

Nature Notes

As is often the case, the most obvious sign of Autumn, changing leaf colour, is not a uniform transition, but one which exhibits itself in different places at different times. Sometimes, on individual trees, the best autumn colours are short lived so, if you are not a regular visitor, you could easily have missed the cherry tree shown below.



There are plenty of berries on the holly this year and at least one confident robin has welcomed them. It can often be seen where the Tuesday walkers rendezvous and may pose for a very seasonal picture.



In contrast, you would have been hard put to find acorns on the oaks in the Cemetery. To start with, few acorns formed - a consequence of unfavourable weather during the critical pollination period in the Spring. But virtually all acorns that did form were invaded by knopper gall wasps. Knopper galls develop as a chemically induced distortion of growing acorns and first appear as a mass of green to yellowish-green, ridged and, at first, sticky plant tissue on the bud of the oak. This breaks out as the gall between the cup and the acorn and can look quite attractive. If only a few grubs are developing within, then it may appear only as a group of bland folds. Where several grubs are competing for space the shape may become much more contorted. The abnormal acorns develop during summer and may be wholly replaced by the gall growth. In early autumn, the knoppers become woody and brown and fall from the tree. The adult sexual female gall wasp emerges through a vent in the top of the gall in spring.



Knopper in final stage of development

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It sometimes appears that there are more grey squirrels in the Cemetery during the autumn. But it is more likely that they are just busy scavenging in readiness for the winter, at a time when one of their favourite foods, pine seeds, is abundant.



In our last issue, we noted concern about the turfing of the roundabout at the main entrance. With plenty of rain and regular mowing, it is now looking much better and presenting an improved first impression, complementing the refurbished chapels.

Autumn Miscellany

Following on from the previous paragraph, we are pleased to report that the other legacy work from McDonalds Gives Back has been completed and the overall benefit of that intense day of activity can now be appreciated.

The Friends continue to make new discoveries about the Cemetery. One of the more notable recent ones was the burial place of James Howell, the founder of one of Cardiff's landmark shops. More or less in the middle of the half of Section M closest to Fair Oak Road, it was almost completely hidden by bushes. Thanks to prompt action by Bereavement Services, it has been restored to the light. The images below show it as discovered and as it is now. The top of the obelisk can be seen on the ground beside it.



Before / After

On 2nd December, two notable events were merged to recognise the award of a Green Flag for another year, by formally raising the flag, and to commemorate National Tree Week, with the planting of five trees. 22 children from Allensbank School helped enthusiastically with both events, joined by Councillor Bob Derbyshire (cabinet member for Environment), our chairman Paul Nicholson, five staff from Bereavement Services and 24 of the Tuesday health walkers.



On a more sobering note, you do not have to look far to be reminded that memorials do not last for ever. The two images below show two views of the headstone of the Tremlett family in Section T. While most of the inscription is still legible, the stone is in an advanced stage of de-lamination, so it won't be long before the information is lost.

Archibald Hood - a Man with a Social Conscience

From the earliest days in Rosewell, Hood took a paternal interest in his workforce, creating a model village with each cottage having a garden. He was deeply involved in the life of the village: he became a benefactor for many of its activities and was Chairman of the Parish Council for a while. He was an Elder and Trustee at the Rosewell Parish Church and the Rev. John Hunter, who became Minister in the 1870s, was a lifelong friend.



Typical miners cottages at Rosewell

Hood was concerned about workers getting into debt by buying on-tick from local traders, so encouraged the development of co-operatives. By acting as Treasurer initially, he ensured the security of the funds and correct accounting. He also introduced the 'Gothenburg' system of public house, where profits from the sale of alcohol were ploughed back into the community, providing facilities like parks and libraries. He later encouraged the setting up of a similar system in Newtongrange, where he also ensured that decent houses with gardens were built for his workforce. As a result Newtongrange became one of the best mining villages in the country.

Hood showed similar consideration for his workers in Wales, providing cottages with



This highlights the importance of recording inscriptions before they are disappear forever. We are aware that a number of people have done some of this valuable work over the years, but we don't know exactly what has been done or, indeed, who holds the data. It seems highly desirable to collect it all together in a single database. The Friends are in a position to hold this data in a secure database that would ensure its retention for posterity. In addition, having all the data in one place would enable the areas where the recording of inscriptions still needs to be done to be identified. A plan for finishing the work could then be produced. If anyone has such transcriptions and is happy to let the Friends have a copy, please let us know. If you know of someone with this sort of information, please help us to make contact.

