

It Just Gets Better and Better



Cherry in blossom

We are told that the conditions through Spring have been ideal for prolonged duration of blossom. From our observation of the Cemetery, we can certainly confirm that the blossom has been magnificent this year. But so have the flowers and, if anything, each year seems to surpass its predecessor. However, this is not solely down to nature: credit has to be given to the management of the Cemetery by Bereavement Services and to clearance work by them and the Friends. There are areas today that are carpeted by Spring flowers that, a few years ago, were completely overgrown and devoid of floor vegetation.



Primroses in Section G

After a poor display last year, the Foxglove tree has excelled this year. However, all is not well with this prized tree - it is leaning to one

side, with a tell-tale uplifting of soil on the opposite side, and appears to be relying on a headstone to prop it up. There is real concern that it will either die or have to be removed for safety reasons. If you agree that plans should be made to replace it, please make your voice heard. Bearing in mind that it can take ten years for a young tree to start to produce blossom, now is the time to be planting a replacement.



Foxglove tree in blossom

Sometimes a walk around the Cemetery reminds you that there is always something else to discover. In April or May, take the path in the lowest part of the Old Cemetery (the one that skirts the property on Wedal Road) and you may spot a bush, with variegated leaves and an abundance of small reddish-purple petalled flowers. This is one of the varieties of Aucuba Japonica or Japanese Laurel.



Blossom of Aucuba Japonica

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While you are on this path, look up and you may be rewarded with a glimpse of one of the largest blossoms on one of the grandest trees in the Cemetery, the Horse Chestnut. It is often difficult to get close enough to this blossom to fully appreciate its beauty.



Horse Chestnut blossom

The warm spell, in the middle of April, stirred the slow worms from their slumber. One was spotted by Richard Weaver, of Bereavement Services, during a litter pick and we are grateful to him for the picture below. Another was found during the workday at the end of April. This one had shed its tail, probably as a defence mechanism after being caught by a predator.



Slow worm

Spring Miscellany

It is always good to see the Cemetery used in an innovative way and the presentation of "Selections from Shakespeare" by drama and theatre students from the University of South Wales, Cardiff, certainly fell into this category. Around 40 students presented a dozen extracts from five Shakespeare plays, at different locations within and around the chapels. Not only did they brighten up a damp, cold early March day (how some of them avoided hypothermia is a mystery), they showed that the location provided appropriate natural sets. A circle of trees in Section J will henceforth evoke visions of the witches from Macbeth!

After an absence of six years, it was gratifying to see a ceremony to remember the Irish Potato Famine, 1845-51, return to Cathays. The ceremony, held on the 10th May, was part of the Global Irish Great Hunger Commemorations, with events taking place in Nova Scotia, Liverpool, Boston, Sydney, New York, Dublin and, for the first time, in Belfast. It was fitting that Cardiff was also selected to take part as the memorial here is one of only three across the whole of the UK.

The ceremony, which lasted about 45 minutes, comprised of Irish music and readings of poetry and articles about the Famine and the Irish community in Wales. A booklet of the Event may be found here:

<http://cathayscemetery.coffeecup.com/pdfs/Irish%20Great%20Hunger.pdf>

Sadly, we have to report more abusive use of the Cemetery. A further attempt was made to gain illicit access by removing the padlock and chain on a gate: as before, the objective of this activity is unclear. The next incident, was the tipping of the contents of a cannabis farm in one of the more secluded parts of the Cemetery. Since this required a small tipper lorry driving into the Cemetery in broad daylight, it is unlikely that it was unseen. A third incident was the damaging of the

information board by Bishop Hedley's tomb, in an attempt to tear it off of its supports.

