

Unveiling of memorial to John Henry Harding – 13th Light Dragoons

Thank you to John Farnhill, Friends of Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff, for drawing our attention to this item

On 23rd November 2021, a special memorial marking the burial place of John Henry Harding, a survivor of the 'Charge of the Light Brigade' was unveiled at Cathays Cemetery. The event was attended by more than 70 people, including many veterans of Harding's descendant regiment – The Light Dragoons.

Wreaths were laid by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff; the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan; Regimental Associations, and descendants of John Henry Harding.

John Henry Harding was born in 1831 in the parish of St. John's, Glastonbury, the eldest of nine siblings. He enlisted into the 13th Light Dragoons at Bath, aged 19, on 15th December 1850. The 13th Light Dragoons were part of the British forces that took part in the Crimean War and were one of the cavalry regiments that formed the Light Brigade. He took part in all four of the main battles in the Crimea, against the Russian forces, and was a proven rider in the famous, but ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade on 25th October 1854.



*Mayor placing a wreath
Photograph courtesy of the
Friends of Cathays Cemetery*

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Harding was issued with the Crimea Medal with four clasps for Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman, and Sebastopol. On the regiment's return from the Crimea, he continued service with them, firstly in Ireland, and then latterly in Scotland. While in Ireland, based at the Island Bridge Barracks in Dublin, he married his wife Elizabeth on 14th August 1858. He was discharged from the army in 1863, having served 12 years and 53 days. His conduct was given as 'Good' and he was in possession of one Good Conduct Badge.



*John Henry Harding memorial
Photograph courtesy of the
Friends of Cathays Cemetery*

On leaving the 13th Light Dragoons, he settled in Cardiff where his father and brother, both called Robert, were living. Initially he joined his father as a local manager for the London and Lancashire Fire Insurance Company, and by 1872 he had become the licensee of the Gardeners Arms Inn, No.1 Plucca Lane (now known as City Road), which he renamed the Military Canteen, possibly to take advantage of the proximity of the army barracks at Longcross Street.

Harding had left the Military Canteen by 1880, and in 1886 he was keeping an establishment called the Alexandria at 37 Upper George Street (now known as Wyverne Road).

John Henry Harding died 3rd September 1886, five months after his wife, and at the time of death he was virtually destitute. Two factors that may have contributed to this: firstly, the army barracks had moved from Longcross Street to Maindy Barracks on Whitchurch Road, two miles away, and secondly, the passing of the Welsh Licensing Act 1881, which introduced Sunday closing and the emergence of many small drinking clubs.

New Publication
**Studies on Hardwick Road Cemetery, King's Lynn, from 1849 to
the present day**
edited by Julian Litten

This book consists of nine essays and appendices on the history and science and aesthetics of Hardwick Road Cemetery, which could be a major contribution to cemetery studies generally. Dr Julian Litten, well known funerary historian and chairman of the Friends of Hardwick Road Cemetery, has edited the work and contributed the essays on the history of the site and a glossary of funerary symbolism. He has also co-authored with Neville Posnett a study of the Commonwealth War Graves, and with other authors an essay on the notable burials.

Colin Houseman studies the changing history of cemetery regulations and administration; John Lovett and others provide a survey of the trees on the site; Robin Stevenson analyses the mosses and plant life found there; and Rob Gordon and others cover the animal wildlife. There is a generous section of colour plates, maps and diagrams. The book is priced at £11.95. The Friends of Hardwick Road Cemetery will be handling local orders in association with publisher Shaun Tyas. For more details see the website www.hardwickroadcemetery.co.uk or email shaun@shauntyas.myzen.co.uk

NFCF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Hosted by

The Friends of Welford Road Cemetery, Leicester
Saturday 11th June 2022

Any members who have not received details
please contact the NFCF secretary
secretary@cemeteryfriends.com

ASSOCIATION OF SIGNIFICANT CEMETERIES IN EUROPE

AGM and Conference will take place
from 15th to 17th September 2022
Belgrade, Serbia

<https://www.significantceteries.org>

Welcome to Welford Road Cemetery, Leicester, from the Friends

Chris Powis Secretary of the host group for this year's NCF AGM, gives some background to their historic cemetery and city

Welford Road Cemetery, then known as The Leicester Cemetery, was opened as a municipal cemetery on June 19th, 1849, the same day as the town's Art Gallery and Museum, and the first burial followed nine days later. It rapidly expanded over the next 20 years to occupy its current 31-acre site just outside the city centre.