Worryingly, in the last few months, there have been concerted attacks on the security of the Cemetery. Padlocks and chains have been cut, hinges broken and other damage caused, all seemingly aimed at making illicit access easier for more significant theft. The cost of repairing the damage, replacing locks, etc. and counter measures (which we cannot disclose, for obvious reasons) has been significant. If you see anything suspicious taking place in or around the Cemetery, please report it to Bereavement Services and/or the police.

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gardens, and erecting schools and institutes furnished with reading rooms. It was reported that Llwynypia was the only place where sports were encouraged by the colliery proprietor. In Gilfach Goch, a reading room was established for use by the workmen of the Glamorgan Coal Company and the first colliery school was established, in 1870. The Company was active in the supervision of the school and, around 1875, the Llantrisant School Board decided that there should be a school-house and school for 309 pupils. Hood was closely involved in the discussions and, when the premises were built, his company paid one third of the cost.

He was probably astute enough to understand that men who spent much of their lives underground would appreciate decent homes and outdoor recreations such as gardening, which could also provide cheap vegetables for families. Of course, a more satisfied workforce worked better for the company.

Even in Wales, Hood maintained close control of his Scottish business interests and this relied on frequent reports and correspondence. But these papers were not confined to business, as he would also enquire about social and welfare matters. A keen bowler himself, he encouraged the installation of bowling greens and, only six months before his death, he opened the Newbattle Bowling Green.

A staunch Presbyterian, Hood encouraged the establishment of churches in his company's communities and he was also involved in the Presbyterian Church in Cardiff. In Gilfach Goch, before a proper church was built, he gave permission for Welsh Baptists and Welsh Independents to use the carpenter's shop at the colliery for their Sunday service. In 1867, he subscribed £25 (say, £2000 today) to assist in the installation of a clergyman in the community, but cautioned, "that the subscription should not be considered as necessarily forthcoming in future years if the venture proved unsuccessful".

He showed great loyalty to those who gained his

respect and this appeared to be returned. An example of this can be found on a gravestone in Hawthornden Cemetery, Rosewell, which bears the inscription "Sacred to the Memory of Alex McGregor, Underground Manager at Rosewell who died 15th June 1891 in his 55th year and who was for 35 years the faithful servant of Archibald Hood by whom this memorial is erected". In South Wales too, it is recorded that Hood looked after many of his elderly employees.

He was the first President, and undoubtedly the 'father' of the Cardiff Caledonian Society, which was formed in 1886. Even with many local 'leaders of industry' in its membership, Hood dominated its early operation, particularly in widening the Society's original social function to give a more charitable outlook. There were many Scots in the area and the charity assisted those who had fallen on hard times. The Society's records are a sad catalogue of social history, with families being left poverty-stricken on the death of the breadwinner, old people on their own, young men unable to work due to tuberculosis or other illness, children being left without parents and many other examples of distress. In these cases, the Society provided money, practical help or, even, paid for the individual or family to rejoin their kin in Scotland. As we saw in Issue No.6 (June 2011) the final act of charity was a proper burial - with their names recorded on a stone - for men and women who otherwise would have been given a pauper's grave.



A Caledonian Society grave in the "new" Cemetery

Another facet of Hood's character was his love of music. In the 1898 St Andrew's Night dinner, Madame Gwen Cosslett-Heller, a professional singer from London, sang 'Coming Through The Rye' to an arrangement by Hood himself. He particularly appreciated Welsh choral music and he gave generous support to the local society at Llwynypia, as well as to the colliery band. In 1900, he presided over a musical evening arranged by the Rosewell Co-operative Society.

Archibald Hood died at Sherwood House on 27th October 1902, at the age of 79. Even up to the day before his death he had been working on a new wages agreement aimed at solving a dispute in the South Wales mining industry.

Hood himself might have been most pleased by those tributes after his death from representatives of his workforce. The leader of the South Wales Miners' Federation, and Rhondda's first MP, said that he had been one of the best friends of the colliery workers, while another official of the Federation said that, "his quaint Scottish humour made a difficult task more pleasant than it might have been". Other tributes included "... a good relationship existed between him and his workmen", "He never forsook old workmen." and "... he had always taken interest in the social and intellectual welfare of his workmen and their families".

