

Phew!

This is the one word summary of the Summer in the Cemetery. One of the driest, hottest and sunniest Junes on record only prepared the way for a scorching July, resulting in much of the Cemetery taking on a parched appearance, as the view of Section S below shows.



Not far from where this picture was taken, a false autumn appeared under the lime trees alongside Allensbank Road, with an abundance of winged seeds covering the boundary path and quickly turning yellow.



The unusual and extreme weather resulted in winners and losers. While the flower spears on the yucca in Section K failed to develop into blooms or quickly withered, the nearby hydrangea has rarely looked better.



Our young foxglove tree became a cause for concern, struggling to produce more than a handful of small leaves. Two sturdy suckers then appeared at its base and closer examination revealed that the strapping that tied the tree to its supporting stake had turned into a throttle, as the trunk expanded. Clearly, the tree's behaviour was a defence mechanism, responding to the problem. The image below shows the two suckers, which had grown to three feet in as many weeks.



As soon as the problem was identified, the strap was cut and the suckers removed. But the tree failed to respond so, when new suckers appeared, it was decided that the tree probably knew best, and these were allowed to remain.

Another casualty of the weather was the tulip tree in Section K, which lacked flowers. But, apart from this, our blossoming trees seem to have been happy with the weather, with rowan and the later flowering bean trees blossoming well. The picture below shows our biggest Indian (that's the native American one!) bean

Friends TOPICAL

tree in Section W.



While the Cemetery has many exotic trees, it has relatively few native shrubs, like hawthorn, hazel and elderberry. A specimen of the latter can be found in Section C, close to the former Catholic chapel site and is probably most easily identified when the fragrant white flowers are out, as in the picture below.



While not the result of formal planting, roses can be seen around the Cemetery throughout the summer and these seem to be happy in any weather conditions. The common dog rose will have spread in naturally, while some sweet briar was deliberately introduced about thirty years ago. But there are many hybrid varieties which are presumably the legacy of floral tributes placed on graves. Left to their own devices, they are well able to survive, often competing successfully with other shrubs. The result is that fragrant and pleasing blooms can be found almost anywhere, throughout the summer, as shown in the two examples below.



Our regular readers will remember that we reported on the successful sowing of yellow rattle seeds in Section L last year. As this traditional meadow plant is an annual, it relies on natural self-seeding to repeat its display, so what happened this year was perhaps the real test. While the flowers weren't quite as dense (which may be a reflection on our weather this year), there was still a distinct yellow border to enjoy. So we can now confirm this sowing as a success.

Summer is the time when the Conservation Areas start to prove their worth, as bees and butterflies busy themselves amongst the flowers. A recent sighting was of the Common Blue butterfly pictured on the following page.



Green Flag raising and Green Heritage Award plaque

The weather did finally relent around the end of July (no coincidence that this is when the school summer holiday starts!), with some welcome rain. While there was sufficient precipitation for the grassed areas to become green again, amounts were still below average. Temperatures, while less oppressive, were still higher than normal.

Summer Miscellany

We are pleased to announce that the Cemetery has once again met the requirements for a Green Flag. In addition, it is one of just six locations in Wales that has earned a Green Heritage Award. This special award, endorsed by Cadw, is administered by Keep Wales Tidy, on behalf of Welsh Government, and recognises sites that are both historically significant and meet Green Flag criteria. All in Bereavement Services and the Friends who have contributed to this achievement should take great credit from this.

The formal flag raising ceremony and revelation of the Heritage Award plaque took place on Tuesday 7th August. The flag raising was a joint effort by Councillor Michael and our Chairman, Paul Jones. Demonstrating confidence that the Heritage Award plaque will be ongoing, it was mounted on a substantial pillar of local pennant sandstone.

Early in July, a funeral service took place in the Nonconformist Chapel, with the coffin being borne in a hearse, pulled by four black horses. If, by chance, you had been passing through around noon that day, you would have been transported back 150 years, by the sight of the hearse, standing outside the chapels. Sorry if you were hoping to see a picture of this scene, but respect for the family and friends of the deceased doesn't allow us to do this.

