapels, you will soon find, on the left, a cross with a bronze plaque, marking the grave of Thomas Waring, the builder of the chapels, cemetery lodge and main entrance. We are grateful to Bereavement Services for providing these markers at significant graves that would otherwise remain unidentified.



Cross on Thomas Waring's grave

The Cemetery continues to attract TV companies. The latest location work was for the children's programme, *Wizards vs Aliens*.

As part of their contribution to the centenary of World War 1, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is placing signs at the entrances of all burial grounds where there are graves marked by their headstones. You can see the signs at Cathays (in Welsh and English) at all the vehicular access gates in normal use, that is at two gates in Fair oak Road and two in Allensbank Road.



If you have visited the Cemetery recently, you may have noticed that a new memorial has appeared, to the left, just inside the main Fair oak Road entrance. This joins the small select group of memorials that are not dedicated to named individuals (can you name the others?)



The inscription on this memorial reads:

In memory of all those who bequeathed themselves to medical science at Cardiff University.

Their kindness will live on in our hearts.

Extraordinary General Meeting

This was held on 6th May, in the John Percival Building of Cardiff University, immediately before the talk on Solomon Andrews. The only business before the meeting was the election of a new chairman and we are pleased to report that Paul Nicholson was unanimously elected for the remainder of the current term.

**Obituary - William Titus Mosley
(1940-2014)**

Bill Mosley, whose sudden and sad death on 14th March was reported in our last newsletter, was known to his family as Tim. The intention had been that he be called Titus, but at the last minute his father added the name William at the Registry Office. He was the studious one in his family, with his head always in a book, even at meal times! From an early age he exhibited an attention to detail. He played the cello and enjoyed classical music.

After reading law at University, Bill followed a career in the Civil Service as a tax inspector, a job which suited his precise and meticulous nature. He took early retirement in 1995, but put his time to good use. This included a 2 year part-time administration role for a back pain research study for the NHS and working for a charity. It was during this period that he honed his organisational skills and got involved in publishing - experience that was to prove such an asset to the Friends later.

He married Gill, a Cardiff girl who had lived on Allensbank Road as a child, in 1967. They eventually settled in Harrow where they raised a son, David, and three daughters, Sarah, Helen and Lydia. He was happy there and became involved with many community concerns. In 2005, they moved to Cardiff, where he became an active member of Highfields Church, the local Civil Service Retirement Fellowship and other community groups.

Bill's longstanding love of classical music meant that he was a regular visitor to the Proms, and he enjoyed science fiction and photography. While they didn't necessarily share his musical preference, his children did benefit from his love of science fiction, whether it be in print or on the large or small screen. Bill's attention to detail came to the fore in photography, leading to his family describing him as the "slowest photographer known." He was an accomplished handyman and devoted to his family.

Travel also featured highly in his life. He went

to Czechoslovakia, when it was still behind the Iron Curtain, with the Slavic Gospel Association. Other trips took him to Russia, Hungary and to China, from where he travelled on round the world to pay his sister, in Seattle, a surprise visit.

It was Gill who introduced him to the Cemetery and was the initiator of joining the Friends in 2008. Sadly, Gill died unexpectedly later the same year, but Bill took on her membership and immediately threw himself into helping with the production of our 150th anniversary book. It was not long before he was elected to the committee and he was on the newsletter editorial team from its inception. In January this year, he began his third term as Chair of the Friends.

His funeral service on April 2nd would have marked his 74th birthday and was well attended by both family and friends. The family provided a photographic tribute to Bill accompanied by Mendelssohn's Opus 26 'Fingal's Cave', his favourite piece of music. Bill is survived by his four children and three grandchildren, by whom he will be sorely missed.

Bill's wish was to be laid to rest with Gill, appropriately in a family grave in Section O of Cathays Cemetery. If you are passing, why not stop to say "Hello". He would appreciate it.



Bill, getting stuck in during a workday

Archibald Hood – Scottish Beginnings

In our last issue, we looked at Archibald Hood's family: we now turn to the man himself.

