

Something Old, Something New

Spring is always a delight in the Cemetery, with a succession of things to enjoy. We have had the usual carpets of flowers, as shown below by the celandine/primrose combination in Section K (left) or the primroses providing a background for a primula hybrid in Section Y (right).



The primroses are presumably descendants of meadow flowers from before the opening of the Cemetery, while primula are thought to have been introduced by people tending graves, but have happily hybridised with the natives. The flower carpets last right through the spring, but reach their best in different areas at different times, so it is only towards the end of the season that you will find this bank of albino bluebells in Section EL ...



This leads on to the question, what is this self-contradictory white bluebell? Very occasionally, within a population of native British bluebells, a genetic mutation may occur, which results in a white flower. Once considered rare, it has become increasingly common. The Spanish bluebell mutates more readily to produce white, pink and various shades in between. Specialist plant suppliers have also become involved, so you can now virtually guarantee a white variety if you order *Hyacinthoides* 'White City'. But all this does not readily explain this isolated

example, found in section R, with a white base to the bell, but pale blue petal tips ...



Spotted for the first time (unless you know better!) in the Cemetery was a lone cowslip, struggling through tree litter in Section R and pictured below.



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It has been a similar pattern with blossoms. The regular participants may be represented by the cherry, in Section N, and the magnolia, in Section K, pictured below.



We were, of course, spoilt for choice in deciding what to use to illustrate the annual display of blossoms in the Cemetery. But there are still the unusual blossoms to feature, like the pine tree in Section Q with an abundance of tiny yellow flowers, especially when caught during the short window when they were releasing pollen ...



... or the bird cherry waterei in Section U, with its distinctive conical racemes of white blossom ...



It is always nice to see the pollinators getting

to work in the Spring, especially when they are as handsome as this red-tailed bumblebee, *bombus lapidarius*, spotted on a daffodil in Section V.



From its size, this is a queen, newly awoken from hibernation. It usually nests on the ground, often under stones, and will start its colony by laying a few eggs that will hatch as workers; whose sole purpose is to tend the nest and the young males and new females that emerge later. After mating and in the autumn, the females, now new queens, hibernate while both the males and old queen die.

Another flier (but on a very different scale), a red kite, was seen lazily riding the air currents over the Cemetery, during one of our Tuesday walks. Forty years ago, the UK population of these birds was about a dozen pairs, all in a fairly small area around Tregaron. Its resurgence has been spectacular, gradually expanding its territory in Wales and, through supported introductions, to many areas of the rest of the UK. However, sightings in Cardiff are still quite rare. During the Middle Ages, the red kite was a valued scavenger that helped keep streets of towns and cities clean. While it

would be nice if they were to become a common sight in Cardiff again, they would not find much carrion amongst today's unsightly and largely inedible litter.

Two years of Covid, limiting ground maintenance, had had a particularly adverse effect on Sections A and B, which were beginning to appear like impenetrable forest. So we were pleased to see a blitz on the conservation areas here at the end of the recognised clearance period. The immediate effect was an unusually brown appearance and a lot of builder's bags of cut vegetation, as shown below.



Very quickly, the bags were cleared and spring flowers appeared and the area is now looking quite green. Nature can respond quickly and vigorously to being cut back! The chipper was also busy around the Cemetery ...



Spring Miscellany

We mentioned the opening of the new Northern Cemetery in our last newsletter, but now we are pleased to expand on the first interment, thanks to Pauline Brelsford.

Mohamed Hanef Bhamjee, OBE, was the first person to be buried in the Northern Cemetery, 19 January 2022. He was born in South Africa

but moved to the UK as a young man because of political tensions with the apartheid regime. On moving to Cardiff in 1972, he dedicated his time to the Wales Anti Apartheid Movement. He counted many senior Welsh figures including politicians, trade unionists, church leaders, artists, performers and Welsh language activists among his supporters. He also knew senior figures in South Africa and welcomed Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu to Wales. He was awarded the OBE for services to anti-racism. After the end of apartheid he became a solicitor specialising in immigration and asylum cases.

Because of Covid restrictions the whole funeral service was held outside making use of one of the outdoor shelters. Despite the bitter cold it was a wonderful service with the Anti Apartheid Movement Banner on display and speeches by family, friends and former comrades including Member of the Senedd Mick Antoniw. The South African National Anthem was played to accompany Hanef to his final resting place.