The large attendance at the funeral in Cathays Cemetery, included 100 workmen from the Glamorgan Coal Company as well as representatives from Midlothian. The service was taken by his old friend from Rosewell, the Rev. John Hunter. Later, in Rosewell Parish Church, Rev. Hunter led a thanksgiving service, referring to Hood as a man of untiring industry, unswerving rectitude and fearless courage.

Hood may have missed out in having a statue at Barry Docks, but he does have a statue in Llwynypia, commissioned by a grateful

workforce and community. It was unveiled 3 years after his death - by leading trade unionist and MP, William Abraham. The statue is unusual being coloured, with striking yellow trousers.



Hood statue at Llwynypia

The rags-to-riches story of Archibald Hood was one of the most remarkable in the second half of the 19th century. He never forgot his Scottish origins and remained a straightforward man, who never actively sought publicity for himself.

The Hood articles comprise our longest story (to date!), but you can obtain a fuller account in "From Rosewell to the Rhondda, the story of Archibald Hood a great Scots mining engineer" by Archie Blyth (published in 1994). We are pleased to acknowledge the help derived from this book in producing the Newsletter serial.

Continuing Story of Q-ships

Back in June 2011 (Issue 5), we were grateful to Patricia Evans for information from her own family memoirs that linked a striking memorial in Section L, prominent 19C families and a former mansion in Newport Road. Patricia is one of our oldest and more distant members and it seems that the article on Q-ships in our last edition stirred up further links to the memoirs.

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Q-ships under tow

She wrote that her father served in the Royal Flying Corps (later to become the RAF), based mainly at Milford Haven, in Pembrokeshire. He was a keen photographer and the family archive includes two large leather bound albums of pictures taken by him. Many of these were taken from aircraft/balloons (blimps) and some of these are of Q-ships, which were presumably being constructed in the area or were based there. These obviously had a particular fascination for him. Perhaps for security reasons, the captions in the albums were written in invisible ink but, fortunately, Patricia discovered that they became visible if damped.



Blimp

We are grateful to Patricia for the two photographs that illustrate this article. The first shows two Q-ships being towed out to duty off the Pembrokeshire coast: perhaps it will seem surprising that these were sailing ships. The second picture gives an idea as to what one of the blimps looked like. In this case, a Deperdussin TT (a French monoplane first produced in 1912) is slung underneath: a number of these were acquired by the RFC early in the war.

Her father's interest in this form of subterfuge continued into World War 2, when he was a Royal Navy reservist based in

Scotland. His letters written in September 1939 are headed FTB (Fleet Tender B) which, it transpires, was a mock up of a warship. There is an anecdotal tale that even Churchill couldn't understand why one of his battleships was still in Scotland when it should have been active elsewhere.

If you are looking for further reading on this subject, Patricia recommends an excellent book by Rear-Admiral Gordon Campbell VC DSO, "My Mystery Ships".

Views of an Antique Land: Egypt and Palestine in the First World War

We are pleased to be able to announce that Cardiff University has received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the collection of views of Egypt and Palestine during the First World War.

Our aim is to collect photographs taken by service personnel, postcards, lantern slides and stereoviews. We are not collecting the actual views but rather scans of them which, with the owners permission, will be uploaded to a dedicated website where anyone interested in seeing what their ancestors saw or who is interested in how the ancient monuments, cities, towns and villages looked during the First World War can get that information.

As you will have noticed much of the commemoration of the First World War has focussed on the Western Front and so gives the impression that the war was entirely one of mud and trenches with very little movement. However, few people realise that the war in Egypt and Palestine was much more mobile and often fast moving, it was also fought in hot and dry conditions and posed a whole range of challenges to those who fought there. It is also a surprise to many that such a great number of personnel did actually serve in Egypt and Palestine at some point during the war with units regularly being withdrawn from the Western Front to serve in the area before

returning to Europe later on. Egypt also served as a staging post for the Dardenelles Campaign and Thessalonika.