Archibald Hood was born in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, on the 4th June 1823, the eldest son of Robert Hood, an overman at a Kilmarnock colliery. His mother died when he was a child and, within the limited means of his father, he had only a basic education. He began work in the same colliery and at the age of 13 was in charge of a surface engine and working at least 12 hours a day.

His limited spare time was spent extending his knowledge, particularly in mining and geological matters. When he was twenty, his father was appointed manager of a colliery near Glasgow. The proximity of higher education facilities here allowed Archibald to go to evening classes, at which he evidently excelled. It was only two years later that, as a qualified mining engineer, he was appointed Chief Mineral Agent and Engineer to Messrs Dunlop & Wilson, Ironmasters, and, in this capacity, he masterminded the development of a large area in South Ayrshire for coal and ironstone mining. However, he saw that profit lay not only in winning the basic minerals, but also in the associated service industries. This was to lead to him developing interests in brick and tile works and railways.

After a few years, he became a partner in Bankhead Colliery near Glasgow, but disposed of this interest after acquiring a substantial colliery connection in Midlothian. It was in 1856 that Hood became involved in the Lothian Coalfield by taking a lease on Whitehill Colliery at Rosewell. Mining had taken place in the area for at least a century, the pits being quite shallow, with ladder access and simple hoisting gear to remove the coal, and to provide worker access. Hood brought more professional and dynamic mining management to Whitehill and to smaller adjoining collieries at Skelty Muir, Gorton, Eldin, Carrington and Polton, which he

later acquired. In 1866, Hood described Whitehill as being about 50 or 60 fathoms (3/400 feet) deep and ventilated by furnace. In 1878 a new Whitehill Mine winding shaft was sunk and this remained in operation throughout the early 20th Century.

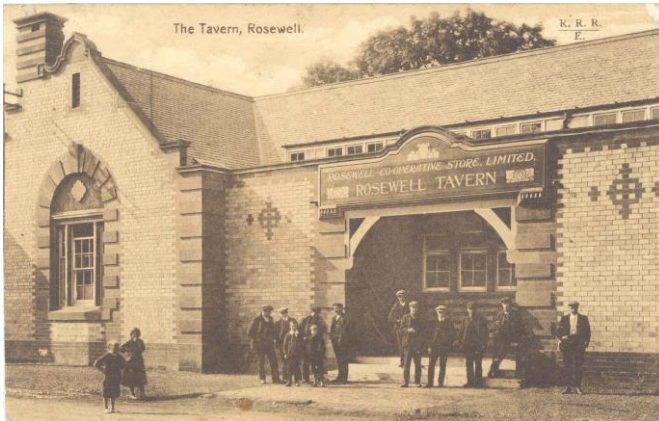
One of the major problems at Rosewell was the transportation of coal and other products to surrounding markets, at the time being carried by horse and cart over roads of poor quality. Appreciating that movement of his products by rail was vital, he applied himself to the furtherance of the Polton and Penicuik railways, which were not only beneficial to his own interests, but also to the local paper mills. Following this the family maintained a connection with the paper mills until at least the 1940s.

It was around this time that Hood realised that an amalgamation with the adjacent collieries owned by Lord Lothian would be of mutual benefit. But it was not until 1890 that Hood finally attained his goal to amalgamate his Whitehill interests with those of the Marquess of Lothian at Newbattle to form the Lothian Coal Company Ltd. with a share capital of £500,000. The main shareholders were the Marquess and Hood: they became Chairman and Managing Director respectively. When the Marquess died in 1900, Archibald became Chairman. The new company leased 22 square miles of coalfield, owned 600 wagons and locomotives, 700 cottages, and Whitehill Brick and Tile Works.

The merger created one of the most successful mining concerns in the country and facilitated the development of a new deep mine, the Lady Victoria Colliery, named after the Marquess's wife. The colliery, one of the deepest in the country and using the most modern equipment then available, became the jewel of the company's crown for 60 years. With a work force of 1200 men it became the main employer for the village of Newtongrange. The colliery lasted for 91 years (in the later period being under the control of the National Coal Board)

and over its life produced nearly 40 million tons of coal, a Scottish record.