The Cemetery continues to be used as an educational resource and the Friends have been pleased to host a tour by visiting European librarians, helped with the production of a podcast by a local graduate student and assisted research into the social value of walking. The last of these was a project by the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, and involved 'go-along' interviews with participants in our Tuesday Health Walks, over a number of weeks.

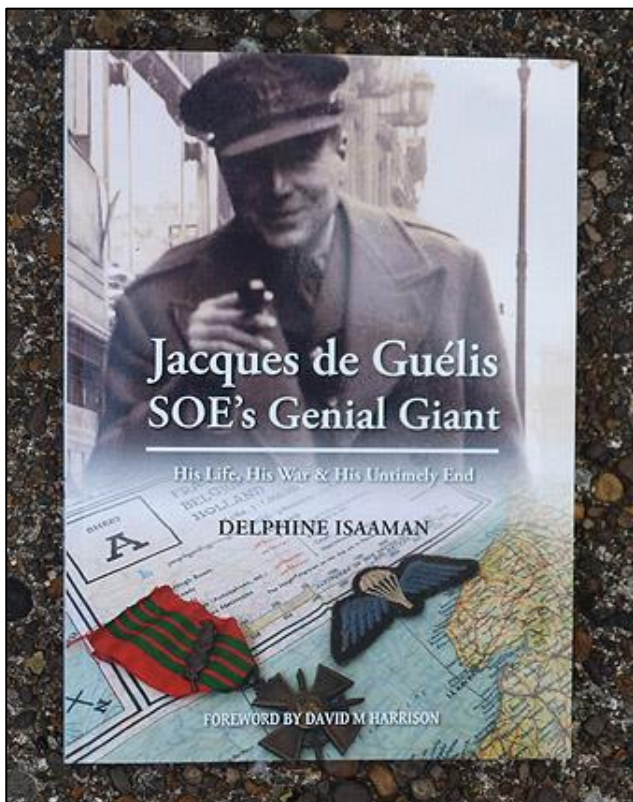
The Friends were pleased to receive an invitation from Cardiff University to attend the launch of the Barbier Archive, on June 6th, at the Temple of Peace. The archive comprises family papers (letters, diaries, photographs, etc) previously held by two descendants of the Barbier and de Guélis families and now occupies some 10m of shelf space in the University's special collections archive. The reception included a small exhibition of items from the archive and a talk on the Barbier/de Guélis families. Everyone then went to Museum Place for the unveiling of a blue plaque to celebrate the life of SOE agent Jacques Vaillant de

Friends TOPICAL

Guélis, who had been born at number 3 of what was then known as Richmond Place (the museum not having been built at this time). The pictures below show the unveiling ceremony and a close up of the plaque.



At about the same time as the archive launch, a book about Jacques de Guélis was published. The author is Delphine Isaaman, whose mother was a first cousin of Jacques. While Delphine drew heavily on the papers now in the archive, she also made research trips to France and Corsica, meeting many people who had worked with Jacques. Now, for the first time the full story of this remarkable man has been told.



"Jacques de Guélis, SOE's Genial Giant"

The Friends have published four more titles in the popular booklet series, "Builders & Architects in Cathays Cemetery", "The Five Legs of Cathays", "First World War Soldiers - Absent but Remembered" and "Tragedy at Sea". More information about these and other publications can be found on the final page of this newsletter. Alternatively, go to the Friends' website - Events & Links tab - Publication page.

Unfortunately, there were printing and distribution problems with our last newsletter, which meant that the issue was delayed by a few weeks and some copies had page formatting problems, such as large blank spaces and headers and footers in the centre of pages. We apologise for this and are hoping that distribution of this issue proves more straightforward.

