

### Getting Along Without You

We had not anticipated that, since our last issue, there would have been no material change to the way in which the Cemetery can be enjoyed. While there are many of us who miss the Cemetery, all the indications are that the Cemetery is getting along without us pretty well. Of course, basic maintenance, like mowing and strimming, continues and there is still the trickle of burials in Cathays but, otherwise, it is eerily quiet. So the World War 1 plot in the New Cemetery continues to look immaculate ...



... while the the lawn conversion sections in the 'library quarter' of the Old Cemetery look their normal selves.



Picking up on the "outside, looking in" theme of the last issue, one thing that is apparent is that some things inside the Cemetery are better seen from the outside. In Section S, close to the Whitchurch Road wall, there is an Oriental Plane tree, which can be hard to find amongst

the cluster of trees around it. But if you are outside, near the bus stop, you should see its branches hanging over the wall. It is also called the old world sycamore, to distinguish it from the 'western' plane, which is the American, or 'new world', sycamore. The London plane is a hybrid of these two trees and is much more common in Cardiff, for example, lining the northern end of Ninian Road and in the park alongside. There is little to distinguish the fruits of the two varieties (which would make pretty decorations for a small Christmas tree, if sprayed in silver or gold paint), but look closely at the leaves. The London plane leaves have three lobes, while the Oriental variety has five.



*Oriental Plane, fruit and leaf*

Not only better seen from outside the Cemetery, the crab apple tree is normally only visible from outside the wall alongside Fair oak Road, because it is in the garden of the lodge. But it has been very productive this year: anyone for crab apple jelly?



*Crab apples hanging above the pavement in Fair oak Road*



## Friends TOPICAL

The wealth of fruit is another demonstration of how well the Cemetery is getting on while left to its own devices. There was a good crop of cherries ...



... the rowans are heavily laden, the sole eating apple tree bears plenty of fruit ...



... and, at the time of writing, blackberries are abundant, not least, in the parts of the conservation areas that missed out on the autumn/winter clearance because of the Covid 19 restrictions. Brambles are also a prime target for workdays, so clumps elsewhere around the cemetery are also thriving.



The summer blossoms have come and gone, so the coy tulip tree flowers have been largely unseen ...



... but the catalpa erubescens purpurea (purple bean tree) could be enjoyed through the Fair oak Road railings.



This is a cross between the American and Chinese bean trees and has dark purple leaves when young, while the blossom has a distinctly purplish hue.

The prolific fruiting was also apparent on the oak tree in the New Cemetery, which is shown below...





... and the lime trees alongside the Allensbank Road boundary. In this case, the combination of new seeds, fresh foliage and high sap levels increased the weight of the branches to the extent that many that could easily have been walked under in the winter, were bent down to the ground.



*Sycamore branch, heavy with seed and bent to the ground*

While the pandemic restrictions prevented the wild flower garden being seeded this year, it has managed pretty well on its own, relying on self seeding, as the picture below shows.



Over the years, rose bushes have been planted on graves. Most of these have received little or no attention for many years, but somehow look after themselves so that, throughout the summer, it is usually possible to find a good display somewhere, as the picture below shows.



Birds seem to have enjoyed the quieter Cemetery, including a pair of crows that were seen using a strange eating technique. Finding some crumbs thinly spread on a headstone that had been laid down, they were turning their heads sideways and using their beaks like scrapers. It looked quite odd, but seemed to work.



*Crows feeding*

We understand that the Cemetery bees have been enjoying the tranquil environment and that a plentiful supply of honey has been produced. Arrangements for the sale of this are still being finalised, so stay in touch on our website ... or via the local grapevine.

August brought some exceptional weather - two named storms in the month. With trees in full leaf, some casualties in the Cemetery were perhaps inevitable. There was a lot of smaller debris, a small festigate beech in Section N was uprooted, but the biggest loss was one of the twin trunks of an Hungarian oak in Section T, which is pictured below.





## Friends TOPICAL

Fortunately, no memorials were in the path of the falling trees. The Hungarian oak is distinguished by its very large leaves. Multi-trunked trees are not unusual and sometimes one trunk dominates. However, in this case, the two trunks were of much the same size. This results in both trunks leaning outwards and having a greater weight of branches on the side of the lean. This imbalance frequently leads to an early demise. The risk is exacerbated by the bark inclusion where the trunks touch at the bottom.



