

Continued Fruitfulness and Vibrant Colours

The abundant cropping of the summer continued into the autumn, particularly noticeable with holly berries and rose hips, as below:



Another, less common example, is the species of sour cherry (*prunus cerasus*) found in Section Q. Sometimes known as the tart cherry, on account of its acidic taste, or dwarf cherry, it is a relative of the better known sweet cherry (*prunus avium*). Of the two main groups of cultivars, we believe this to be the darker red Morello cherry. The fruit crop this year has been huge:



The Cemetery has witnessed what has been referred to as a "mast year". Originally coined to describe the relatively few years when the beech had a bumper crop, the term has been extended to include any tree or shrub when it has an exceptionally large crop of fruit or nuts. This abundance may boost the populations of small mammals but, more importantly, guarantees that some seed will survive and grow into new trees. While not particularly relevant in the Cemetery, you may have witnessed good crops of apples and sweet chestnuts this year,

or carpets of acorns under oak trees.

Much as weather earlier in the year determines if we will get a bumper crop, it also affects the timing and quality of autumn colours. We noted the false start to autumn in our last issue, but the real start was early, too, and we were seeing vistas like this when most trees were looking quite green ...



But the best was still to come, with particularly vibrant colours. The composite picture below is just a sample of what could be seen as the autumn progressed. It just emphasises that the Cemetery is best enjoyed through frequent, rather than occasional, visits: the Tuesday walkers know this!



We are currently seeking a person to fulfil the role of

TREASURER

The role involves maintaining the records of the Society, the Bank Account and preparing the end of year financial report.

This is a great opportunity to use your skills to make a tangible, positive impact on a cause you care about.

To apply please contact us on

cathayscemetery@gmail.com

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As the bottom centre image shows, sometimes it is the carpet of fallen leaves that stands out and for those that are still children at heart the urge to scrunch through them cannot be resisted. Sadly, this autumn, the leaves had scarcely accumulated when it rained ... and squelching through sodden leaves just isn't the same!

Autumn, particularly October, is also the best time to see fungi and the following picture is just an easy-to-spot sample ...



There is more on fungi in the next section of this newsletter!

September tried to make up for the lack of rain earlier in the year and was significantly wetter than average and, also, slightly cooler than average, ending a run of warmer months. But, through October and well into November, it was warmer again, although we were brought down to earth by the early arrival of the first frosts. It is little wonder that nature got a bit confused, with one cherry tree producing blossom in mid November:



Omnivour crows congregate in the Cemetery in

October, presumably attracted by the crop of berries, nuts and seeds to be found, strutting about confidently as if they own the place. In contrast, the jay is shy, but attracted by the same bounty. You need to be lucky to get a close up view of one ...



By the end of November, the Cemetery seems to be overrun by squirrels ... and they are not so shy. Assuming some have had families during the year, you might expect to find more about, but not to the extent witnessed. The explanation is that, at the start of winter, they are actively gathering and storing food, a process called hoarding, to prepare for the cold months. They are also eating heavily to build up fat reserves for energy and insulation, and are often busy burying their stashes. All of this makes them more visible as they move around their territories. Here's one of them



Autumn Miscellany

Our last issue featured a leaning memorial in Section J. We can now report that Bereavement Services carried out an early inspection and took appropriate remedial action to make it safe i.e. the upper sections were dismantled and laid in the plot. The before and after pictures are shown below:



An adjacent memorial which was also tilted, but not as much, was checked at the same time, with the same outcome. It needs to be emphasized at this point that responsibility for the maintenance of memorials rests with the successors to the original purchaser of the plot and memorial. The Council have an over-riding responsibility for the safety of all Cemetery users.

It was interesting to see that the faces of the joint between the larger blocks (see composite image below) had partially roughened surfaces that may have prevented sliding, but nothing that would have resisted tensional forces caused by tilting out of equilibrium.



The higher joint, with smaller contact area, did have a metal dowel set into the stones to reinforce the joint, but had ceased to be effective. This is shown below.