Some of the Friends' aims depend on reaching a wider audience - something which is easy to talk about, but less easy to accomplish. So it is reassuring when evidence of success in this is seen. Our presence on Facebook and Twitter, since the start of this year, seems to have boosted attendance at events. But it is not just about "getting out there". Our Facebook comments also provide snippets of information which augment our knowledge of the Cemetery's residents. As an example, a recent post made us aware of someone who took part in the Zebrugge raid in 1918, which we hope to say more about in a future issue.

At the end of July, Wales Online picked up the stories of two of our severed legs, those of Samuel Chivers and Edith Fanny Skyrme, and these stories then appeared in print a few days later. Around the same time, we learned that Edith's story appears in the August issue of the Dyfed Family History Society Journal, the outcome of research by a current generation Skyrme. This is, of course, far better publicity for the Cemetery and the Friends than we could generate for ourselves ... and it's free!

Sadly, it is all too easy to find new examples of the gradual deterioration of the heritage record. The Pennant Sandstone memorial shown below was recently spotted in Section V. The inscribed face has delaminated, leaving the recorded details on a fragile slither, currently leaning against the remainder of the headstone. This underlines the importance of the recording work being done by a small number of dedicated volunteers. If you would like to help with this task, please let us know.



Once again, we return to the theme of unusual grave ornamentation. The orange plant pot featuring a trio of what appear to be satsuma bear heads was quite striking, but we really liked the sentiment behind the mementoes placed after a recent interment - flowers, a photograph ... and a malt whisky miniature! These are both pictured at the top of the next column.



We are increasingly indebted to the probation service and the labour provided under Community Payback, which aims to benefit local communities, while offenders pay back for the crimes they have committed. The scheme chooses projects which will make a contribution to communities, whilst not taking work away from law-abiding citizens. It provides a tough and visible punishment and deterrent, by requiring people to undertake challenging work, while giving offenders positive experience of what can be achieved working in a structured and disciplined team, while learning new skills that can help them to get paid employment and to lead more stable, positive and crime-free lives in the future.

There is no doubt that the work which they do in the Cemetery fits the criteria and makes the difference between keeping on top of maintenance, rather than fighting a losing battle against nature. An example of recent work was the clearance of a badly overgrown area in the centre of Section P, an area otherwise given over to short grass. The cleared area, pictured below, revealed at least half a dozen long lost memorials and, at the centre, a long forgotten large tree stump. At the same time, a very similar area was cleared in the adjacent part of Section O.



Friends FEATURES

Spanish Flu

Just over a year ago (Issue 27, June 2017), correspondence from New Zealand prompted the question 'what was the impact of Spanish flu in Cardiff?' It proved difficult to provide a simple answer. While we are commemorating the centenary of the end of the Great War, it is equally important to remember the global pandemic of 1918-19, which was one of the greatest medical disasters of the 20th century.

A children's playground rhyme of the time rather trivialised it:

"I had a little bird
its name was Enza
I opened the window,
And in-flu-enza."

No other epidemic has claimed as many lives, at least 50 million worldwide, as Spanish influenza in 1918-1919. Young adults between 20 and 30 years old were particularly affected - in this age group, those fine and healthy at breakfast could be dead by tea-time. The first symptoms of fatigue, fever and headache, could rapidly develop into pneumonia and victims would then struggle for air until they suffocated to death. There were no antibiotics to treat the pneumonia. This age group was both the core of the working population and the group already most badly hit by the war.

Because of World War I, newspapers were censored. Many countries including Britain, France, the United States and Germany, had media blackouts on news that might lower morale, so it was the Spanish cases that hit the headlines (one of the first casualties was the King of Spain). It was because of this that it earned the nickname 'Spanish Flu', first coined in the trenches in Flanders.