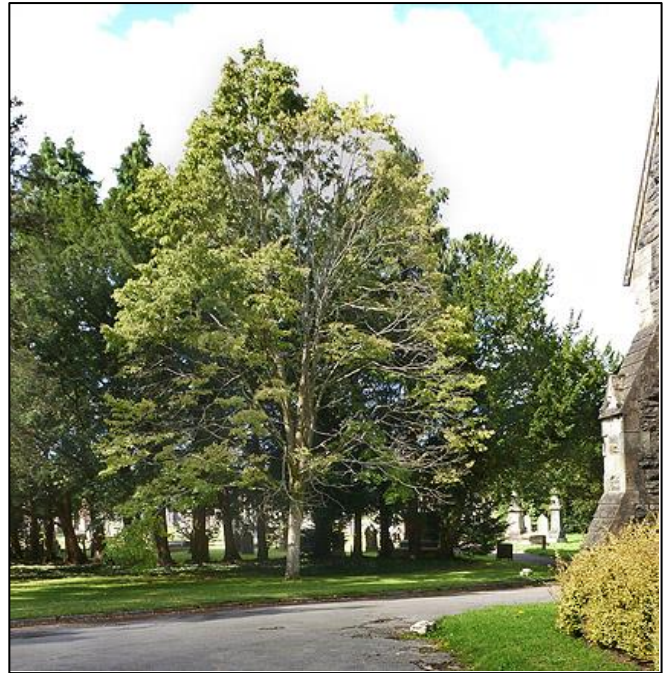
*Bark inclusion*

This means that there is no bond between the two trunks and, as the tree grows and its limbs become larger, there is no room to expand against the joint and strain builds up. In addition, the joint offers an invitation to disease or fungal attack. Taking all this into consideration, perhaps any multi-trunked tree should be regarded as an accident waiting to happen. Although there is no bond between the trunks, there is a degree of mutual support through the root system and interlocking branches. But, once this has gone, the remaining trunk must be regarded as being at higher risk of falling too.

## *Just Champion*

One of the rare trees in the Cemetery is in line to be registered as a Champion Tree. This will be the first in the Cemetery. The 'Harold Hillier' lime tree (*tilia hillieri*) can be found just

across the drive from the front corner of the non-conformist chapel, as pictured below.



According to the Tree Register there are no other such trees in Wales. The tree is described as elegant and vigorous, with a narrow, conical habit, shallowly three-lobed leaves, bright yellow autumn colour, and seeming not to support problematic aphid populations. It is a hybrid cultivar first raised from open-pollinated seed in 1973, in London, and the Cemetery specimen probably dates from the 1990s when it had a significant commercial distribution.

In profile, it doesn't look at all like the common lime, but its seeds, pictured below, give it away.



Look behind our champion tree, along the path into Section M, and you will see the tree shown below left.



The profile would suggest a poplar or pine, but the leaves (on the right above) tell a different story. It is unmistakably an oak. This is *quercus robur fastigiata*, a narrow-upright, columnar, or fastigate, form of English oak (sometimes called the common or pedunculate oak), which features dense, upright branching that rises at a sharp and narrow angle from the trunk. It can grow to 50-60 feet tall, but with a width of only 10-20 feet. Its leaves remain green throughout the growing season, with little change in colour in the autumn.

There has been no change in the access restrictions for the Cemetery since our last issue, but it is pleasing to record that the ability to visit graves has been appreciated by families and this has been apparent in the number of floral tributes that have been left, as the picture below, taken in Section E-D, shows.



While the operations of the Probation Service have been restricted by the Covid 19 restrictions, they have been able to make a start on re-painting the perimeter fencing. While this is a huge task, it is pleasing to see it

underway.

### ***The Rev Griffith Arthur Jones***

Griffith Arthur Jones was born in Ruabon on 16 July 1827, the fifth child and only son of the Rev. John and Charlotte Harriett Jones. Griffith went to Jesus College, Oxford, where he was much influenced by Dr Pusey and became prominent in the Tractarian, or Oxford, Movement, which promoted the adoption of Catholic ritual. He graduated in 1851 and in the following vacation accompanied the Dean of the college on a trip to Paris and Normandy. He was ordained deacon at Bangor Cathedral on 21 December 1851 and went on to officiate at Gwalchmai and Heneglwys, Anglesey.

Unusually, he was offered the incumbency of Llangowen only three months into his diaconate but, after advice from friends and family, declined this. In 1857, he was appointed Vicar of Llanegryn, near Towyn and in the shadow of Cader Idris, where he stayed for 16 years. Initially, at Llanegryn, the parishioners were reluctant to accept his form of Anglican ministry, but he eventually won them over and is credited with raising church attendance and having one of the first (if not the first) surpliced choirs in North Wales.