Some years ago, bat walks took place in the Cemetery, but were discontinued when no trace of the creatures was detected. Over the last few months, bat boxes have been placed in both parts of the Cemetery to encourage recovery of the local bat population and, hopefully, a resident colony. The boxes are quite distinctive ...



We were pleased to see a concerted effort being put in to clearing the rampant vegetation in Section L, which has a high density of graves that have interesting stories attached to them. There is also a nostalgic connection for the Friends to this location, because early workdays

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were concentrated here and found it to be a heritage hot spot. These two views into the Section show how much more accessible it is now ...



At about the same time, three black and white images of the Cemetery were found in the National Library of Wales Collection, dating from around 1905. The original negatives were created by Martin Ridley on glass dry plates. The Library has converted them into digital images which can be viewed online.

One of the images was used to create the postcard which we featured in the third edition of this Newsletter in July 2010. To create the postcard, the image had been cropped and grass and shrubs tinted green, effectively creating a coloured picture.

After investigation, the other two images were found to be of the path leading from the chapels into Section L, although one of these proved to be an enlargement of a distant portion of the other. On the enlargement it was possible to discern a white railway signal post behind the Cemetery wall at the back, with a

branch line signal attached to its upper section. Zooming in on the digital versions allowed some inscriptions to be read. This all proves the high quality definition of the original images.

The primary picture of the view into Section L is reproduced below (courtesy of the National Library of Wales) together with a present day picture of the same view. Yes, it was a happy coincidence that the clearance work in Section L had just been undertaken.



There are some obvious differences in appearance. Paths which are now grassed (and can be hard to find or follow, particularly in the summer) were gravel surfaced. 120 years ago, the area had the appearance of a well kept formal park - which is exactly what it was intended - while today ornamental trees and shrubs have given way to a dominance of natural growth with larger trees. It has to be remembered that there would have been a team of people whose sole responsibility was to tend to the landscape and keep it looking its best. In

the old picture, there is a distinct ridge of farmland in the background. The vegetation in the Cemetery today makes it difficult to see the skyline, but it is now covered in the houses of Lakeside and those along Cyncoed Road on the top of the ridge.

These historic images help to fill in gaps in our understanding of the development of the Cemetery, can provide details of memorials that have been lost or even provide the wording of inscriptions that cannot now be read. If anyone reading this has old photographs that would provide further insight into the Cemetery, we would love to see them.

A recent arrival in the Cemetery is a memorial on a previously unmarked grave, with a unique (to Cathays, at least) design. It consists of a substantial wooden post, with small round plaques set into it to identify the three people buried in the plot. The memorial post, with an enlargement of the plaques, is shown below.



The top plaque remembers Joseph Hockridge 1889-1909, the second Mary Jane Hockridge 1843-1914, and the bottom one Basil William Beese 1921-1921. The dates and relationships leave unanswered questions.

Once again, the Cemetery has been awarded a Green Flag, following a successful inspection and interviews, including with members of the Friends. The presentation of the award was celebrated with a formal flag raising ceremony on 14th October. The flag was raised by Counc. Norma Mackie and several members of the Friends were in attendance.



Flag raising ceremony

As part of a citizen science project organised by A Rocha UK and Caring for God's Acre, local ecologist, Peter Sturgess undertook a survey on Saturday 25th October, with the help of approx 25 people. This 'Churches Count on Nature Fungi Search' recognised that Cathays Cemetery is of county, if not of national, importance when it comes to waxcaps. We were treated to over 60 different species of fungi on our walk, with some amazing colour displays. We are also thankful to Bereavement Services for the careful conservation and grass cutting that keeps the Cemetery in prime condition for fungi to thrive. Fortuitously, its timing coincided with the workday which had been cancelled, so a limited number of the Friends were able to join the walk.