The cemetery's heyday was in the late Victorian period but by the turn of the century new cemeteries were needed. The first opened in 1881 at Belgrave to the north of the city and it too has an active Cemetery Friends group. It is well worth a visit. A large new cemetery with a crematorium opened at Gilroes in 1902 and was joined by a further cemetery at Saffron Hill in 1931. Welford Road now sees around a dozen burials a year in family plots.

Designed as a classic Garden Cemetery, the site provides a green oasis in the city and is home to a range of fauna and flora as well as over 213,000, mainly Victorian, citizens of Leicester. Use of the cemetery declined following the First World War and the fine chapels sadly fell into disrepair and were removed in 1958. The final plots in the cemetery were purchased in the 1970s, and in the 1980s and early 1990s the cemetery suffered from vandalism. However, as the cemetery neared its 150th birthday, in 1999 the Council and the newly formed Friends group began a process of regeneration that culminated in the award of a Heritage Lottery Grant in 2006. This enabled the building of a Visitor Centre and the renewal of roads and paths, plus the installation of information boards and plaques.

Leicester was an established Roman town sitting astride the Fosse Way and has played an important part in the history of England since then. Bosworth Field (1485) was fought close by, and everyone will be familiar with the story of the 'King in the Car Park' following the discovery of Richard III in 2012; but Naseby (1645), the decisive battle of the English Civil War, was also fought a few miles to the south of

Leicester. The city expanded rapidly during the Industrial Revolution and the later Victorian period to become a centre of the hosiery trade. Modern package tourism was started by Thomas Cook when he organised a train excursion to Loughborough in 1841 and he is now perhaps the cemetery's most famous inhabitant. There is much to see and explore in the city and its surroundings for any member choosing to make a long weekend around the AGM.

Friends of Welford Road Cemetery: www.fowrcl.rg.uk

Friends of Belgrave Cemetery: www.friendsofbelgravecemetery.org.uk

The wandering death penny

by Stuart Wilkinson

I have long had an interest in death pennies – these are large bronze disks which were given to the family of men killed in the First World War. As these are treasured by families they do not often come up for sale, so when one was offered at a local auction, I purchased it. Along with the penny was the dedication scroll, war medal and a cutting from a newspaper.



*Bronze WWI death penny and medal – William Little
Photograph courtesy of
Stuart Wilkinson*

The trooper was not from my locality and was in a regiment far away from my hometown, but I was just happy to possess such a poignant relic.

I woke in the middle of the night thinking about the name on the medal. William Little was not a common one, and I remembered a relative with the same name. On investigating the gentleman concerned I found that he was actually my great uncle, and I once met his widow, and knew his daughter and granddaughter.

So, the relic has come back to the family and will be a cherished memento.

National Cemeteries Week (NCW) back in business

by NCW coordinator, Emer Seamark

By the time you read this the NCF's National Cemeteries Week will be over and we would like to thank all those who registered to be part of it. I hope your events went well and the week was enjoyable. Do send the Editor a photo or a few details of anything special for the next issue.

The gap of two years since we were last able to celebrate NCW left us a little "rusty" on the mechanics of organising the event - apologies to those who were inconvenienced by this in any way.

Thanks also to those who, for various reasons, were unable to play an active part in NCW and simply highlighted their whereabouts with the posters; one can never assume that all members of a community know where their cemetery is situated or are even aware of its existence and newcomers and young people are likely to fall into this category. Posters also allow cemeteries to call for volunteers which is an excellent reason for displaying them.

Over the past four years there has been a steady rise in the numbers participating, the area of the UK covered becomes wider, and we have managed to maintain our pre-pandemic best which is a pleasant surprise, NCW helps to publicise the NCF and the work done by so many volunteers across the country.

The following groups took part: Friends of Flaybrick, Birkenhead; Friends of Brandwood End, Birmingham; Arnos Vale, Bristol; Friends of the Red Church, Broseley; Friends of Ramsey Mortuary Chapels, Cambridgeshire; Friends of Spital Cemetery, Chesterfield; Friends of Lister Lane, Halifax; Friends of Northwood, Isle of Wight; Dockroyd Graveyard Trust, Keighley; Friends of Beckett Street, Leeds; Friends of Barkby Road, Leicestershire; Friends of Brompton, London; Friends of Nunhead, London; Econet's Friends of Reading Old Cemetery, Reading; Henley Road Cemetery and Crematorium, Reading; Friends of Loxley, Sheffield; Friends of Jesmond Old Cemetery, Newcastle upon Tyne; Brookwood Cemetery Society, Woking; Friends of York Cemetery.