Chinese Grave after Ching Ming

Cardiff's Chinese community commemorate past loved ones at two Chinese festivals, occurring at set times in spring and autumn. Ching Ming meaning "clear" and "bright" falls on the 106th day after the winter solstice (about 1st week of April) and the whole family go to sweep the graves of their ancestors. At this time, you may

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see tokens of remembrance in the form of joss paper, coins, flowers or fruit on graves. Joss paper may also be burned in makeshift braziers. The result of this can be witnessed in the Asian section of the New Cemetery (Section E-E), as the preceding picture shows.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) have been particularly evident and busy recently.

On one of our regular Tuesday Walks, a new and unusual addition to a grave, a Gallipoli (or pedestal) marker, was spotted. Many people will be familiar with the standard CWGC stone, the rectangular white stone on the grave of a serviceman or woman who died during military service. But few will be familiar with the other CWGC stone, the Gallipoli marker, named for the disastrous campaign of 1915 when British, Australian and New Zealand troops landed on the Gallipoli peninsular in modern day Turkey, in an attempt to gain a foothold in southern Europe. It is a small rectangular base with a stone or bronze plaque attached. They are usually found in areas where soil or weather conditions would not support a standard headstone, such as Gallipoli.

The CWGC have a duty of care for all graves of service personnel of the two world wars, including those marked by a private family memorial. When these memorials become damaged or the inscription illegible the CWGC will erect a Gallipoli marker to keep the memory alive, which is what has happened here in Cathays Cemetery.

A few days after finding our first Gallipoli marker, Jean and Des Sanford, who were inspecting gravestones as part of the CWGC Eyes on Hands on project, came across two further Gallipoli markers. All three are in Section L, on the graves of:

H D Jones	L2222
J T Rabjohns	L2111
A Cant	L2033



Gallipoli marker for J T Rabjohns

More may appear in the future, so keep your eyes open!

Only a week or so later, the Tuesday walkers met someone from the CWGC erecting a new stone in the New Cemetery: not unusual in itself, but in this case, it was rectifying an oversight made over 100 years ago! W A G Arnold who died on 20th November 1920 is now appropriately remembered. It was fortuitous that this also offered the opportunity to witness a detail of the erection process that may not be generally known. The durability and stability of these headstones is dependent upon a concrete saddle, which is normally hidden from view, below ground.



CWGC headstone mounted in saddle, before backfilling the hole

A couple of weeks later, another century late new stone was provided on the grave of Leonard William Williams, in Section S. Des and Jean, doing their Eyes on Hands on inspections last year, discovered that this grave had been wrongly identified on the CWGC list. The list showed Leonard as being buried in the grave of a similarly named but different Williams. Leonard was in fact in a nearby but unmarked grave. The Commission needed to check their records, the grave location and secure any necessary permissions - from the family, if traceable, and from Bereavement Services. If there had been family interest, there was the possibility of a formal dedication at the graveside. In the event, there was a less formal visit to the grave by the Tuesday walkers, a few days after the erection of the headstone, complete with an explanation of what had happened by Jean and Des. There is, of course, a moral here - if you want to hear the news first, come on the Tuesday walks.

The Ukrainian Connection

The inscription on the memorial reads:

*In Loving Memory of
William George
beloved husband of
Margaret Waters,
late of Hughesoffka, Russia.
Died Jan. 30th, 1909, aged 54 years*

The inscription goes on to tell us that he was joined by his wife, Margaret Ann, on December 20th 1914, when she was aged 52.

While *Hughesoffka* seems to have been the most common spelling used by British emigrants, the more common spelling found is *Hughesovka*. In this country it would be *Hughestown*, or *Trehughes*, and was named after John Hughes, the son of an engineer at the Cyfartha Works in Merthyr Tydfil. He followed in his father's footsteps, firstly in Newport and then at the Milwall Ironworks, which specialised in providing iron cladding to the Admiralty, where he became manager of the company.

In 1868, the Company received an order from the Imperial Russian Government for the plating of a naval fortress being built at Kronstadt, on Kotlin Island, at the head of the Gulf of Finland and about 10 miles from St Petersburg. The successful completion of this contract led to Hughes being granted a concession from the Russian Government to develop metal works and, in 1869, he acquired land to the north of the Sea of Azov in a sparsely populated area of open steppe. The Sea of Azov is the eastern extension of the Black Sea, at the mouth of the River Don. It's principal port may have been unknown to readers a few months ago, but will be familiar today: it is Mariupol.

Hughes formed the 'New Russia Company Ltd.' to raise capital and, in the summer of 1870, at the age of 55, he moved to the Russian Empire. He sailed with eight ships, with not only all the equipment necessary to establish a metal works, but also much of the skilled labour; a group of about a hundred ironworkers and miners, mostly from South Wales. Bullock power was all that was available to transport everything the 60 miles or so from the coast to the chosen site, which had the necessary mineral deposits close at hand.

