

Halcyon days

After the longest of Indian summers, Storm Abigail arrived - followed very quickly by Barney - with gale-force winds and torrential rain reminding us that it was, in fact, autumn, and winter was just around the corner.



Autumn trees

Still, it was a glorious autumn, with the wide variety of trees in the cemetery's 'arboretum' providing a continuous palette of sumptuous golds and oranges and reds to delight the visitor's eye. The berries, too, seemed particularly plentiful this year, with the rowan, yew, hawthorn and dogwood trees all heavily laden with juicy red fruit.



Rowan Tree with berries

It has been a superb season for fungi at both the old and new sections of the cemetery, endorsing the area's identification as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and reinforcing the need to maintain most carefully the extensive grounds, a task handled very competently by the crew from Bereavement Services, with a little help from the Friends on their workdays.



Scarlet waxcaps

Waxcap fungi have been particularly numerous at the new cemetery, where the Scarlet, Butter, Parrot and Ballerina varieties appear like tiny jewels in the swathes of grass between the headstones. Looking like they belong beneath the ocean waves rather than above ground Smokey Spindles and Coral fungi have also been fruiting well this season.



Coral fungi

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Perhaps less welcome, though forming very picturesque fairy rings, are the Redlead Roundheads. This invasive species came originally from Australia but has now made itself at home throughout Europe and the UK by hitching a ride amongst things like wood chippings.



Redlead roundheads

Lovely sweeping arcs of both Common Funnel and Clouded Funnel Caps have also been spotted, leading us to wonder whether the fairies and elves emerge at night to enjoy their festivities around the fungi!



Common and clouded funnels

Our feathered friends have also delighted the eye of cemetery visitors, with frequent sightings of jays and green woodpeckers, and visits from redwings and fieldfares, as well as the usual garden birds.



Autumn Miscellany

After a bit of a lull, it was heartening to see workmen back in the Nonconformist Chapel. Thanks to some generous donations, sufficient funding has been secured to enable this chapel to be restored for funerary use. It is hoped to complete this work by the end of February and the chapel will then begin to generate an income, which can help to pay for further planned improvements. The chapels have also been licensed for weddings and the first of these has been booked for April.

Bereavement Services are to be congratulated on their innovative action and we can be optimistic that restoration will continue on other elements of the long term plan, thanks to the newly generated income and continued fund-raising initiatives.

Sometimes the Cemetery throws up a mystery surprise - like the porcelain figure that appeared nestling in the folds of a lime tree.



It must be a possibility that it belongs on a grave, but got lost in the long grass, from where someone has rescued it. If it does belong somewhere else, it would be nice to return it. Can anyone shed any light on this?

Another mystery was the appearance of the item of urban art in Section S, which is pictured below. The only clue to its purpose was the word *Cookecanvas* and two sets of latitude and longitude coordinates.



A little research identified it as "Shrine #2" by a locally based artist. The coordinates were for the locations of its predecessor and successor in the series, on Flat Holm and in Alexandra Gardens, respectively. Reactions to the art and its placement in the Cemetery may be mixed, but it was discretely placed and not interfering with any grave and, perhaps, in keeping with one of the principle functions of the cemetery today, to provide enjoyment for visitors. And

who knows, the artist could become another Banksy.

"Being Human 2015" was a festival of the humanities put on in the middle of November. While it was coordinated by the University of London, free events took place across the UK, with local ones staged by the University of South Wales.

Building on the already established and successful partnership with Bereavement Services, two versions of "Graveyard Voices" were staged in the Cemetery on successive Fridays. Actors and musicians brought history to life through the presentation of stories at several locations. The weather was not exactly favourable for outdoor performance, so the participants are to be commended not only for the quality of their presentations, but also for their fortitude. Unfortunately, the academic calendar, means that this sort of thing cannot be done in the summer, when more clement weather might be expected and a bigger audience would be attracted.