To understand the story of Rev Jones, it is perhaps necessary to clarify what the Oxford Movement was. In the early nineteenth century, different groups were present in the Church of England. Many, particularly in high office, saw themselves as liberal and moved to broaden the Church's appeal. Conversely, many clergy in the parishes were evangelicals, as a result of the religious revival led by John Wesley. At the same time, the universities became the breeding ground for a movement to restore liturgical and devotional customs which borrowed heavily from traditions before the Reformation as well as contemporary Roman Catholic traditions. Griffith Jones was fervently of this latter persuasion, so it was inevitable that he would encounter resistance in some parishes.



## Friends FEATURES

In 1871, Rev Jones was offered the benefices of both St Mary's, Butetown, and St Margaret's, Roath, at same time. He accepted the former and became vicar in 1872. He was to hold this position for 31 years. Despite determined opposition, he revived the patronal festival at St Mary's and introduced Catholic practises, including confessions, incense and daily Eucharist services (previously Sunday only services had generally sufficed). By his opponents, he was variously dubbed an out-and-out Ritualist, a Puseyite or a Popish priest in disguise. Congregations declined initially but, in time, recovered and increased.

St Mary's Church has an interesting history. It was Cardiff's only parish church in 1102 and, by 1146, it was the mother church for subservient chapels serving Llanishen, Roath, Lisvane, Llanederyn, etc. The prominent church in the city centre, St John's, was one of these chapels and only became a separate parish in the 15C. St Mary's Church was originally situated at the bottom of St Mary's Street, close to the River Taff, but it was seriously damaged by floods on Jan 20, 1607. The damage is often, but wrongly, ascribed to erosion by waters of the River Taff itself. But the date is that of what is now described as the 1607 tsunami, or Great Flood, that inundated the coastal levels of South Wales and Somerset. Flood marks on churches, like those at Redwick and Peterstone Wentloge, testify to the height of the flood and the enormity of the event.



*Flood mark on St Thomas' Church, Redwick*

The Great Flood affected the foundations of St Mary's and, although it continued to be used,

its condition deteriorated. By 1678, it was described as being in ruins, the tower collapsed in 1680, the last recorded burial in the churchyard took place in 1698 and the last service was held in a roofless ruin in 1701, after which the church was abandoned.

The River Taff was diverted in 1850, by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, to create a site to allow Cardiff Central railway station to be built, and the original line of the river is roughly where Westgate Street runs today. The Theatre Royal (later the Prince of Wales theatre) was built on the site of the old church in 1878. This is now the location of the current Prince of Wales public house. The outline of a Gothic church was included on one wall of the theatre, denoting its location on the St Mary's church site.



*Outline of church on Prince of Wales*

## Friends FEATURES

For more than a century, St Mary's had no church and it shared St John's, though maintained its independent parish council structure. By 1840, the population of the combined parishes had surged above 10,000, with the majority now in the southern one, which included the rapidly expanding docks. A new church was needed and the centre of the parish had now moved south. In 1843, John Crichton-Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute paid for the construction of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin and St. Stephen the Martyr, in Bute Street as a permanent replacement. This church was designed by Thomas Foster, of Bristol, and the first divine service in the new building was held on December 14th 1843. The 2nd Marquess was to die within three years, but worshipped at St Mary's.

Father Jones, as he was normally addressed by his parishioners, also instigated changes to the church itself, which he considered not conducive to the conduct of open and welcoming services. The original enormous three-decker pulpit, which completely hid the small altar from the view of the congregation, was removed and replaced with a smaller pulpit to one side of the chancel arch. The organ and choir were moved from the west gallery and placed closer to the chancel.

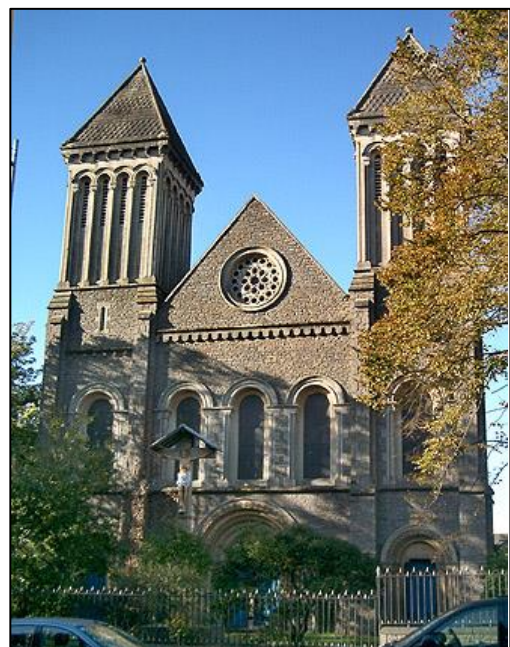


*Chancel and Sanctuary of St Mary's Church*

In 1884, the east end of the church was significantly modified, to designs by the

architect J D Sedding, removing the original main entrance and replacing the "very bad coloured glass" with masonry, although dummy doors and windows remain. Internally, niches, to be occupied by life-sized statues of the apostles, were created and wall paintings of St Margaret and St Winifred were commissioned for each side of the chancel arch.