Before we leave Scotland, we should point out that, if there is a visible Hood legacy today, it is in the area of the Midlothian collieries and mining villages, which are about 10 miles to the south-east of the centre of Edinburgh, just outside the ring road (A720) and adjacent to the A7.



Rosewell Tavern (archive postcard)

Rosedale House, where most of Hood's family were born, is a listed building and remains as a private house on the southern outskirts of the village of Rosewell, where you can also find Rosewell Tavern, the original cooperative building, which Hood established. At Bonnyrigg, there is an estate in which all streets use the name Sherwood, the name of Hood's Cardiff mansion. Midfield House, Lasswade, which was the home of James Archibald, is a listed Georgian Manor. It remains an impressive building, even though it has been converted into maisonettes: if you wanted to live there, £200,000 would get you a modest 2-bedroom one.



Midfield House (archive image)

The Whitehill Colliery site has been reclaimed as a woodland park, but the Lady Victoria Colliery, which has been called the first super pit, is now the Scottish Mining Museum. It is not quite the same as Big Pit as only the above ground buildings are used, the underground workings having been sealed off when the pit closed. Next door, the Victorian mining village of Newtongrange is well preserved. The single storey terraced houses, built of bricks produced by Hood's brickworks, form a geometric pattern of streets, called simply First Avenue to Tenth Avenue, in a compact L-shape, enclosing the spacious Welfare Park. This estate does not have the run-down look of much of the old housing stock in Welsh mining communities - a testament to the quality of the original construction and the benevolence of the employer who provided them.

This already seems like an impressive achievement in the life of one man, but we have not touched on the Welsh part of the story ... which we shall pick up in our next edition.

Then There Were Two!

It had been thought that the interment of a solitary leg, that of Samuel Chivers, was quite unusual. But, thanks to research by Paul Jones at the Glamorgan Archives, we now find that Cathays Cemetery is exceptional in having two (at least?) buried legs. The Burial Register for



1883, on 23rd January, records the interment of "Leg of Female" for Miss Skyrme of Richmond Terrace, Park Place (the road now called Museum Place).

Friends FEATURES

Although the Plot Number in Section K was given, locating this proved trickier than usual, due to anomalies on the record maps. Thanks to Alan Staniforth, the problem was resolved and the grave pin-pointed ... in what may well appear to be part of Section L! From the chapels, head north around the outside of the "heart" and take the first path to the right: as you near the path crossing, look up to the right. Thanks to Bereavement Services, the grave is now marked by a wooden cross with a bronze plaque.

It wasn't long before John Farnhill found a newspaper article which explained how Miss Skyrme became separated from her leg. The headlines read

*Terrible Accident in the Gelly (sic) Pit
Melancholy Termination of a Pleasure Trip
Lady Visitors Crushed by a Tram
Shocking Injuries to Miss Skyrme and Miss
Cassy John*

It appears that eight young ladies had prevailed upon the colliery manager for some time to take them underground and he eventually acceded to their request. As well as the manager, the party included four other men, who were there to look after the ladies and, in some cases, satisfy their own curiosity. They descended about 700 - 800 feet down the shaft to the main level and had walked about 300 yards along this, when a tremendous roar was followed by a fully loaded tram crashing through a ventilation control door about 15 yards ahead of them.

All members of the group tried to get out of the way and ended up in the coal dust and debris on the floor. All were badly shaken and bruised, but Miss Skyrme and another lady were more severely injured. It seems that some others in the party fainted when they saw the nature of the injuries. The two ladies were quickly evacuated by tram and were soon being attended by doctors on the surface. On hearing the advice that amputation was necessary, Miss Skyrme's father, the postmaster at Pentre, sought a second opinion from his own family

doctor, who arrived from Cardiff the following day. However, he concurred with the original advice and the local doctors carried out the operation, under chloroform, straight away. Within days, the leg was buried in Cathays Cemetery.