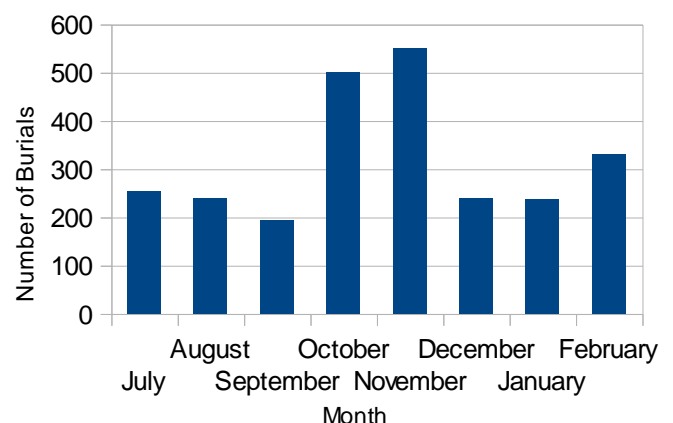
The rapid global spread of the virus was undoubtedly helped by troop movements in the latter stages of the war and, particularly, the return of troops to their home countries. The origin of the epidemic is unclear. There are

theories that the particular strain first appeared in Kansas early in 1918. But the results of investigative work published as recently as 2000, suggests that a British troop staging camp in Étaples, France, was at the centre of the pandemic or, at least, a significant precursor virus to it, as early as the winter of 1915-16. Also soldiers in the trenches became ill with what was known as 'la grippe', the symptoms of which were sore throats, headaches and a loss of appetite. Although highly infectious in the cramped, primitive conditions, recovery was usually swift.

Troops returning from Northern France at the end of the war travelled home by train. Waves of flu were seen to spread from the railway stations to the centre of towns and cities, into the suburbs and then into the surrounding hinterland. Even the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, contracted it, but survived. About a quarter of the British population were affected. The UK death toll was around 228,000.

Looking at Cardiff, definitive data is not readily available. As already mentioned, bad news was subject to censorship, while burial records are not death certificates. However, as the chart below shows, just looking at the monthly burial figures is illuminating.

Burial Records July 1918 - February 1919



There is a clear leap in the burial rates during October and November 1918, to more than double the average. It is reasonable to assume that this is due to the flu, with the total deaths attributable to it being in the region of 600. By comparison, there are 466 World War I servicemen buried in Cathays Cemetery. Evidence from elsewhere in the country indicates that there were two or, even, three waves of the flu, although the autumn of 1918 was the most severe period. The timing of the peaks varied in different parts of the country. This suggests that there may have been relatively low numbers of Spanish flu deaths hidden in the less exceptional figures for other months.

As it happens, we have identified one returning soldier, Sapper A Jones, of the Royal Engineers, who is counted in both of the above figures! His death on 19th November 1918, at Fargo Military Hospital, near Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, is attributed to "Influenza". His civilian occupation is listed as "Third Group Fireman, Great Western Railway Loco & Carriage Dept, Tondur". His grave, in Section EA, is marked by a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone, which is located pretty much at the centre of that Section and pictured below.



Among reports of committees presented to the Council, on 13th January 1919, was one from the Cemetery Manager, dated 3rd December, 1918, which made the following points in relation to burials during October and November:

"(1) In no period in the history of the Cemetery has such a large number of interments taken place in two months. (2) The Regulations as to arrivals and notices had to be almost entirely suspended and arrangements made by telephone. (3) The number of interments for October was 483 and for November 536; Total, 1019. (4) To deal with the extraordinary conditions, the staff of workmen had to be increased and men obtained from the City Engineer, Waterworks Engineer, and Parks Superintendent. The Chairman also helped. (5) Twelve to fourteen men were also supplied daily for Grave Digging for four weeks by the Commandant of the Agricultural Distribution Centre. (6) The most busy period was from October 19th to November 16th—701 interments—an average of 28.2 per day. (7) The greatest number on any one day was 40 (October 30th). (8) The Cemetery staff worked seven days a week, and at times during very wet weather when temporary men were absent, they "carried on." (9) The organising work meant hours of additional clerical labour for six weeks, Sundays and evenings."