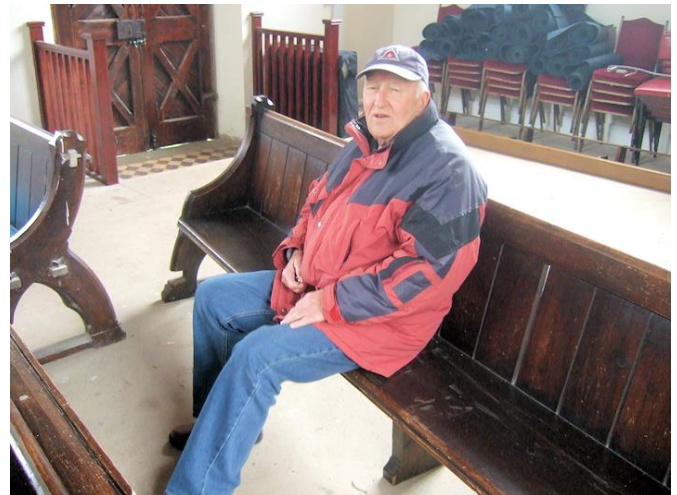


Fly tipping

We are not the only ones to suffer from these problems: last year the National Federation of Cemetery Friends were sufficiently concerned to organise a Security Seminar. This identified as a particular concern so-called "urban explorers" who see this sort of activity as a hobby. They are equipped for the purpose of entering a site with bolt cutters and may leave a marker as evidence of their visit, post images of themselves on the internet as proof or take mementos, causing damage in the process. Perhaps the most important conclusion from the seminar is the need to be alert to suspicious behaviour and to report such activity promptly. We ask all our readers, particularly those who visit the Cemetery regularly or who live in the area, for support in this. The NCF is considering pulling together a set of guidance notes for dealing with potential security issues and suspicious activity to assist its members.

But it's time for some more cheering news. We learned that St. Catwg's Church, Pentyrch, was replacing its Victorian pews with chairs. The Friends inspected the pews and put in a successful bid. We are now the proud owners of 10 pews. Many of you will be aware that the original pews in the Chapels were beyond restoration by the time that renovation work on the buildings commenced. The picture below

shows Ivor Lippett testing one of the new pews.



This acquisition fits in well with the latest renovation plans, which now aim to have one of the chapels restored for funerary services at an early date. This splendid news recognises a need for additional chapel capacity and follows discussions by Bereavement Services with funeral directors, which confirmed that these historic buildings could meet that need. As well as the pews, which will be loaned by the Friends to Bereavement Services, the restoration process will also include new solid oak flooring.

It was pleasing to see the Cemetery featured in Cardiff Remembered, in the South Wales Echo on 24th April. The writer, Brian Lee, supported the Friends when the Anniversary Book was produced, wrote its Preface ... and kindly gave the book another plug in his latest article. If you missed the issue at the time, the article can be picked up online at

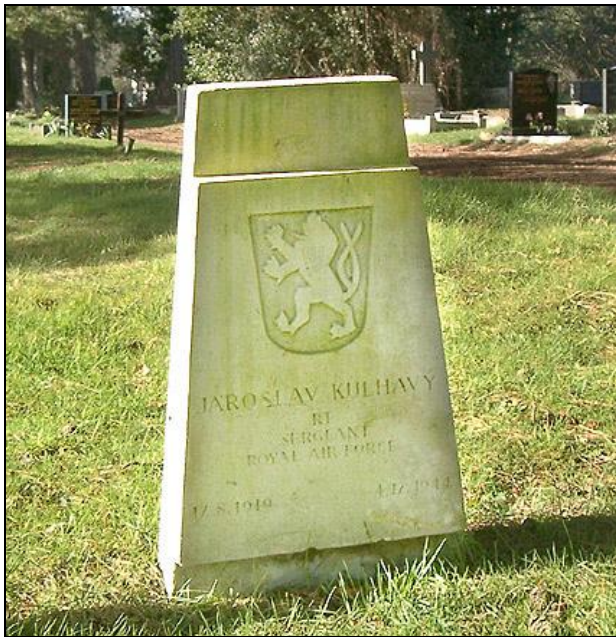
<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/lifestyle/nostalgia/cardiff-remembered-how-cathays-cemetery-9104153>

Cathays to Prostějov

In the north-east corner of Section E-K, you will find the grave of Jaroslav Kulhavý. Although provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it has a style reserved for Czechoslovak servicemen.