The winters here are harsh and it seems amazing that the first blast furnace was built in less than eight months and, by April 1871, the first iron was smelted. With his key workers he went on to open collieries and build more blast furnaces in this challenging environment. By 1874 all difficulties had been overcome and the puddling furnaces were in continuous action, producing about 150 tons of iron a week and over 8,000 tons of iron rails were rolled each year. Within 10 years there were over two thousand people employed and iron smelting exceeded 20,000 tons a year. While John Hughes died in 1889, while on business in St Petersburg, his four sons continued to manage the company. By the end of the nineteenth century, the works was the largest in the Russian Empire, producing 74% of all Russian

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iron by 1913.

Hughes established a town for his workers, including a house for himself and his family. At least until a few years ago, the shell of the house remained. The Hughes family believed in looking after their workforce and took an interest in their welfare. They opened a 12 bed hospital as early as 1870 and, by 1901, this had increased tenfold in size, with a staff of 61. While it served the whole community, treatment for workers and their families was free or appreciably subsidised. The company provided schools, churches, a fire brigade and tea houses. The Company also gave money towards the Orthodox church and other religious institutions for the cosmopolitan population and paid for the settlement's police force. There were also five inns, ten wine-cellars, four beer halls and a vodka wholesale outlet. Compensation was payable for industrial accidents and easier light work was offered to widows and injured workers. Over the years, although a Russian workforce was trained by the company, skilled workers from the United Kingdom continued to be employed, and many technical, engineering and managerial positions were filled by British (and especially Welsh) emigrants. A thriving expatriate community was established, living in good quality company housing, and provided with an English school and an Anglican church.

With the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the Hughes brothers and almost all of their foreign employees returned to Britain. The works were taken over by the Bolsheviks and the town of Hughesovka was renamed Stalino in 1924. The works survived and prospered, and remained a major metallurgical industries centre. Nikita Khrushchev, attended school in Hughesovka and, when he came to Britain in 1956, he said 'My father worked in a mine near the Hughesovka Metal Factory which once belonged to the Welshman, John Hughes'. However, in 1961, during Khrushchev's period in power, the town's name changed again ... to Donetsk.



The Waters' memorial

In March 2014, following the annexation of Crimea, Donetsk came under the control of the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic, who wanted integration with Russia. Shortly after this, a humorous campaign advocated that Donetsk join the United Kingdom because of the city's connection to Hughes. Also in 2014, the Manic Street Preachers' album *Futurology* paid homage to him.

Eight years later, the situation in the whole of Ukraine is more serious and, today, Donetsk is a key objective of the Russian invasion. The strategic importance of the metal industries first established by John Hughes are far from irrelevant to Putin's ambitions.

The grave of William and Margaret Waters is in Section J: from the chapels, head around the right side of the "heart": four plots before the prominent White Family memorials, the red granite memorial can be seen one row back from the path.

Thanks to Susan Edwards, the Hughesovka Research Archive is held in the Glamorgan Archives. The material from the Archive has supported a travelling exhibition that has been

well received around Wales and by descendants of the Hughes family and their British workers, now scattered all over the world. In happier times, the exhibition was lent for display in Ukraine. Using the archive, the Glamorgan Record Office (as it then was) published a booklet telling the Hughesovka story. It is modestly priced at £1, so if you want to know more of this story, you know where to go!

From the booklet, we learn that Margaret Waters, in Cardiff, a year before her death, received a letter from her sister, Mary James, in Hughesovka, describing the mud thus - *'one could get about the streets in boats if the liquid mud was a little deeper'*! Recent news reports have mentioned the problems for invading armies caused by the mud. Also in the booklet, there is a picture from the 1890s which includes William Waters ... if you can decide which of the 30 plus workers pictured is him!

A few of the British workers stayed on after the revolution, some had married locals, while others had fully settled in the country after living there for decades. Their descendants are still there and, indeed, may have distant cousins in Wales. All the more reason why we should keep Ukrainians in our thoughts at this time.

The Coopers see the Light

The recent clearance work in Section B of the Old Cemetery has revealed grave monuments that have not seen the light of day for several years. One such memorial is that of the Cooper family: a rather splendid slab of black basalt, ornately carved with trailing ivy and topped with a funerary urn, which is pictured opposite.

The head of the family, John Cooper, was born in Durham in 1845. He and his wife Jane Hannah Henderson Cooper, along with two children and John's unmarried sister Mary, moved to Cardiff in the late 1880's, and setup home at 78 De Burgh Street, Canton.