Note that nowhere in this report does the word "flu" appear. The Chairman and Committee paid tribute to the splendid work of Mr Rouse, the manager, and resolved that the Junior Clerk be granted an honorarium of two guineas for his extra work while men who remained on duty at the Cemetery for the whole of Armistice Day were granted an extra day's pay. The thanks of the Committee were accorded to the City Engineer, Waterworks Engineer and Parks Superintendent, for lending men for grave digging, and also to six volunteers.

The inscription on one grave suggests that the flu was not just a matter of life or death. The

Friends EVENTS

wonderfully informative stone almanac, that is the Larcombe/Crocker Harris headstone in Section 5 tells us that the daughter of William and Ciss Crocker Harris, Lulu Grace, was crippled by the flu vaccine in 1918. Lulu had only been born in June of that year.



Detail of Larcombe/Crocker Harris headstone

While there were vaccines about at this time that were thought to be effective against flu, all were based on the erroneous presumption that the illness was caused by a bacterial infection. It was not until the 1930s that researchers established that influenza was in fact caused by a virus, not a bacterium. On the basis of research almost 100 years later, it seems that, at best, some of the vaccines available in 1918 could have reduced the attack rate of pneumonia, after viral influenza infection. Even today, flu vaccination for babies under six months old is not normally recommended.

So, interpretation of the inscription on the memorial is problematic. Was such a young baby really given a vaccine that, with today's knowledge, would have been of dubious benefit? Could it have been the mother who was vaccinated, passing on some ill effect through breast milk? Or perhaps the disability was a consequence of the flu, rather than any vaccine? Whatever the reality, there seems no doubt that baby Lulu Grace was a sufficient casualty of Spanish flu to warrant placing the information on a durable record. This record also tells us that Lulu Grace died in 1989, so had a relatively long life, which we hope was happy and fulfilled.

Robert Raeburn Hood

Writing previously about the eldest son of Archibald Hood (Grave News in 2014 and Hidden Histories), we knew only that he had

died in Chile. Thanks to a distant relative, Jenny Robertson, in New Zealand, and her contact in Santiago, Audrey Wilsdon, we can now throw some light on the circumstances of his death.

Robert went to Chile around 1891 to manage the Arauco Coal Company. In 1901, he was living at Calle de Santo Domingo, overlooking the Pacific, south of Valparaiso. However, just a year later, a codicil to his father's will refers to his son lying in a helpless and hopeless condition in Santiago (the capital and about 40 miles inland). He was to live for another 13 years or so in this state. He died on 4th December 1915 and his funeral was at the British Protestant Church, in Calle de Santo Domingo, the following day. His body was placed in wall alcove 23 of aisle W the "Cementerio de Disidentes" in Valparaiso.

Recent Events

Walks

On **Tuesday June 5th**, **Gordon Hindess** led the Friend's **Midsummer Walk**. Encouraged by a fine warm evening, and probably with the help of our Facebook and Twitter channels, a record attendance of 74 people was achieved. Fortunately, Bereavement Services had trimmed critical grassed sections of the route (as they usually do) and there were plenty of committee members on hand to assist, when needed.



The route concentrated on graves which had not previously featured on guided walks. The

anecdotes related to two staunch non-conformists (both of whom were writers, with one of them being the first wearer of the Lady Mayoress's chain), a link to Cardiff's FA Cup triumph in 1927, a number of murder victims, a remarkable adventurer, the victim of a construction accident, the tragic tale of an operatic soprano and a lady of ill repute who spent much of her life in jail.

Also blessed by good weather, on successive **Wednesday** evenings, **13th and 20th June**, a total of around 80 people enjoyed the performances of "**Graveyard Voices**". Previously billed as Trails and Tales, this event has grown into a collaboration between Bereavement Services, the University of South Wales, A48 Theatre Company Ltd and writers from Living Lines, with costume assistance from Lydia-Jane Bateman. It was pleasing that many of the dramatisations benefited from research by the Friends.