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Jaroslav was born on 17th August 1919 in Mladá Boleslav, a city in central Bohemia. At the beginning of the 2nd World War, he fled to Poland, where he was admitted to the Czech Legion. After moving on to France, he took part in the fighting during the retreat, until he was evacuated to England. In December 1940, he joined 311 Squadron, which was manned by Czech personnel, as a technician. He died on 4th December 1944, as a flight engineer on a Liberator that crashed shortly after take-off



on a training flight from RAF Tain, in the north of Scotland. 311 Squadron was largely engaged in anti-submarine action. Kulhavý was posthumously promoted to Colonel in the Czech Air Force. He was buried in Cathays Cemetery in accordance with his English wife's wishes.

At the end of the war, many relatives of the 510 Czech men who died while serving in the RAF, wanted the bodies of their loved ones returned to their home country. However, the cost of exhumation (today's equivalent would be more than £25,000 per body) was considered unaffordable, so symbolic exhumation was adopted instead. A sample of soil from each of the airmen's graves was placed in a temporary wooden urn and taken to Czechoslovakia towards the end of 1945, where the plan was to place them into permanent urns for formal

interment at a national memorial site. The temporary urns were stored in boxes whilst planning for an appropriate memorial took place. In February 1948, the Communists took control of Czechoslovakia and, under this new regime, the urns were forgotten ... and it remained like this for the next 40 years.

On 15 January 1990, during the reconstruction of the National Monument in Prague, the boxes were re-discovered. Unfortunately, due to poor storage conditions, 63 of the wooden urns had



Jaroslav Kulhavý

rotted and their contents had mixed together. These were placed into one communal urn. The contents of the remaining 239 urns were placed in new urns. A few of these urns were returned to those families that could be traced and had requested the remains.

A special memorial, with a crypt to house the urns, was finally built in the Prostějov Municipal Cemetery and unveiled at a ceremony on 22nd June 1998. Prostějov, in Moravia, was the home of the Military Aviation College where many of

the Czech aircrew had trained. By this time, Czechoslovakia had split in two and some of the individual urns were passed to Slovakia. Other urns were interred at two other memorials in the Czech Republic, leaving the urns of 97 Czechoslovak RAF airmen, and the communal urn for 63 airmen to be placed at the Prostějov Memorial. Of these, symbolic urn No 242 contains the soil taken Jaroslav's grave in Cathays Cemetery.

We are grateful to the website for the Prostějov Memorial for much of the information used in this article and for permission to use the photograph of Jaroslav Kulhavý. If you wish to learn more about this, the site can be found at

<http://fcafa.wordpress.com/2010/12/12/prostějov-remembers/>

Cork to Cathays

The opening of a vault in Section D, just across the drive from the site of the Catholic Cemetery, two years ago, prompt curiosity at the time - interments in some of the oldest graves are quite rare. Fortunately, one of the family, through a mutual acquaintance, was able to throw light on the situation. Once again, we are grateful to the family for the story that follows.

Daniel and Ellen Scanlon were born in Ireland around 1852 and came to Cardiff in the 1870's, as a result of Daniel's involvement in the meat trade. They lived in Constellation Street, conveniently close to the Roath Cattle Market and Slaughterhouse, in Cycle Street. Cycle Street has disappeared, but was opposite System Street, with the Market filling the space between Constellation Street and the railway. The area of the market is now occupied by a play park, surrounded by the flats of Anderson Place. Daniel died in 1909, aged 57, and Ellen joined him in the vault in 1918, having reached the age of 66.

Daniel and Ellen had four children, only one of whom, Cornelius (Con), born 1883, is interred in the vault. Con played rugby for Cardiff in the early years of the 20C. In 1918, he married Teresa Nunan from Mallow Co Cork. Both were interred in the vault, Teresa in 1957 (aged 66) and Con in 1965 (aged 82).

They had eight children and in the 1930's lived at Pengam Farm, from which they operated a dairy business. The farm was requisitioned just before the war and the family ended up after the war in a house on Pen-y-lan Hill. Two of their children are also interred in the vault,



Scanlon memorial

Desmond, who died in infancy in 1931, and Eileen, who reached the grand age of 92 and whose interment in 2013, sparked our curiosity. Eileen never married and lived her whole life in Cardiff, other than a period working for the Catholic Women's League in Germany in the aftermath of the war.