John was a Master Mariner, the highest level of professional qualification amongst mariners, and was thus deemed competent to serve as master of any size of merchant ship operating anywhere in the world. John died in 1897 at the relatively young age of 52.

His death notice in the Cardiff Times 4th December 1897 is very brief, but does recognise his seafaring life by referring to him as Captain John Cooper.

His widow Jane continued to live at the house in De Burgh Street and died over 20 years after John on 1st June 1919 at the age of 58 and is buried with her husband.

Also buried in the grave is their only daughter, Helena Jennie. She never married and spent her working life as a music teacher. In 1939 she was living at 15 Bridge Street, Llandaff with her younger brother John Ernest Leonard Cooper, a Post Office sorting clerk. She died On 1st August 1947 at the age of 64 and is buried with her parents.

The two eldest sons of John and Jane were both killed in the First World War, and are remembered on the family gravestone.

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John Herbert Cooper followed his father into the merchant navy and from January 1915 was the 1st Engineer on a cargo ship the M V Rosario. He was still serving on the Rosario when on 18th or 19th August 1917, 17 nautical miles south west of Ireland, the ship was torpedoed and sunk by German submarine UC-55. Joseph was among the 20 crew members killed. He is commemorated in London on the Tower Hill Memorial, a memorial to the men and women of the merchant navy and fishing fleets who died in both world wars.

Philip Vincent Cooper did not follow his father and elder brother into the merchant navy: in the 1911 census he is shown as working as a clerk for a coal exporter. After war broke out Philip joined the 11th battalion of the Welsh Regiment, which was formed in Cardiff in September 1914 as part of General Kitchener's New Army. The battalion arrived in Boulogne on 6th September 1915 and six weeks later was in the south of France, sailing from Marseilles to Salonika in the northern Greek region of Macedonia on 30th October.

At its peak the British Salonika Force numbered nearly 229,000 officers and men. They were fighting a mixed Bulgarian, Austro-Hungarian, German and Turkish force of almost half a million men. Living conditions for soldiers on both sides were harsh. This was mostly static trench warfare where diseases such as malaria and typhus were rife. Philip must have seen some action however as, while many of his comrades were dying of disease, he died of wounds on 14th September 1916, aged 25, and is buried in Karasouli Military Cemetery 73 kilometres north of the port of Salonika which is now known as Thessaloniki. He is also commemorated on the Cardiff Coal Exchange War Memorial plaque.

The Cooper gravestone is not unique; Victorian monumental masons had catalogues from which the bereaved could choose a fitting memorial for their loved ones. In Section Y of Cathays cemetery is an identical monument on the grave

of the Frayling family, but that is a story for another day.

Recent Events

Zoom Lectures

On Tuesday 8th March at 7:00 pm, Stuart Orr of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust presented 'Highgate Cemetery - a Victorian Valhalla'. The last part of the title is a quote from John Betjeman. Stuart drew a number of comparisons with Cathays: Highgate opened 20 years earlier, in 1839: both cemeteries are in two halves, as a result of demand exceeding the original space available, but Highgate is only about one third of the size of Cathays. Like Cathays, Highgate was built outside the urban area which it was intended to serve. Both were 'garden cemeteries' with intricate drive layouts, while their extensions show more rectilinear patterns. Both have graves of survivors of Rorke's Drift and both have balloonists (with a family connection within their stories).

In the early 19C, cemeteries were full and unable to cope: it had become impossible to bury people decently. Parliament passed a statute enabling the development of private cemeteries around London. Eight, of which seven still survive, were to be built: the third to open was Highgate. The London Cemetery Company was founded by Act of Parliament in 1836, with an architect, Stephen Geary, its founder and first chairman.

An existing Cedar of Lebanon was incorporated into the design, with the ground around it being excavated to create the Circle of Lebanon, accessed via the Egyptian Avenue, which is, in effect, a tunnel. Both the Avenue and the Circle are lined with vaults that are accessed horizontally.

Above the Circle are the Gothic style Terrace Catacombs with room for a total of eight hundred and twenty-five people in fifty-five vaults. Above and behind the terrace, but outside the cemetery, stands St Michael's

Church, augmenting the overall vista.

The main entrance into Highgate Cemetery is an archway under the bell tower which, like Cathays, is between its two chapels, one designated for the Church of England, the other for dissenters.

The financial model for the Cemetery Company almost inevitably led to declining income. By the middle of 20C, the Company's ability to maintain the Cemetery declined and it went bankrupt in the 1970s, leaving the Cemetery uncared for and with no protection from nature and vandals. Concerned locals, led by Jean Pateman, formed a Friends group and were eventually allowed to run the Cemetery as a charity. The Friends Trust has to maximise income from burials and visitors, but still has a legacy of problems on its structures and in trying to recover ground from rampant nature. In 2019, it produced a policy plan for the future. Because it will run out of grave spaces in about 5 years, it has to find a way of extending its life as a burial ground and this requires a private bill to go through Parliament.