As yet, we do not know what happened to Miss Skyrme afterwards, but she doesn't show up again in later Bereavement Services records - at least, not as Miss Skyrme. It is perhaps interesting to reflect that the burial of limbs in this country today is unlikely, not that there is any shortage of amputated limbs, but because they are usually classified as medical waste and incinerated.

Dead Centres of Iceland

In the summer of 2013, I was lucky enough to go on an Icelandic Adventure, as the tour brochure described it. A busy schedule took us through a string of "wow" locations and didn't leave a lot of spare time. But I did manage to visit a cemetery or two.

Most of these cemeteries were quite small and attached to churches. Two things were immediately apparent. Firstly they were well cared for and litter free, but you could say this of Iceland generally. The second point was perhaps a little more surprising: there seemed to be much in common with British cemeteries with regard to the use of symbolism ... but at least one notable difference.



Graveyard at Hofn

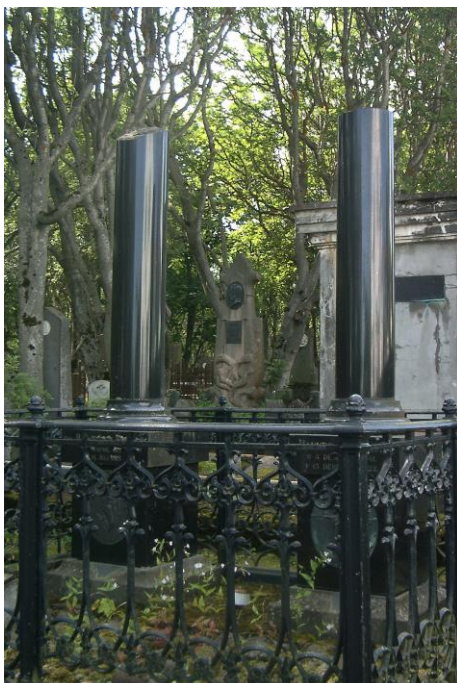
For a country so dependent upon the sea, it is not surprising that there are many graves of

seamen and, just as in Cathays, they can be identified from the anchors on them. The link to the sea is obvious, but it can also symbolise hope in death, by reference to Hebrews 6.19: *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.* Clasped hands were also in evidence, having various interpretations such as matrimony, a heavenly welcome or earthly farewell.



Sailor's memorial and clasped hands

Iceland is blessed with a wealth of durable volcanic rocks ideal for memorials, none more so than basalt that provided the polished black columns in the picture below.



Basalt columns broken off

They also show a familiar symbology, broken off to signify a life cut short.

But there was one gravestone adornment that I hadn't seen in the UK - a bird sitting on the top, looking down at the inscription below. This can be interpreted as a symbol of peace or messenger from God.



Hólavallagarður Cemetery in Reykjavík, at three hectares in area, is about one tenth the size of Cathays Cemetery - but it is older by 21 years, having been consecrated in 1838. In 1932 all plots had been allocated so, much like Cathays, burials may now take place only in reserved plots. However, subject to agreement, cremation urns may also be interred in otherwise "full" graves.

Traditionally, Icelanders believed that the first person buried in a new cemetery would become its "guardian." The body would not rot, but serve to watch over those arriving later. At Hólavallagarður, the guardian is Guðrún Oddsdóttir, the wife of a magistrate. Perhaps it would be nice to think of Maria Dolores de Pico as the guardian of Cathays? I didn't find the guardian's grave, but I did see one dating back to 1846: it had been repaired, but the inscription was still clearly legible. And it was clear that previous visitors had recognised it as special and had left some present day tokens of their admiration on it!

For a long time, no trees were planted in the cemetery but this changed between the World Wars. It now has the appearance of a woodland, the main species being birch, rowan, spruce,

Friends EVENTS



1846 grave stone (and today's tokens!)

larch and willow so, much like Cathays, you can enjoy the vegetation and birdwatching. Another similarity is that the cemetery has been described as the "largest and oldest museum in Reykjavík."