The east end of the church was further enlarged in 1907 and it is today a Grade II listed building. These changes would not have been possible without the continued benefice of the Bute family (even though the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1868) and other influential friends. The latter included Sir Edward Hill and Alderman Robert Hughes. Hill, of Rookwood, Llandaff, was the owner of a dry dock close to the church and, for a time, a churchwarden at St Mary's. When the 1884 modifications were carried out, he gave the beautiful reredos with its painting, by Westlake, of the Adoration of the Shepherds. Hughes was a child at Llanegryn, when Father Jones was there, and became one of the most devoted Sunday school teachers at St Mary's. He was to become Cardiff's first Lord Mayor and, in the first year of his Mayoralty, presented a lectern to celebrate Father Jones 32 years incumbency.



*East facade of St Mary's today*



## Friends FEATURES

Father Jones took a keen interest in everything connected with Welsh life, attending Eisteddfod and receiving a bardic title, Eos Egryn, and medal. He also did all he could to support the social well-being and education of his people, including getting the first two church schools (for boys and girls), built in North Church Street and run by the Sisters of St Margaret's, East Grinstead. He was also involved in the management of seven national schools in the parish.

There was a large seafaring population around the docks, with many sailor's lodging houses ... and a large number of houses of disrepute. This did not deter Father Jones from siting his parish office in the heart of the most deprived area around Loudon Square. He also arranged mission work, again using the Sisters from East Grinstead, who first arrived for this around 1873. Within a short time, the number of sisters based in Butetown had doubled.

Flatholm was in the parish and Father Jones made a point of visiting the small community there, to baptise their children and to visit their sick. Sometimes other clergy and friends accompanied him and the trip became a pleasant picnic. As well as the better known HMS Hamadryad, the Seaman's Hospital, there were two other retired naval vessels, HMS Thisbe and HMS Havannah. The former served as a Seamen's Chapel and Institute, where the chaplain served under licence to the Vicar of St Mary's, while the latter man-of-war was manned by naval officers as an industrial training school for boys, and worked closely with St Mary's and its vicar.

Father Jones' interests were not confined to Butetown. He formed a lifelong friendship with Father Lowder, a parish priest in Wapping, another poor dockland area, with much in common with Butetown. They would visit and preach in each others churches. Griffith Jones was fond of country sports and he happily accepted invitations from the Manager of the London & Provincial Bank, Mr Watkins from

Llandaff, to go grouse shooting on the Cumberland Moors. While he was at Llanegryn, he had made a retreat with the Society of St John the Evangelist in Cowley. When he was at St Mary's, it was largely through his efforts that retreats were instigated in Margam and Aberdare. In the latter, Abernant House became a retreat house and, later, the theological college for the diocese (which transferred to Llandaff in 1907). With the help of Robert Hughes, he was instrumental in getting a church for services in Welsh, Eglwys Dewi Sant, in Cardiff. Father Jones was involved in the publishing of several religious books in Welsh, including a Welsh psalter, and "A Manual on Confirmation".

While Father Jones was a staunch advocate of celibacy in the priesthood for himself, he happily accepted that his fellow clergymen might marry. He also had a deep affection for children and there are numerous quotations that talk about him approaching children in the street, talking to them and kissing them. This affection was clearly reciprocated to the extent that children would run up to him in the street and hang on his coattails. While such behaviour today might well be questioned or, indeed, lead to criminal allegations, it was clearly a healthy relationship and welcome at the time.

With increasing infirmities of old age, Father Jones resigned the living of St Mary's in 1903 and took a small house in Longcross Street, which he named Llesty Mair (St Mary's rest). His home was open to frequent visitors and he continued to exercise his priestly office, officiating regularly at St Mary's, helping his successor, with whom he had very cordial relations.