The Scanlons were a well known Cardiff Catholic family, parishioners of St. Peter's Church, Roath.

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Cardiff Municipal Airport

The story of the Scanlon family refers to the requisition of Pengam Farm - and provides a convenient link into the history of air travel in Cardiff.

As we have seen previously, Pengam Moors had been associated with flying since 1905 when Ernest Willows built his first airship. Operating from Pengam, Willows went on to record a number of 'firsts' - flight from Cardiff to London, in 1910, quickly followed by London to Paris, etc. Within these achievements were the first airship crossings of the Bristol and English Channels.

Sploft Aerodrome, on land purchased from Lord Tredegar, was opened for private club and leisure flying in September 1931, only later changing its name to Cardiff Municipal Airport when scheduled passenger flights began. To protect the single grassed runway from flooding, a sea wall was constructed. By 1934, Western Airways were operating flights to Weston-Super-Mare, Haldon, Plymouth and Birmingham and later extended to Bournemouth and France. It may seem surprising that the Weston service would support 13 flights each way daily but, when one considers the alternative travelling options, the charge of 6 shillings and 6 pence (about £20 today), may have been a bargain.

The site, including the Scanlon's Pengam Farm, was requisitioned by the War Department for the Pengam Moors Royal Auxiliary Air Force station. By 1938, the runway had been extended and accommodation, in the form of hangers, maintenance buildings and offices, enlarged. In June 1938, No 614 (Glamorgan) Squadron was formed and took up residence at RAF Pengam Moors. Initial duties included spotting and range finding for the army. In 1940, 614 Squadron redeployed to Inverness for coastal patrol duties. When the squadron returned to Wales they were based instead at RAF Llandow.

During the rest of the war, Pengam Moors had a variety of roles - Swordfish torpedo bombers on anti-submarine patrols in the Bristol Channel and English Channel, a maintenance unit tasked principally with dismantling, packing and despatching fighter aircraft to overseas locations, base for Miles Martinet target tugs, to provide towed airborne targets for anti-aircraft gunnery training and as an emergency landing field for Spitfires, Hurricanes and other aircraft damaged in air battles over the Bristol Channel ports during German air raids. The unit was amalgamated into 587 Squadron RAF in December 1943 and remained at Pengam Moors until the station closed in 1946.

Guy Gibson, commander of The Dambusters was a visitor to RAF Pengam Moors in 1940. He had met the Penarth born actress and show dancer Eve Moore at a party in Coventry the previous year. They were married at All Saints Church, Penarth. Gibson was based at RAF Digby in Lincolnshire and, for the wedding, he flew a Bristol Blenheim bomber to Pengam Moors, returning three days later with his new wife as a passenger.

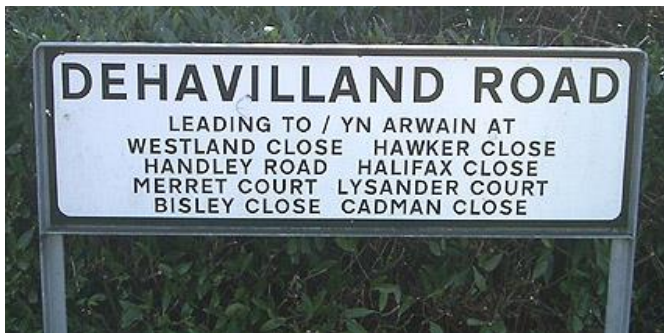


Airport service road remains

The facility was handed back to Cardiff City Council, in January 1946 and civil flights resumed. The principal operator was Cambrian Air Services (later Cambrian Airways) and, during 1950, British European Airways operated an experimental helicopter scheduled service via Wrexham to Liverpool's Speke Airport.

However, passenger aircraft were now larger and the short runway could not be extended, so it never regained the number of routes that had existed pre-war. The airfield became redundant, in 1954, when civilian flying was transferred to the new Rhoose Airport.