Gordon Hindess

Recent Events

Talks

One of the most stressful times when arranging a public talk is the half an hour before the scheduled start. You've done the publicity and you've contacted the membership ... but will anyone turn up? We needn't have worried when **Dr David Jenkins** spoke to us on **25th March** about the "Last Port of Call - Shipowners' graves in Cathays Cemetery". Some 50 people were in attendance at what was a most informative and entertaining talk. If we'd been in our usual venue, it would have been standing room only!

Dr Jenkins chose to speak about ten of the shipowners that we had identified as being residents of Cathays, detailing their origins, how they got into shipping and other aspects of their lives, whether it be horseracing (William Tatem), Methodism (Thomas Morel), or philanthropy (William Reardon Smith).

One of the main points brought out by the talk was that the vast majority of shipowners were not Cardiffians, and even if they were born here they had strong family roots elsewhere. Only a small number were even Welsh. Cardiff's strong link with the Channel Islands was highlighted (Morel, Hacquoil, Marquand) where potato merchants, wanting to export their produce first chartered and then bought ships. Shipowners of west country origin also figured prominently (Tatem, Seager, Reardon-Smith), and the north-east of England with its coal trade also featured (Stallybrass, Turnbull).

Dr Jenkins gave special consideration to William Reardon Smith who he considers to be Cardiff's greatest shipowner. He was born in north Devon in 1856 and after a sea-faring career settled in Cardiff. Following a short and ultimately bitter partnership with William Seager, he founded his own shipping line in 1905 and carried cargoes of all types. In the 1920's he pioneered the introduction of diesel marine engines. He is probably best remembered though for his good works and philanthropy. He established numerous scholarships, endowed the chair of geography at Exeter University, and donated generously to the National Museum of Wales. He died in 1935, but his company continued for a further 50 years.

Judging by the number of questions afterwards (and the rush to ask him more after the formal proceedings) Dr Jenkins' talk was well received. Just a pity that even more didn't turn up to hear him!

The talk by **Alan Thorne** on "**Solomon Andrews**", on **6th May**, was also well attended, with an audience of 46 including several members of the Andrews family.

The Andrews family moved to the Carmarthen area from Trowbridge, part of an influx of bakers and confectioners to South Wales from that area, around the middle of the 19th century. While the rest of his family returned to Wiltshire, Solomon (or Solly), a 16 year old lad, stayed behind, lodging in Tredegar Street with some other confectioners from Wiltshire.

He earned his keep by hawking sweets around Cardiff and the surrounding area, apparently walking as far as Cowbridge in pursuit of customers.

He soon had a stall in the old market and had branched out into selling embrocation and oil for horses (although it was rumoured that these were one and the same!). By the age of 20 he owned 8 horse-drawn vehicles. He acquired lucrative mews just outside the west and east gates of the town which were tolled. In 1870, when he was still only 25, he took over a Cardiff-Penarth horse-bus route and soon saw off his two competitors.

He continued to expand his horse-bus business, both in Wales and further afield, and started a coach building business, supplying the rest of the UK and places as far away as Australia. He added coffee houses to his baking and confectionery businesses and became a major developer of both commercial and residential property, including a brickworks and two streets of workers houses at Llandaff North. His development work was not confined to the local area and he is largely responsible for the development of Pwllheli as a holiday resort. By around 1900, he had over 2000 horse-buses operating in London, mainly running between the main railway terminals. However, he had the foresight to recognise the impact of the expanding underground network and sold out profitably in 1908, shortly before he died. Among his many interests were a golf course and quarry near Pwllheli, a number of collieries in the Valleys, and woollen mills and warehouses around Dolgellau.

For a man with little education and low literacy, at least in his early life, Solomon became arguably Wales' greatest self-made entrepreneur. He is, of course, buried in Cathays Cemetery (look for the large headstone in Section Q, not far from Samuel Chivers leg). His funeral is reputed to have been the largest held in Cardiff, possibly because his will provided that all employees attending would qualify for a new coat or suit.

We are very grateful to Alan for sharing the fruits of his research into this fascinating character, with an entertaining lecture.