Perhaps the most exciting part of "Graveyard Voices" is that each short scene is recorded as a podcast and, between the two live performances, a consolidated version of these was shown as a separate event, at the University's main building in Adam Street, The Atrium. This event effectively launched a series of anywhere, any time heritage podcasts relating to people buried in the Cemetery, which will expand over time. At the same time, the production of the podcasts provides a valuable learning experience for students, who have to research their subject, write the script and stage the performance.

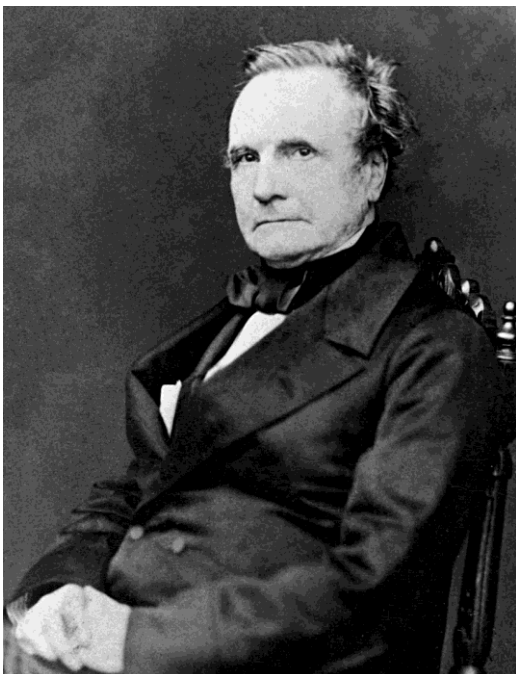
In due course, we expect to see more and more people enjoying their own self-guided tour of the Cemetery using their mobile devices and these podcasts. It is good to see Cardiff at the forefront of innovative presentation of its heritage through its Victorian Cemetery.

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In a lonely grave far from home: Herbert Ivan Babbage

During a guided walk around the (relatively) new part of Cardiff's Cathays Cemetery in September, I spotted, amongst the long sad lines of World War One war graves, a large flat slab embedded in the grass. The words 'Wanganui, New Zealand' and 'artist' glinted in the weak autumn sunlight and my curiosity was immediately aroused. Who was this New Zealand artist and why was he buried amongst the war graves in a Welsh cemetery?

Herbert Ivan Babbage (known as Ivan) was, in fact, born in Adelaide, Australia, on 10 August 1875, the fourth son of Charles Whitmore Babbage and Amelia Barton. You may perhaps recognise the Babbage surname - Ivan's great-grandfather Charles Babbage (1791 - 1871) was the famous mathematician credited with conceiving the idea of a programmable computer. What an impact he has had on the modern world!



Charles Babbage c.1860,

courtesy of Wikimedia Commons:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_Babbage_-_1860.jpg

Ivan's grandfather Benjamin Herschel Babbage (known as Herschel) (1815 - 1878) was another interesting character. After training as an engineer, he worked for a time on railway projects in both England and Italy with none other than engineer extraordinaire, Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Then, in 1850, a commission from Patrick Brontë, father of the famous writing sisters, resulted in The Babbage Report, which improved the horrifically unsanitary conditions that had previously caused so much early mortality in the town of Haworth where the Brontës lived. Soon after he'd helped to clean up their town, Babbage moved to Australia, initially to perform a geological and mineralogical survey of the colony, and he then went on to explore and survey much of South Australia.

Herschel's son, Ivan's father, Charles Whitmore Babbage often accompanied his father on his surveying expeditions and is known to have produced some fine ink drawings of aspects of life in the young colony of South Australia so it may be from his father that Ivan inherited his artistic talent. One of Charles's early sketch books, containing 61 drawings, still exists and is now held in the collections of the National Library of Australia.