While older Cardiffians may remember the Pengam Moors airfield or the subsequent Rover car parts factory (which closed in 1984, but remained derelict for another 20 years), most of us will only know the site as that of the Tesco Extra supermarket and Willows High School. There is little evidence of its former use, although a few of the original buildings and road layouts remain and a few streets hint at its history - Runway Road, Handley Road and Avro Close.



Street nameplate

Strangely, government policy has resulted in a postscript to this story. With the introduction of the strategy to bolster the number of reservists in the fighting forces to 20% by 2020, RAF 614 Squadron was resurrected in March 2014, 57 years after it was disbanded. The Squadron's headquarters is at Ty Llewellyn, in Adam Street and it aims to have 120 reservists, in posts ranging from photographer to intelligence analyst. To celebrate its re-creation, Honorary Air Commodore Vic Norman piloted a plane over Pengam Moors, while a wingwalker, Stella Guilding, performed handstands and acrobatics.

Gold Rush

The first Welsh emigrants to Australia were convicts, four men and two women, who were in the first shipment to Botany Bay, in 1788. By

1852, 1,800 of the convicts in Australia had been tried in Wales. About this time, mining brought large numbers of Welsh settlers to Australia, when places like Merthyr Tydfil were in the grip of economic depression. Initially, the discovery of copper in South Australia, in the early 1840s, attracted people, but it was the discovery of gold in Victoria that caused the Welsh population to increase dramatically. By 1900, there were 12,000 Welsh settlers in the colony.

David Jones was born in Caroline Street, in 1832, the son of Elias Jones, a builder and contractor. In 1852, he sailed from Dartmouth on a 94 day passage to Victoria. Initially, he worked as a joiner in Melbourne, but he soon moved to Ballarat, the focus of the gold rush.

A letter home, published in the Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian in June 1853, describes the voyage and conditions in Ballarat at the time. The passage was rated as very fair, despite losing the fore-top and main-top-gallant masts. Nearly all the passengers were sick. Just as well it wasn't a bad passage! He notes seeing dolphins, flying fish, porpoises and sharks ... and finding a portion of the latter very palatable. This was better fare than he was to eat in Australia itself.

He found it impossible to find lodgings due to the overcrowding in Ballarat because of the influx of immigrants, so he stayed at the Wesleyan Immigrants Home. By comparison with Wales, the cost of board, at "4s 6d per day" seemed high, but this only reflected the cost of basic provisions. He lists examples, "Bread 1s 6d, beef or mutton 6d per lb, potatoes 6d per lb, carrots 1s per lb, butter and cheese 2s 6d per lb, sugar from 4d to 6d per lb and tea or coffee 2s per lb." Fortunately, wages were higher than in South Wales and he was earning £1 per day, working from 6.00 am to 6.00 pm with an hour for breakfast and for lunch. Ale, a necessity because of the heat and for health reasons, was 6d a glass. Oranges, peaches and plums were 1s each and apples 1s 6d. The

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temperature could hit 112° F in the sun. For the lucky ones, the rewards could be great. He talks of diggers coming into town and throwing down sovereigns like dirt and not caring about taking their change.

David Jones accumulated some wealth and, after four years in the goldfields, returned home. This wealth helped set up, with his brothers, Daniel and Noah, the company which was to construct Cardiff's deep drainage system. David Jones became an Alderman and, eventually, Mayor of Cardiff, in 1888. He died in January 1908, at his home, 13 Richmond Road, after a six week illness. It was reported that he caught a chill from riding on the outside of a tramcar. This developed into bronchitis, with other complications. He is buried in the most southerly quadrant of Section M of the Cemetery. The grave is marked by a distinctive red granite scroll memorial.