Guided Walks

On **Sunday 6th April**, **Phil Amphlett** of Bereavement Services led a **Heritage Walk**. A mixture of drizzle and bright skies, so typical these days of our Spring weather, greeted a group of thirty curious people to complete a diverse introduction to the fascinating world of the Victorians and beyond. Phil illustrated and brought to life the lives of bishops, boxers and balloon-girl along with other assorted famous or infamous characters from the story of Cardiff's past.

On **Monday 19th May**, a small group of staff from the **University Hospital of Wales** enjoyed a short walk, led by **Ivor Lippett** and **Gordon Hindess**. The event was blessed with warm sunny weather and formed part of the staff's contribution to Learning at Work Day. To fit in with the constraints of the staff lunch break, the walk started from the Catholic gate in Allensbank Road and concentrated on a selection of notable graves and features in the oldest part of the Cemetery. Perhaps surprisingly, most of those attending had not visited the Cemetery before, but were pleasantly surprised by the heritage and natural history on their doorstep.

Our Regular Events

Weekly Health Walks

These walks continue to be well-supported, with numbers occasionally topping twenty. We are also pleased to welcome children during school holidays. Participants on these walks, as well as enjoying the ever changing face of the Cemetery are often the first to hear of the latest discoveries about the Cemetery and its residents. A good example of this is the story of Miss Skyrme's leg, which is recounted on page 5 but was first told at the graveside during the health walk on 20th May.

Friends EVENTS

For the second year, we took part in the Cardiff Walking Festival, so the walk on Tuesday 6th May was of slightly longer duration, although the distance walked was the same as usual. There was, however, more commentary about the Cemetery. As in 2013, it was a joint event with Cathays Library, where we were grateful to receive tea or coffee and biscuits.

Everyone is welcome on these sociable walks: just turn up at 10.30 am on a Tuesday morning, meeting just inside the gates adjacent to Cathays Library. We walk every week, regardless of the weather, but you can decide whether to come every week, or just occasionally. After the walk, we adjourn to a cosy local café for a chat over tea or coffee.

Monthly Workdays

Since our last newsletter, we have had three successful Workdays, maintaining the gains made previously in Section L, in the face of nature's continued efforts to make a come back.

Why not forget about cutting the lawn at home and, instead, come and **meet us by the chapels at 10 am** for a couple of hours of gentle exercise in the fresh air, with good company. You'll even get a refreshment break! The next Workdays will be held on the **last Saturday of the month, in June and September**. Tools and gloves are provided.

Future Events

Talk

On **Tuesday 9th September at 7 pm**, **Geoff Brookes** will give an illustrated talk for our Open Doors programme entitled '**Stories in Stone**', a look at some of the more interesting stories behind Welsh gravestones. Swansea based Geoff has written a number of books, including "Stories in Welsh Stone - The Secrets beneath 15 Welsh Graves", and has researched other gravestones which reveal interesting tales. His wealth of knowledge and pictures promise an enthralling talk. The venue for this

talk will be Room 4.44, John Percival Building, Cardiff University, in Colum Drive (behind Colum Road).

Guided Walks

On **Tuesday 24th June at 7 pm**, there will be a **Midsummer Guided Walk**, led by the Friends. Take advantage of the long evening to find out more about the Cemetery and history of Cardiff. The walk will start from just inside the **main entrance in Fair oak Road**.

On **Sunday 13th July at 2 pm**, there will be another opportunity to catch the **Heritage Walk**, again led by Phil Amphlett of Bereavement Services. The walk will start from just inside the **main entrance in Fair oak Road**.

On **Sunday 21st September at 2.30 pm to 4 pm**, as part of our Open Doors programme, the Friends will lead a **guided walk in the "New" Cemetery** (i.e. north of Eastern Avenue), starting from just inside the **vehicular entrance in Allensbank Road**. For those who have only been on walks in the old Cemetery, the amount of interest in this part may come as a surprise.

Open Doors

On **Sunday 21st September from 11 am to 2 pm**, the main event of our **Open Doors** programme will be the **opening of the chapels**, just inside the Fair oak Road entrance. This will be an opportunity to view the work which has been done this year to make these listed buildings habitable again. (Note that the guided walk noted above conveniently follows on from this event.)

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