Friends FEATURES

The annual Remembrance Service, organised by Bereavement Services, was held at the War Graves plot in the New Cemetery on Tuesday 18th November, led by the Rev. Caroline Downs. There was a welcome address by The Lord Mayor, Cllr Adrian Robson, and "The Last Post" was played by Alan Bourne, Director of Music, RAF St Athan. The service was attended by pupils from Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, Fairoak Primary School and Cathays High School, who contributed to key elements of the proceedings. Eleven wreaths were laid at the Cross of Sacrifice, including one on behalf of the Friends and the Tuesday walking group, by Jean Sanford. A twelfth wreath was laid at the plaque to Frederick Barter VC by Mr Alan Barter.



Alan Bourne signals the one minute silence and wreaths laid at the Cross of Sacrifice

After the service, the role of honour was read directly from the headstones in the War Graves plot by the children from the three schools.

Near Woking, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is building a new "Memorial to the Missing", to commemorate those who died in the First World War and have no known final resting place. The original Brookwood 1914-1918 Memorial honoured some of these but ongoing research has revealed more names, while the final resting places of others commemorated on the memorial have since been identified, so a new memorial is needed.

Initially, 400 service personnel will be commemorated on the new memorial. But there will be space to record up to 1,200 names and additional names will be added as they are identified. Volunteers have worked with the CWGC Commemorations Team on the In From The Cold Project, examining military records, death certificates, and local archives to find the missing names. The memorial design seeks to honour the fallen while enhancing the natural environment, with sustainability woven into every aspect. It will be set within a landscaped environment that supports wildlife and biodiversity.

There are foxes in and around the Cemetery, but they are cautious creatures and not seen very often. So it was a surprise to find one lying down close to a well used drive in the New Cemetery. Sadly the explanation was soon clear - it was dead. The cause of death was not obvious, but somehow the fox knew the appropriate location to lie down for the last time:



A Flag Maker and a Royal Visit

Inscriptions on gravestone come in all shapes and sizes, and give a little or a lot of information. Some simply show names and dates, some remember family members buried elsewhere, and some give a profession or job title. One such is the grave stone of Frederick Morgan, in section M very near the chapels. We would have passed by Frederick's grave without a second glance were it not for the words below his name: Tent and Flag Maker. That's interesting we thought.



Morgan family gravestone

Frederick was born in Cardiff in 1841 and his father George was an accountant, originally from Bristol. In 1861 the family were living in 9 East Terrace, a little road off Bute Street, which doesn't seem to exist now. Frederick, aged 19, was a sailmaker.

In 1868 Frederick married Sarah Israel. They had two sons; George born in 1870, and Frederick junior born 2 years later. By 1881 the family were still living in East Terrace, and the census shows Frederick as a Waterproof maker (horse clothing).

Sadly Sarah died in 1883, leaving Frederick with 2 young teenage boys, and 2 years later in December 1885 Frederick married Sarah's sister Teresa. Odd as it may seem today marrying a sibling of your deceased spouse was not uncommon then.

The 1891 census shows the family living in Ryder Street, Canton. Frederick is shown as a Tent Maker, and his sons are marvellously

described as Tent Assistants. So we now know where the Tent Maker on the inscription comes from; but what about the flags? For this we need to look at the report of Frederick's death, which appeared in the Western Mail on 5th October 1927, as it sheds more light on his life than the census returns. The report reads:

The death occurred late on Tuesday night at his residence, 9 Denbigh St. Cardiff, of Mr Frederick James Morgan. Mr Morgan who was 85 years of age, was a partner in the well known firm of Morgan and Richardson, flag and tent makers of Bute St. Cardiff, but had retired from business some years ago. He was a staunch Conservative and Churchman and a prominent Freemason, and had been a resident of Cardiff all his life.

So we now know that Frederick was a partner in Morgan and Richardson, who had a stock advert that was placed in many editions of the Western Mail; it reads as follows:

To Shopkeepers

For self-acting spring roller shop sunblinds or hook-up blinds, send to the manufacturers.

Morgan and Richardson, 43 Bute St Cardiff

Marquees, tents, flags, decorations, illuminations, fireworks and torchlights in great variety.