Because the project is HLF funded one of our aims is to involve lots of volunteers and we would be most grateful for any help offered. We will need people to help identify images posted on the web - that might mean identifying places, regiments or even individuals who feature in pictures. We will also need people to help with a series of Roadshows which will take place in Cardiff and further afield. We will, of course, need lots of people who have images taken around 1914-1918 in Egypt and Palestine to either scan them for us (we will be providing instructions on what to do and how to upload) or make them available for scanning at one of our events. If you are unsure if the images you have are actually Egypt/Palestine or you think they may be earlier or later than WWI we would still be interested - the key thing for us is to be able to date them where possible and we may be able to do this from the uniforms and other features so if your photograph has no date or place name that is not a problem!

Our website will launch early in 2015, but in the meantime you can contact us directly on nicholsonpt@cardiff.ac / [millsf1@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:millsf1@cardiff.ac) in the School of History, Archaeology and Religion at Cardiff University. We will be happy to register you as a volunteer.

Paul T. Nicholson & Steve Mills

Recent Events

Talks

On Tuesday 9th September at 7 pm, Alan Thorne gave an elegant rendition of tales of a handsome blue-eyed adventurer, presented as "Ernest Willows, Cardiff's Pioneer Aviator". This was always going to be night to remember and we were left wondering why E T Willows still remains obscure and has not had a film made of his life. Alan led us through the exploits of early ballooning, crash landings on the roofs of London, multiple bankruptcies and final disaster, as Willows died when the balloon envelope disengaged from the passenger car, sending him hurtling to the ground and to his ultimate death.



*Willows with his second airship in 1909 -
courtesy of Cardiff Central Library*

Five versions of his own private balloons, each larger and more sophisticated than the last, cumulated in the crossing of the English Channel. Disappointment at the lack of orders from the military and an unfortunate shipwreck during his seafaring activities led to financial failure, but did not stop the eagerness he applied to dirigible transportation. An amazing story of an outstanding hero of Cardiff history and aviation. Roll the cameras ...

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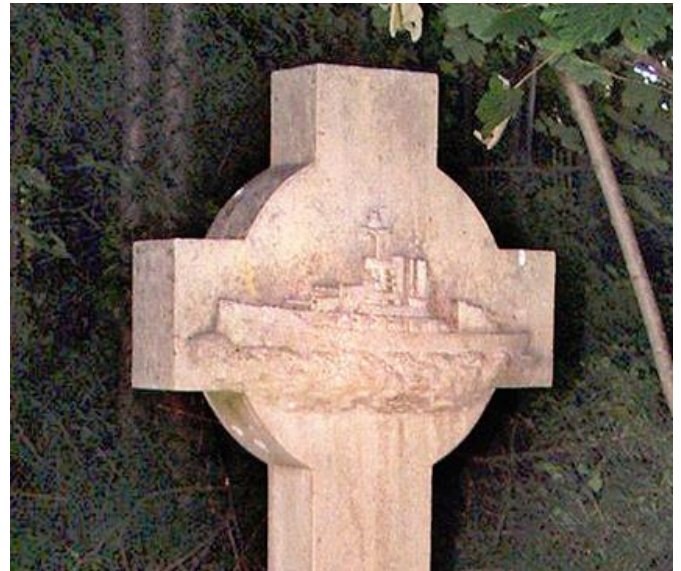
The first **Bill Mosley Memorial Lecture**, formerly the Friends Annual Public Lecture, took place on **Tuesday 18th November**. **Gary Williams** of the Western Front Association talked on the subject of "**Commonwealth War Graves Inscriptions**". The lecture was illustrated by excellent photographs, taken by Gary on his extensive research trips to World War 1 cemeteries. He described how the drive of Fabian Ware and the architectural expertise of Herbert Baker and Edwin Lutyens, aided by two committees, determined the layout criteria for cemeteries and the size, material and engraving principles for the headstones. One of these principles was that there could be up to three lines (a maximum of 66 characters, including spaces between words) at the bottom for a personal message ... to be paid for by the relatives at a rate of 3½d per letter. This gave rise to a lot of criticism at the time and may account for the high number of headstones that have no personal message. Gary showed us examples of permitted variations and of unusual inscriptions, including one which had the telling words "Shot at dawn" and another with a musical engraving. Around 40 people, including a representative of Bill's family, enjoyed this well researched and presented talk. Gary clearly has much more interesting knowledge of this subject, so we hope to see him again.

Guided Walks

On **Sunday 21st September**, as part of our Open Doors programme, **Ivor Lippett** led a **guided walk in the "New" Cemetery**. Taking in the entertaining tales behind the monuments, the tour ended at the unusual Chinese section with the story of burning banknotes to the departed. The afternoon was a huge success, appreciated by the 48 people who participated.