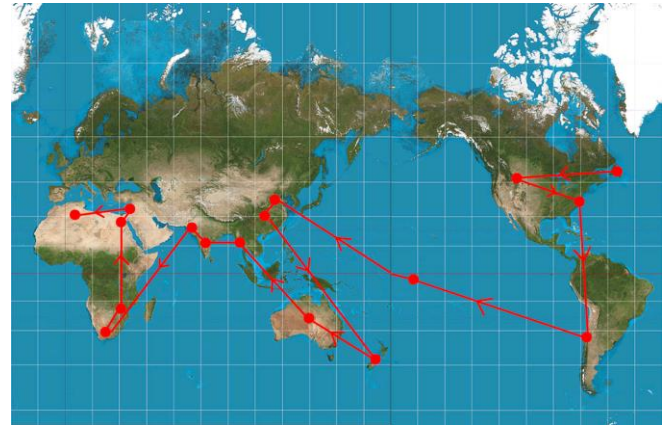
We would like to thank William Jones, Professor in Modern Welsh History at Cardiff University, for providing the newspaper clips and inspiration on which this article is based.

Recent Events

Talks

On **Tuesday 10th March**, **Gordon Hindess** presented "**Cathays Cemetery - World Tour**".

Using triggers from memorials and exotic trees in the Cemetery, Gordon took an audience of around 30 people on a 40,000 mile trip around the world, calling in at some 15 countries. The route, heading generally westwards, is shown on the map below.



The illustrations and anecdotes included man-made and natural disasters, the sieges of Mafeking and Peking, the allied advance through Palestine in World War 1, a date race from the Persian Gulf to America, the death of a dwarf and shooting seeds off trees in the Andes. For those with access to the internet who missed the talk, an illustrated transcript can be found on the Friends' website.

On **Tuesday 5th May**, **Peter Robinson** gave a talk entitled "**The Role of the Cavalry in the Second Boer War, 1899-1901**". While Peter is currently at Cardiff University, working on the Welsh Divisions during the Great War, he comes with a background of 30 years in the Metropolitan Police, including a couple of years serving at the Houses of Parliament. It was during his time with the police that he gained an MA in War Studies from King's College, London.

There were perhaps two underlying themes to Peter's talk: the first, how the effectiveness of cavalry diminished as the 'industrialisation of the military' (i.e. guns taking over from cold steel) took place: the second, how the Second Boer War, was a learning exercise for the army and developed tactics and many of the leaders who were at the forefront in the First World War.

In developing the cavalry theme, Peter took us

from the Napoleonic Wars to the First World War, including the crucial change first recognised in the American Civil War (1861-65) where mounted infantry (horse soldiers) came to the fore. The second theme used many examples of people who served in South Africa, not always successfully, and how they applied their experience in the Great War. Horses were particularly important in this war, which witnessed perhaps the last successful classic cavalry charge, at Beersheba, in 1917.

Guided Walks

On **Sunday 12th April**, Bereavement Services led their **Heritage Walk**. With the recent departure of Phil Amphlett, the opportunity arose for Rachel Protheroe to conduct proceedings this year. But this was not for the first time, as she had led it a number of years ago. She was assisted on this occasion by Roger Swann, Phil's replacement at Bereavement Services. It was not an unpleasant day for a walk, as the rain clouds kept away, and a fairish-sized crowd gathered to hear the tales about the residents in the Cemetery. Following the route outlined in the printed version of this walk, Rachel updated the stories to reflect the latest research into the people interred in Cathays. The thoughtful questions that rounded off the hour's walk, displayed that the crowd had thoroughly enjoyed their introduction to the curiosities of the Cemetery.

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

Although the weather hasn't always been on our side, we have had three well-attended and successful Spring workdays. Efforts have been concentrated in the Conservation Areas, while the length of the grass is still short enough to facilitate safe access. The never ending battle with saplings and brambles in Sections B and H was supplemented with a litter pick in the latter.

Our next workdays, which span the Summer break, are on **Saturday 27th June** and

Saturday 26th September. We meet by the **chapels at 10 am**, tools and gloves are provided and we even have a half time refreshment break. Please join us if you can for a couple of hours of undemanding exercise in a friendly environment. Any help is appreciated.

Weekly Health Walks

Our health walks continue to be well attended, with participants having the advantage of being the first to hear about the results of recent research. During May, we participated in the month long Cardiff Walking Festival and the coincident Big Welsh Walk 2015. We were pleased that this attracted a few additional walkers, both local and from further afield. It also attracted S4C, who followed us around one day for a feature in their magazine programme, Heno. An underlying theme of the programme was to show that, even in the city, there are opportunities to walk in beautiful surroundings and to explore the heritage of Cardiff. The programme went out at 7.00 pm on Thursday 14th May. If you missed it, it is available for a month on S4C Clic: the particular feature comes just after the mid programme break.