DISTANCE NO OBJECT

Interestingly there is a telephone number, Cardiff 336, or you could telegraph to TARPULIN, CARDIFF

In July 1907 Cardiff hosted a royal visit; King Edward V11 and Queen Alexandra came to officially open the new Queen Alexandra Dock. It was quite an occasion and generated much excitement among the citizens of Cardiff. Cardiff had been granted city status by Edward V11 in 1905, in recognition of it's rapid industrial growth, particularly from the coal trade, and the new City Hall had been opened in 1906. A little girl called Elsie Elizabeth Warner

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was taken to see the City Hall being built. Years later she recalled that she had waved to her uncles, stonemasons, working high up on the scaffolding. Remember little Elsie as we will hear more about her shortly. There was a great deal of civic pride in Cardiff in the summer of 1907. Morgan and Richardson seized this business opportunity and the following advertisement appeared in the Western Mail of 29th June 1907:

VISIT OF THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN TO CARDIFF

MORGAN AND RICHARDSON

*Public decorators and illuminators,
43 Bute St Cardiff*

Be glad to announce that they have the best selected stock of Royal Decorations in the city and are prepared to undertake the decoration and illumination of public and private buildings to any extent. As there will, undoubtedly, be an unprecedented demand for decorations, it is advisable that orders be placed without delay

Designs and estimates free.

NOTE - No connection with the firm trading as Morgan and Co decorators, Hayes.

Perhaps there was bad blood between these two similarly named companies?

The King and Queen, and Princess Victoria, arrived in Cardiff on the Royal Yacht. A choir of schoolchildren, including Elsie Elizabeth Warner, was assembled to serenade the royal party. The new dock was officially opened, and in the new City Hall the King knighted the Lord Mayor, William Smith Crossman. He is buried in Cathays too, in Plot Y1607.

A bronze medal to commemorate the occasion was struck, designed and made by Spiridion and Son. It shows the profiles of the King and Queen, and on the reverse the coat of arms of the City of Cardiff and an inscription

commemorating the royal visit and the knighting of the Lord Mayor. The medal was distributed to schoolchildren and members of the children's choir, one little girl who received a medal was Elsie Elizabeth Warner. Many thanks to her grandson Huw Griffiths, who told us stories about Elsie Elizabeth, and generously lent his grandmother's medal to the Friends so it could be photographed for this article.



The commemorative medal

Recent Events

Open Doors

On **Sunday Sept 7th**, the **Cathays Cemetery Chapels** including the vestries, **were open**, with displays and members of the Friends on hand to answer questions. In addition, there were **guided walks** around the **Old Cemetery** both before and after lunch, led by **Gordon Hindess** and **Ted Richards**, respectively. It was very gratifying to have a steady stream of visitors, asking lots of questions, throughout the day and, in favourable weather both walks attracted about 30 people.

Walk

On **Sunday October 12th**, **Amanda Eades** of **Bereavement Services** led the **Heritage Walk** in the **Old Cemetery**. Approx 30 people enjoyed the very interesting walk which, amongst many, included stops at the Billups, Pettigrew and Tatem graves, along with old favourites such as the Balloon Girl and Chiver's Leg. A very pleasant way to spend a cloudy but dry Sunday morning.



Amanda talking to the party in Section M

Talk

On Tuesday November 11th, Professor Paul Nicholson presented the annual **Bill Mosley Memorial Lecture**, entitled **Round the World in (less than) 80 Graves**, in the **Anglican Chapel**. From the Professor Emeritus of Egyptian Archaeology at Cardiff University, it was no surprise that the illustrated journey around the world included burial sites in Egypt. But his wider interests, for example, geology, had taken him to destinations that made the holiday choices of most of us look tame! Amongst the diverse graves visited were those of Mary Anning, in Lyme Regis, Donald Campbell, at Coniston, a Sioux warrior, at Last Stand Hill, Little Big Horn, and the 5th Earl of Carnarvon (who backed Howard Carter in the search for and excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb), on a hill overlooking Highclere Castle. We were taken to cemeteries in Belgium (first and last soldiers to die in the First World War), Greece (sailors who died in an explosion on HMS Devonshire, in 1929) and El Alamein (CWGC cemetery and the markedly different burial places/memorials for German and Italian servicemen). We visited two graves in both West Norwood Cemetery and the graveyard at St Mary's Church, Henbury, Bristol, and one in Cathays Cemetery with a headstone made from South African rock. Perhaps the most claustrophobic image was of ibis pots inside a catacomb at Saqqara, with

Paul's booted foot in the foreground! The weather was foul on the evening of the lecture, so the audience of twenty for this fascinating talk was disappointingly small.