The **Insignia Walk** on **Sunday 26th October**, was sufficiently close to the 100th commemoration, in August, of the start of the Great War to generate increased interest. In consequence, a substantial attendance of 42 people joined Phil Amphlett of Bereavement

Services for an informative afternoon walk around the numerous war graves scattered around Cathays Cemetery. Pointing out appropriate examples, Phil described the different types of headstone used by the Allies and compared the material used on the newer stones with the traditional Portland Stone, which is prone to wear. The selection of graves visited displayed the variety of Regimental Insignia, with detailed descriptions of how the badges came into existence. The emphasis lay on the First World War, including the insignia of the Royal Flying Corps (the forerunner of the Royal Air Force) and a visit to the publicly-subscribed John Cleal memorial with its impressive depiction of a battle ship.



Battleship on Cleal memorial

A stop by James Kear of the Seaforth Highlanders, in Section I, drew the crowd's interest to a monument from an earlier conflict, the Boer War, at the turn of the century. Importantly, even the weather remained dry for a very enlightening talk enjoyed by everyone present.

Open Doors

On **Sunday 21st September**, as the main event of our **Open Doors**, access was given to the general public to view both Chapels, for the first time since their recent renovation. This generated exceptional interest and we had to stop counting after the attendance passed a

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staggering 200, making this the most successful Friends' event since the 150th Anniversary celebration. The renovation work over the last year includes a suspended floor over the original damaged floor with its open ventilation pits, painting of the walls, glazing of all windows with polycarbonate, restoration or replacement of doors and the provision of power and light.



The displays included our newly designed colour posters, complete with our new logo (which can also be seen on the first page of this newsletter). A welcoming cup of coffee was kindly provided to all by Bereavement Services.

Remembrance Day 2014



Wreaths by Cross of Sacrifice

On a blustery, rainy day, 11th November 2014, a service was held by the Cross of Sacrifice next to the World War 1 graves in the Cemetery. Wreaths were laid by Cllr Margaret Jones the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Capt. James Marden on behalf of the 3rd Battalion The Royal Welsh, Ivor Lippett on behalf of the

Friends of Cathays Cemetery and the Walking for Health Group, Mrs Wilson from Allensbank Primary School on behalf of all children from Cardiff's schools and Martin Birch, Operational Manager Bereavement Services on behalf of all employees of the City of Cardiff Council. The service was conducted by Rev Lionel Fanthorpe. The rain held off for the last part and the minute silence at 11am, and the names of the fallen were read out as a roll of honour by the schoolchildren and the Walking Group to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War.



Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

The autumn workdays have concentrated on Sections I and J. The enthusiastic band of volunteers know that they make a difference but you can see the evidence for yourself in the before and after pictures below.



Before

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After

Unfortunately, this does not mean that there is nothing left to do, as the next picture shows. This is part of Section K: 18 months ago it was looking fairly clear: now ash saplings are up to four feet high.



Section K

As usual, there will be no workday in December or January, but we will resume on the **last Saturday of the month, in February, March and April in 2015. We meet by the chapels at 10 am**, tools and gloves are provided and we have a half time refreshment break. If you fancy some gentle exercise in the fresh air, with good company, why not come and join us?

Weekly Health Walks

These leisurely walks last between 40 minutes and an hour, pausing occasionally for a cemetery related anecdote. With an emphasis on sociability, everyone is welcome both on the

walk and, afterwards, when we adjourn to a cosy local café for a chat over tea or coffee. Walks normally take place every week, regardless of the weather. The only exception to this will be on Tuesday 30th December, because it falls in the middle of the festive season. Just turn up at **10.30 am on a Tuesday morning**, meeting just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library**.

Future Events

The AGM

This will be held on **Saturday 24th January, at 10 am**. For the first time we will be on "home soil", meeting in **Cathays Cemetery Chapels**.

Talk

On **Tuesday 24th March at 7 pm**, **Gordon Hindess** will give an illustrated talk entitled "**Cathays Cemetery - World Tour**". The venue will be the **John Percival Building, Cardiff University, in Colum Drive** (behind Colum Road). Come and see how a stroll in the Cemetery leads to a variety of anecdotes in exotic places around the world.

Guided Walk

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

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