On Sunday 9th September 1906, he returned home from church at midday, feeling ill and unable to eat. A doctor was sent for, but he gradually got worse, with his niece and a trained nurse sharing his care, and the end came on 22nd September. The report of his passing in



the Western Mail summed up his character thus;

*Children could do what they liked with him, but he often faced an infuriated mob without flinching, and the clamour and attacks of the crowd left him unmoved. He was gentler than a lamb with the little ones, and hard as a rock, and as unmoveable, in the face of the attacks of the big ones. A strange combination, but a very beautiful one.*

On the day of the funeral, 26th September, there were Celebrations at St Mary's, at 6, 7 and 8 o'clock, with large numbers attending each. At 10 o'clock, there was a Requiem Mass in a crowded church. The funeral procession then formed outside the church, preceded by a cross bearer and a large number of clergy. The coffin and hearse were covered in wreaths and crosses and there were many carriages in the cortège, carrying many of the leading citizens of the capital, including his lifelong friend, the Lord Mayor. The 2 miles of streets between the church and the cemetery were lined with respectful spectators, while a large crowd awaited at Cathays Cemetery. The Western Mail recorded that 34 years earlier he had been one of the most unpopular men in Cardiff but, that at his funeral, it was not just his own people, but the whole city that respected and honoured his memory.

You can find the grave of the Rev Griffith Jones at the western end of Section L, close to the drive, roughly opposite the much larger White family memorial.



*Grave of Rev Griffith Jones*

But the legacies of this remarkable man are, perhaps, best seen in the fabric of St Mary's

Church, still showing the changes which he instigated, and the Catholic practises which are maintained at the church to this day.

### **VJ Day Remembered**

Having featured VE Day in our last issue, it was appropriate to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory over Japan and the ending of the Second World War, on 15<sup>th</sup> August. But this didn't prove to be quite as easy. Far fewer UK servicemen were involved in the Far East, the attrition rate was higher and those who returned were often reticent about burdening their families with the details of their experiences. And we had to find a link to the Cemetery, too. But we found one - and there may well be other relevant tales that we just don't know yet.

#### **Billy James**

Born in Cardiff on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1921, William John "Billy" James was raised in Carlisle Street, Splott. He joined Cardiff City Football Club in 1939 and became a prolific scorer for the club during wartime fixtures. Regarded as an exciting prospect in Welsh football, he was chosen to represent Wales in two wartime fixtures against England, scoring in the first match where he played against Stan Cullis.

At the age of 18, James enlisted in the army, joining the 77<sup>th</sup> Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment of the Royal Artillery. The unit contained a number of footballers, including other Cardiff City players Ernie Curtis and Billy Baker, and embarked on a journey to North Africa by ship. However, while they were on route, Japanese forces launched attacks on Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya, the UK declared war on Japan and James and his unit were rerouted to Java in the Dutch East Indies. The British forces suffered heavy losses and James was one of numerous British troops taken prisoner. He spent three years in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp before returning to Britain at the end of the war.



## Friends EVENTS

He resumed playing for Cardiff City in the 1946-47 season, scoring in his first two matches in the Football League, a 2-1 defeat to Notts County and a 2-0 victory over Bournemouth. However, during his time in the POW camp, James suffered severe malnutrition, resulting in irreparable damage to his eyesight and reduced overall fitness, and he was forced to retire at the end of the season. The club held a benefit game for James in May 1950 and he later returned to work for the club as a scout.

James died on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1980 and is buried in Section S of Cathays Cemetery.

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On the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, one of our founder members, Jim Lister, placed a small cross on the Cross of Sacrifice in the New Cemetery. The inscription records that it is in memory of the forgotten army, in Burma.

We are grateful to Jim for placing the cross and for the picture below recording it.



## Events

Just as we were finishing off this issue, Covid 19 restrictions were being relaxed and we were hopeful of getting a programme going, albeit with special logistical arrangements to maintain social distancing, etc. Then, just before the issue was printed, local lockdown restrictions were imposed on nearby parts of Wales, so the print run was paused. This proved to be wise, as

Cardiff soon followed. The newsletter was hastily amended and, sadly, our events news remains unchanged since the last issue, i.e.

**ALL FRIENDS OF CATHAYS CEMETERY EVENTS  
- WEEKLY WALKS, MONTHLY WORKDAYS  
HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER  
NOTICE**

**PLEASE CHECK WITH THE FRIEND'S WEBSITE &  
SOCIAL MEDIA SITES FOR THE LATEST  
INFORMATION**

These shenanigans also explain why the September issue is a month late, for which we apologise.

## Publications

**Books** (about 100 pages, full colour) - £5:

Cathays Cemetery on its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Hidden Histories: Tales from Cathays Cemetery

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.

## And finally...

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

*Contact the editorial team on 029 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](http://www.friendsofcathayscemetery.co.uk)