While Cathays is home to many people who are important in a local context, Highgate has a Who's Who of national figures from the last 180 years or so. In no particular order, examples are - Karl Marx (though the impressive memorial is a short distance from his original burial plot), Paul Foot, Michael Faraday, George Eliot, family of Charles Dickens (Charles is in Westminster Abbey), Rossetti family, Henry Gray (of 'Anatomy' fame), John Galsworthy, Alexander Litvinenko, Douglas Adams, Malcolm McClaren, Jeremy Beadle, etc.

Stuart delivered a fascinating talk to more than 30 listeners, most (if not all) of whom will have added Highgate Cemetery to their "must visit" list.

On Tuesday 26th April at 7:00 pm. Janine Marriott of Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust gave an illustrated talk about Arnos Vale Cemetery. In Bristol, this was the first great

garden cemetery in the South-west, covering 45 acres and having four listed buildings, including two separate chapels, and forty listed memorials. It opened in 1839.

With Bristol running out of burial space due to rapid expansion in the 19C, the company "Bristol Cemetery" was established by Act of Parliament. Initially, the business thrived but, after the city opened its own municipal cemetery and in the absence of a viable long term business plan, it struggled. Some respite was achieved by the introduction of cremation facilities in the early 20C, one of the first cemeteries to offer this service. Once again, the arrival of a municipal crematorium had an adverse effect on the business and it went into gradual decline. By the time the company ceased trading in the 1980s, the cemetery was in a neglected state and overgrown.

Local concern led to the Friends group being formed, followed by direct action in the form of breaking into the site and starting clearance work. Petitioning led to the Council purchasing the site and helping the Friends take over responsibility for running the site, protecting the outstanding environment and developing it for public use. Resuming use as a burial ground was an essential part of the business plan.

This absorbing talk was concluded with the stories of a few of the people buried in the cemetery. No doubt many in the audience will allocate an hour or so of their next trip to Bristol for a visit to Arnos Vale Cemetery.

Walk

On Sunday April 24th Roger Swan led the **Heritage Walk** on behalf of **Bereavement Services**. While Roger has retired from his post with the Council, he retains a strong interest in the Cemetery and its promotion. The walk was exceptionally well attended with around 90 people ... and a few well behaved dogs on leads. It was also the first event in the Cemetery to be live-streamed, which proved helpful to some in the audience, who could listen to the narrator on their mobile devices.

Friends EVENTS

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

Our recent workdays have been well supported and we have cleared some large bushes around "the heart" that were restricting access along the drive, prepared the wild flower beds and tidied up the area around the chapels. You can work at your own pace and tools and gloves are provided, so why not join us for a couple of hours sociable exercise? We **meet by the chapels at 10 am** and work until noon, with a break for elevenses. Put the last Saturday of the month in your diary, as the next dates are **25th June, 30th July and 24th September**. Please note that we do not meet in August: people take holidays!

Weekly Walks

These very leisurely walks concentrate on finding the seasonal highlights around the Cemetery, while being informative about the history of the Cemetery and those buried in it. All are welcome on these sociable walks, which last about an hour, and start just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library at 10.30 am every Tuesday morning**. The socialising continues afterwards over tea or coffee in a local cafe.

Future Events

Heritage Trails and Tales

The **A48 Theatre Company** will again be performing to **new scripts by the writers of Living Lines** on a guided walk around the Cemetery on **Tuesday 7th June at 7 pm, Thursday 9th June at 7 pm and Sunday 12th June at 2 pm**. Meet just inside the **main entrance in Fair Oak Road**. Tickets are £7.00 per person from www.a48theatrecompany.com. These dramatised walks are extremely popular, so early booking is advised.

Walks

On **Tuesday June 21st at 7 pm**, **Gordon Hindess** of the Friends of Cathays Cemetery will lead the **Midsummer Walk**. For a change,

this walk will be located in the **New Cemetery**, accessed off Allensbank Road, north of Eastern Avenue. To avoid congestion around the entrance, the walk will start from the **First World War war graves plot (Section EB)**. Please note there are no toilet facilities here.

Open Doors

On **Sunday September 11th from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm**, the restored Cathays Cemetery Chapels will be opened to the public. After the Covid hiatus, we are very pleased to resume this event.

Publications

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

Cathays Cemetery on its 150th 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.

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 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