Surveying at Wallaroo, South Australia, August 1861, C. W. Babbage,

National Library of Australia, an142685126

When he was just five years old, Ivan, his mother and his two surviving older brothers, upped sticks and moved to New Zealand, arriving in Wellington on the Union Steam Ship Company's *SS Rotomahana* on 14 March 1881. It seems the family may have moved to escape scandal, as Charles Whitmore Babbage, having lost money while speculating on the stock exchange, had subsequently been found guilty of embezzling £1616 3s 10d and of forging a cheque for £9955. Much to the horror of local respectable society, in October 1876, the Chief Justice of Adelaide's Supreme Court sentenced Babbage to seven years in prison, all with hard labour.



The Seine, 1904

Babbage, Herbert Ivan, (1875-1916)

Oil painting: 255 x 335mm. 26,758, Hocken Collections, University of Otago

Following his release from prison, Charles Babbage joined his family in New Zealand, and they eventually settled in the Wanganui area, which is why that town is named on Ivan's gravestone. After studying art at Wanganui Technical College, Ivan also worked at the College, from 1899 to 1904, as a pupil teacher under the painter D. E. Hutton. According to Una Platt's book *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and a Handbook* (Avon Fine Prints, Christchurch, 1980), Ivan then travelled to Europe, studying firstly in London and then at the Académie Julian in Paris, and he painted many fine landscape and waterside

subjects in both watercolour and oils during his European travels.

In 1909, Ivan Babbage returned to New Zealand, where he exhibited his work in Wanganui, New Plymouth and the capital city, Wellington. By 1913, he was again living in England, at St Ives, in Cornwall, where he worked from one of a collection of artists' studios in Porthmeor Square. Many of his English and European artworks were displayed in local exhibitions, and Ivan is commemorated on the St Ives Arts Club Memorial.



St Ives from study window, 1905

Babbage, Herbert Ivan, (1875-1916)

Album of watercolours 1898-1905. Ref: E-285-q-031. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

When the First World War began, Babbage was too old for active service overseas so joined the Royal Defence Corps and served with 23rd Company, helping to guard the railways of Cardiff and the surrounding countryside from enemy attack. During this time, one of the letters Ivan wrote to his family back in New Zealand was reproduced, in part, in the *Hawera & Normanby Star*, on 14 June 1916, as follows:

*ON DUTY IN ENGLAND. AN ARTIST'S
LETTER*

In the course of an interesting letter, dated April 25th, Mr H. I. Babbage, formerly of Hawera, who has been doing special military duty in England for a considerable time, says that the hours are pretty long owing to air raids. The men have 24 hours on and 24 hours

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off, in addition to fatigue duty in the spare time. Writing of the season he says:—"We have had the worst winter in the memory of living men. It has been a regular old-timer one reads about. Early in March we had a blizzard. It snowed for two weeks on end. Then at the end of March another blizzard lasting two days, and in that time the drifts of snow were 20 feet deep and numbers of people perished in them. All trains were stopped, some snowed up, and all telegraph wires were down; the poles simply smashed off in the gale like reeds. The wires weighed tons, and were like great white ropes as thick as one's arms. Two motor busses were snowed up outside our billet in the street. It was pretty trying at night time on top of the viaduct, as they were so exposed." His picture, which gained a place at the Royal Academy, he worked at in his spare time. The snow effects, he says, were most lovely. Not only was the picture hung, but hung "on the line," which means the best place in the Gallery. In concluding his letter, Mr Babbage says:—"All the Reserves are now formed into one, with headquarters in London, and are now called the Royal Defence Corps, as the King wanted to show his appreciation of the services of the various corps."



Tower Bridge, London, 1909,
Oil painting: 475 x 620mm. A712,
Hocken Collections, University of Otago

The Viaduct Babbage mentions in his letter was the Goetre Coed Viaduct, which carries the Taff Vale Railway (Merthyr line) over the River Taff, just north of Quaker's Yard. The viaduct

was engineered by his grandfather's former colleague Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and the painting that was so highly esteemed by the Royal Academy was entitled 'The Viaduct', 'a snow scene taken after the last blizzard, and shows the dark viaduct looming up amongst the snow clad hills, with the river below' (Auckland Star, 20 June 1916, p.9).