For about two hours, the audience was treated to dramatised interpretations, inspired by some of those buried in the Cemetery. While walking around the Cemetery, among those we met were the first head gardener, the mother of a missionary to lepers in South Africa, a quarryman created by T Rowland Hughes (with a monologue delivered in Welsh), a famous

racehorse owner, the widow of a sailor on the Titanic and an old sea dog. In all, some 18 actors performed works by about six writers, with the whole tour being linked together by Roger Swan of Bereavement Services. If you were not able to get to one of these evenings, you missed a treat!

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

The two workdays since our last issue experienced contrasting weather: it was sweltering for the first, while the second signalled the end of the drought. Despite this, a variety of small tasks was tackled, including tidying the lawns around the chapels and cutting out 'nuisance' vegetation around memorials. One example of the latter was the Nicholas memorial in Section I, where the statue had only been replaced on its plinth three years ago. New tree growth was again closing in on the statue, which could have suffered renewed damage if pre-emptive action had not been taken.

We meet on the **last Saturday of the month** (but not in August, October or December), so our next workdays are on **29th September and 24th November**. We meet by the chapels at **10.00 am** and work until noon, with a break for elevenses. Tools and gloves are provided and you can work at your own pace. So, if you fancy some gentle exercise in sociable company, why not join us?

Weekly Health Walks

Our leisurely walks take place regardless of the weather and last for about an hour. They are intended to be social occasions, exercising body and mind, with anecdotes about the Cemetery and discussion of the natural history. We meet just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library at 10.30 am every Tuesday morning**. All are welcome on our walks and afterwards, when we adjourn to a local hostelry for a chat over tea or coffee.

Friends EVENTS

Future Events

Walks

On **Sunday September 16th at 2.30pm**, as a contribution to **Open Doors**, the Friends will lead a **Guided Walk in the New Cemetery**. As most events take place in the Old Cemetery, this is a golden opportunity to explore what is generally more recent heritage. Please **note especially** that the **starting point** for this walk is just inside the **entrance off Allensbank Road, north of Eastern Avenue** and almost opposite the back entrance to the University of Cardiff Hospital.

On **Sunday October 21st at 11am**, Roger Swan of Bereavement Services will present **A Brief History of the Victorian Cemetery**. This walk will **start from the chapels, just inside the main entrance in Fair oak Road**. Please note especially that this new format event, an excellent introduction to the Cemetery, is in the morning.

Talk

On **Tuesday 13th November**, Gary Williams, of the Western Front Association, will deliver the **Bill Mosley Memorial Lecture** on "**November 11th 1918 - The End of the Great War**". The Western Front Association was formed to further interest in the period 1914-1918, particularly to perpetuate the memory, courage and comradeship of those of both sides who served during the Great War. Gary is a member of the South Wales Branch and we are lucky to have such an experienced and authoritative speaker to help us commemorate the centenary of the end of the war. Please note that there will be an entry charge of £5, payable at the door, for this lecture, which will be in Room 2.01 in the John Percival Building, Cardiff University, in Colum Drive (behind Colum Road).

Publications

Books (about 100 pages, full colour):

Cathays Cemetery on its 150th Anniversary - £5
Hidden Histories: Tales from Cathays Cemetery - £10

Themed guides (12 - 20 pages, black and white, unless indicated otherwise):

Another Batch of Murders - £1.00
Builders & Architects - £1.00
Cardiff Blitz - £1.00
First World War Soldiers - £1.00
Five Legs of Cathays - £1.00
Symbolism on the Memorials - £1.00
Murders - £1.00
Railway Connection - £1.00
Tragedy at Sea - £1.00
First World War Heroes - £1.00
Tree Tale Trail (colour) - £2.00

The books are also available by post, with an additional shipping cost of £3: in the UK, by sending your name & address and a cheque payable to "Friends of Cathays Cemetery" for the book price plus postage and packing to:-

Friends of Cathays Cemetery
c/o Bereavement Services
Thornhill Cemetery
Cardiff CF14 9UA

For orders from outside the UK please email us for a costing.

There are also several free publications which can be downloaded from our website in pdf format.

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