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

Our September workday cleared out brambles and rosebay willowherb from the cedar of Lebanon roundabout, to give the bergenia (elephant's ears) a clear run, and cleared overhanging branches which were obstructing the grass path from the roundabout into Section J. A clash of events meant that there was no workday in October but, in November, we combined with Cathays Wild Gardeners group, whose aim is to make Cathays a better place to live and work by increasing and improving green spaces, and making room for wildlife. Together we planted a variety of spring bulbs, generously provided by the Local Nature Partnership, in the vicinity of the chapels. Hopefully, anyone getting married in the nonconformist chapel next spring will have a colourful backdrop for their photographs.

We **meet by the chapels at 10.00 am** and work until noon, with a break for elevenses. 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? Workdays are on the last Saturday of most months, but there will be **no workday in December or January**, so our next dates are **28th February, 28th March and 25th April**.

Tuesday Walks

These sociable walks last about an hour and start just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library at 10.30 am on Tuesday mornings**. We have never cancelled a walk at short notice because of the weather, but very occasionally (2-3 times a year) we will meet in the New Cemetery. **There will be no walk in the week between Christmas and New Year**. All are welcome and the socialising continues

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afterwards over tea or coffee in a local cafe. The walks, which are not strenuous, pick up seasonal highlights around the Cemetery and provide a sprinkling of information about the history of the Cemetery and those buried in it.



Tuesday walkers pause at one of the largest Celtic crosses in the Cemetery

Future Events

Annual General Meeting

The **AGM** of the Friends will be held on **Saturday January 31st at 10 am** in the **Anglican Chapel** at the Cemetery. Agendas and other relevant papers will be sent out in January 2026. This is your opportunity to influence the course that the Friends follow. If you can't get there but have issues that you would like raised, please write to us in advance.

Talks

These talks will be given in the **Anglican Chapel** (on the right when you enter the main entrance from Fairoak Road) **at 7.00 pm**. Parking will be available in the Cemetery close to the chapels.

On **Tuesday February 24th**, **Ted Richards** will talk about "**Ernest Willows**". Ted is a member of the Friends' committee and renowned for his research into local history and for presenting his findings in person or online.

On **Tuesday April 21st**, **Gordon Hindess** of the Friends of Cathays Cemetery will tell some "**Tragic Tales from Cathays Cemetery**". Many

of those buried in the Cemetery have had interesting lives, but it is a tragedy that has made some notable.

2026 Event Calendar

As we go to print with this newsletter, the calendar is still being finalised. Look out for the copy with the **AGM** papers early in the new year and keep an eye on the Friends' website and postings on Facebook and X (Twitter).

Publications

Because of disproportionate postal charges, books & themed guides are only sold at events.

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

Cathays Cemetery on its 150th Anniversary
Hidden Histories: Tales from Cathays Cemetery

Themed guides (12 - 20 pages) - £1.50. Those currently available are:

Restoring the Chapels at Cathays Cemetery
Sportsmen in Cathays Cemetery
Cathays Cemetery Tree Trail
Cardiff Mayors in Cathays Cemetery
More Mayors & Councillors in Cathays Cemetery
Circuses & Funfairs in Cathays Cemetery
Another Bunch of Wild Flowers
Men & Women of The Church
Mentioned In Stone - Non-CWGC Graves
The Cemetery Gates
The Crimean War in Cathays Cemetery
The Boer War in Cathays Cemetery

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