It seems the severity of the conditions in which Ivan Babbage was serving were, eventually, to cause his death, on 14 October 1916, aged just 41. The Manawatu Standard of 24 October 1916 (p.7) reported as follows:

Mr Herbert Ivan Babbage, son of Mr C. W. Babbage, of St. John's Hill. Wanganui, and a well-known artist, was in England when the war broke out. He joined the Duke of Cornwall's Light infantry, and was continuously engaged in home defence. A short time ago he broke down under the strain, and had to undergo an operation, from which he never recovered, word of his death having just been received. Mr Babbage held an exhibition in Palmerston North a few years ago and a number of his pictures were purchased by local admirers.

Ivan Babbage's artistic skills have not been forgotten in his adopted country of New Zealand. A collection of his watercolours, painted between 1898 and 1905, is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library, in Wellington; three of his oil paintings are in the Hocken Special Collections at the University of Otago in Dunedin; and Wanganui's Sarjeant Gallery has eleven works by Babbage in its permanent collection.

On 14 October 2015, it was 99 years since Ivan Babbage died as a result of his service during the First World War. It is important that he, and all those who have died in the service of their countries, are remembered and honoured, and I am glad that I have been able to uncover and share a little of the story of Ivan's life.

Remembrance Service

It is pleasing that what started as an addition to a Health Walk has now become a fixture in the calendar. The link to the Health Walk remains, which is why the service is held on the nearest Tuesday to 11th November.

This year the service was led by the Rev. Lionel Fanthorpe and two schools, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Allansbank Primary School, participated in the proceedings.

A pupil of the Welsh school read the poem "Rhyfel" ("War") by Hedd Wyn, then Ivor Lippett and a pupil of Allensbank Road School recited "For the Fallen" ("They shall grow not old ..."). The silence was signalled by a lone bugler, Alan Bourne (Director of Music, RAF St Athan), playing "The Last Post" and ended by the playing of "Reveille".



His gravestone in Cathays Cemetery reads as follows:

In Loving Remembrance
Of
HERBERT IVAN BABBAGE
OF
WANGANUI, NEW ZEALAND
AND
ST IVES, CORNWALL
ARTIST
WHO WHILE SERVING
IN
THE ROYAL DEFENCE CORPS
DIED IN CARDIFF
ON THE
14TH OF OCTOBER 1916
AGED 41
"GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS,
THAT A MAN
LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS"

Annie Irving

We are pleased that Annie has recently moved to Cardiff and joined the editorial team.



*Wreath placing by Capt Chronik, 3rd Battalion
Royal Welsh*

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Following a reading and prayers, wreaths were laid at the Cross of Sacrifice, by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff (David Walker), a Captain from the Royal Welsh Regiment, Ivor Lippett, pupils from the two schools and the Operational Manager of Bereavement Services (Martin Birch), on behalf of all employees of the City Council.



The Lord Mayor unveiling the plaque

A special addition to the service this year was the unveiling of a plaque to Frederick Barter, the first Cardiff recipient of a Victoria Cross in World War 1. The unveiling was carried out by the Lord Mayor, followed by a reading about Barter's life and heroic action by school pupils.



Plaque to Company Sergeant Major Frederick Barter

It was particularly gratifying that a number of relatives were in attendance, albeit that it was somewhat fortuitous, as they had only been aware of the event from news reports in the preceding 24 hours. The story of Frederick Barter was related in our September 2015 issue.



Relatives of Frederick Barter

The service ended with the reading of a roll of honour direct from the headstones in Section EB, the World War 1 plot in the New Cemetery. The reading was carried out by pupils from both schools, assisted by members of the Walking for Health Group.



Preparing for the reading of the roll of honour

Recent Events

Guided Walks

On **Sunday 20th September**, in conjunction with Open Doors, **Ivor Lippett** led a **Friends' Walk** in the **New Cemetery**. Around 25 people, many of them visiting for the first time, heard the history of the Cemetery, put in the context of the rapid expansion of the city from the beginning of 19C. The opportunity was taken to visit the graves of fascinating people whose stories have only recently been discovered, like **William Cann** (who survived World War 1, only to die a hero in a railway accident) and **Jaroslav Kulhavý**, a Czech Air Force flight engineer who died in a plane crash during World War 2.