The walks last between 40 minutes and an hour and are taken at a leisurely pace, with an emphasis on sociability. We meet just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library at 10.30 am every Tuesday morning**, regardless of the weather. You don't need to book or come regularly - all you have to do is turn up. Everyone is welcome both on the walk and afterwards, when we adjourn to a cosy local café for a chat over tea or coffee.

Future Events

Talk

On **Tuesday 8th September at 7 pm**, **Geoff Brookes** will give an illustrated talk, as part of our contribution to Open Doors, entitled "**Stories in Stone**". Geoff is a Swansea based author with several published works dedicated to local history. These include "Stories in Welsh Stone - The secrets beneath 15 Welsh Graves",

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"Bloody Welsh History - Swansea ", "Swansea Then and Now", "Swansea Murders" and "Welsh History Strange but True". These titles give a clue to where the talk might lead and, delivered by an accomplished speaker, we can be assured of an enlightening evening.

Guided Walks

On **Tuesday 9th June at 6.30 pm**, there will be a **Dramatised Heritage Walk** - a variation of the Cathays Cemetery Heritage Trail, which will bring the tales of the past to life with the help of students from the university. The walk will start from the chapels, just inside the **main entrance in Fairoak Road**. Please note that this is a **ticket only event** with limited places - **£5.00 per person**. Please contact Bereavement Services to obtain a ticket on 029 20544820.

On **Thursday 18th June at 6.30 pm**, the **Dramatised Heritage Walk** will be repeated. The details, including the ticketing arrangements, are as given above.

The Friends' **Midsummer Walk** this year will be on **Tuesday 23rd June at 7 pm** and led by Gordon Hindess. While it will also **start at the chapels**, the route and content will be quite different from previous guided walks, highlighting some of the more recent discoveries around the south-western half of the Old Cemetery.

On **Sunday 12th July at 2 pm**, Bereavement Services will lead their ever popular **Heritage Walk**. Again, the **starting point will be by the chapels**. If you are unfamiliar with the Cemetery, this is an excellent way to learn about its history and some of the personalities buried in it and how they helped shape Cardiff.

On **Sunday 20th September at 2.30pm**, in conjunction with Open Doors, there will be a **Friends' Guided Walk** in the **New Cemetery** led by Ivor Lippett. Meet **inside the Allensbank Road entrance**, which is more or less opposite the entrance to University College Hospital. Note that this walk follows on from the viewing period for the chapels on the same day.

Exhibition

Throughout the Summer, the Friends biggest off-site event, an **Exhibition showcasing the Cemetery**, is being held in **The Cardiff Story**, the museum in the Old Library. The exhibition, which has just opened, includes nine especially prepared display posters, artefacts (like burial diaries) and images that show the many facets of the Cemetery and the role of the Friends. It is hoped that this taster of what Cathays Cemetery has to offer will bring it to a wider audience and encourage more people to visit. Why not look in when you are next in the city centre.

Concert

On **Thursday 16th July at 7.00 pm**, in the **chapels**, there will be an **Evening of Elizabethan Music**, performed by **Alison Dite and Richard Kingslake-Jones**. This Lute Concert, in aid of the Friends, is supported by James Summers Funeral Directors, Tesco and Bereavement Services. It will be followed by light snacks and wine. Please note that this is a **ticket only event** with limited places - **£10.00 per person**. Please contact Bereavement Services to obtain a ticket on 029 20544820.

Open Doors

On **Sunday 20th September 11am** - the main event for Open Doors, the Chapels will be open **until 2pm**. Note that this allows time to get to the guided walk in the New Cemetery in the afternoon. You will see from the news item on page 3, that there should be significant new improvements to see this year.

And finally...

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

*Contact the editorial team on 2061 2164
or email <gordon.hindess@uwclub.net>*

You can find past Newsletters, the latest news of events and lots of other information about the Cemetery on our website at www.friendsofcathayscemetery.co.uk