On **Sunday 25th October**, **Carmel Thomas** of Bereavement Services had a hardy audience for the **Insignia Walk**, which had less than favourable weather. The walk looked at a wide range of military insignia and Carmel related the stories of some of the servicemen and their regiments.

Talk

On **Tuesday 17th November**, **Chris Williams** gave the **Bill Mosley Memorial Lecture**, a joint venture between the Friends and the Cardiff School of History, Archaeology and Religion. Chris is Head of School and he chose as his subject "**Cartooning in World War I**". The presentation featured the work of **Joseph Moorwod Staniforth**, who worked from his home in Llanishen, but whose work was seen nationwide, with his cartoons appearing in the **Western Mail** and **News of the World**, as well as other publications. His lifetime output was in the region of 15000 cartoons, including almost one a day on average through the war. His cartoons were very much "of the moment" and he did not avoid potentially sensitive issues, while the quotations which usually accompanied his work showed that he was abreast of political debate and well read. If you want to learn more about this, the project (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and led by Prof Williams) to

research these cartoons and make them freely available has its own website:

www.cartoonww1.org

Open Doors

As the main event for Open Doors, the Chapels were open for 3 hours on **Sunday 20th September**. With Members of the Friends and Bereavement Services staff on hand to help with questions, there was lots of genuine interest in the chapels, with acknowledgement of the progress that has been made and an understanding of future plans ... and the underlying funding problem. Many of the fifty or so visitors were first-timers so, as an exercise in promoting interest in the Cemetery, the event was a great success.

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays



Hopefully, recent visitors to the Cemetery will have noticed that the grassed areas around the chapels has been tidied up, with the gravel drains weeded, the edges trimmed and bare spots patched. The objective is that the



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chapels and the area around the main entrance should make a pleasing impact on visitors. With the annual strimming of the Conservation Areas completed by Bereavement Services, efforts are now being concentrated on the perennial problem of clearing out saplings and brambles, which have prospered in the 2015 weather.

The weather tried to stop our final workday of the year, but we were able to divert to an indoor job - washing off the pews, the first step in their rejuvenation in readiness for regular use in a few months time.

As usual, there will be no workday in December (how many people would turn up on Boxing Day?), but we will resume the normal schedule (last Saturday of the month) in the new year. So our next workdays are on **Saturdays 27th February and 26th March**. If you can spare a couple of hours, please join us. You can choose your own pace and level of exertion and you are assured of friendly company. We **meet by the chapels at 10 am**, tools and gloves are provided and we even have a half time refreshment break.

Weekly Health Walks

These walks continue to be popular, catching the seasonal highlights laid on by nature as they occur. Every walk is punctuated with information about the Cemetery and its residents, often passing on the discoveries of the latest research. Our walk on 10th November included the Remembrance Service at the Commonwealth War Graves plot in the New Cemetery, which is reported on page 7.



The walks take place every **Tuesday morning**, regardless of the weather. The only exception to this rule is the Tuesday immediately following Christmas Day (29th December). 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**. 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

The AGM

This will be held on **Saturday 30th January, at 10:30 am** in the **Meeting Room** in the **Bereavement Services Office** at Thornhill. This is your opportunity to have a say in the direction in which the Friends progress and to raise any issues. We hope to see you there.

Full details for the AGM will be circulated in the New Year.

Talk

On **Tuesday 22nd March at 7 pm**, **Gordon Hindess** will give an illustrated talk entitled "**Cathays Cemetery - European Tour**". The venue will be the **John Percival Building, Cardiff University, in Colum Drive** (behind Colum Road). Europe was not included in Gordon's World Tour, so this talk will address the omission. You may be surprised at the places that memorials in Cathays Cemetery can lead to.

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