Members News

A selection of news and events from Members newsletters and websites

Abney Park Cemetery, London

Abney Cemetery Park Trust have appointed Sam Perrin as their new Trust Manager. Sam is a cemetery researcher with an MA in Victorian Studies and has led the Cemetery's monthly History Highlights tour.

Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham

The Friends are working with Brandwood community interest company, Our Scene. As part of their Brightening Brandwood project, Our Scene is producing planters for distribution in the Brandwood area, and the Friends will be taking receipt of three for the cemetery.

Farsley Rehoboth Burial Ground, Leeds

In April, the Friends welcomed 35 volunteers from Leeds Rhinos rugby league club, which included the full first team and their coaches.

Hyde Park Cemetery, Doncaster

With funding secured in 2021, the Friends have produced a new self-guided walk of the cemetery, entitled 'Larger than life'. This guide explores the stories behind some of the cemetery's larger monuments. The guide can be downloaded free of charge from their website (www.fohpc.org.uk), either as a single page or trifold leaflet.

Rectory Lane Cemetery, Berkhamsted

Dr James Moir, who project managed the cemetery's transformation and remains as the project's convenor, was the recipient of an honorary fellowship from the Royal Institute of British Architecture. These honorary fellowships are awarded each year in recognition of the contribution made by individuals to architecture who are not architects.

Southampton Old Cemetery

A commemoration was held in April to mark the 102nd anniversary of the death of aviation pioneer Squadron Leader Edwin Rowland Moon on 29th April 1920. An address was given at the graveside by the Mayor of Southampton, Cllr Alex Houghton, and Cllr Satvir Kaur read the poem 'High Flight'. Two Southampton Sea Scouts cadets formed the guard of honour around the grave.

Contributions from Colin Fenn, Vice Chairman of the NCF

The Heritage Pulse survey

NFCF has signed up to the Heritage Pulse Network, which surveys trends across heritage networks, of all sizes, staffed and volunteers. The network received nearly 300 responses to their first survey, which showed that heritage organisations, overall, had top priorities of:

1. Sense of place and community
2. Financial resilience
3. Diversity, access, and inclusion
4. Staff and volunteer well-being

Curiously in large organisations with 50+ employees those priorities were inverted:

1. Diversity
2. Well-being
3. Finance

(I postulate this reflects a big difference between our volunteer organisations that are rooted in our communities, versus larger organisations who fall into the trap of being internally focussed on propagating their own institution.)

About nine in 10 organisations were affected by Omicron, and most saw a fall in income, typically by 20%. This has translated to a lack of confidence in investing, and many predict it will take five years to fully recover. However, locally based organisations felt more confident than the national ones.

There are anecdotal fears that cost-of-living increases will impact on people's ability to spend money on heritage. Levelling-up project money hasn't filtered into real funding for projects yet. However, the impending change in lottery operator may well have an effect on its grant funding as the new bidder has had to develop new approaches to funding good causes.

There are some figures on visitors numbers to tourist attractions here: <https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/news/unique-year-2021-visitor-museum-heritage-figures-released-alva/>

The Heritage Pulse website is: <https://heritagepulse.insights-alliance.com/>

Queens's Speech – changes to conservation laws

The Queen's Speech on 9th May included a 'Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill' that affects Listed Buildings and sites on Historic England's Parks and Gardens Register. A large number of cemeteries have been registered as a Park and Garden in the last decade, but there was no accompanying statutory mechanism. There has been policy parity for all types of designated heritage asset since 2010, but the new Bill, if passed, will introduce statutory parity for those registered sites.

Specially, Clause 92 of the Bill now introduces a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting. This now applies equally to all of these heritage 'assets'. This includes listed buildings, registered parks and gardens; scheduled monuments; battlefields; protected wrecks; and World Heritage Sites. (Conservation areas are unchanged, being covered by the existing duty in the 1990 Act.)

Clause 92 also extends the existing listed building duties beyond preservation to include 'enhancing' any feature, quality or characteristic of the asset or setting that contributes to the significance of the asset. So, when development is being considered that affects listed assets or their settings, there will be a duty through planning permission to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting.

This change should place extra controls and criteria to consider at planning permission stage if a registered site is considering grave re-use.

New Members and Associates

The following groups have recently joined the NCF

Econet's Friends of Reading Old Cemetery

This established group from East Berkshire reported that 27 volunteers turned up for their first workday since a long Covid break, including plenty of keen teenagers. The main focus was to clear a huge fallen limb from a cedar tree and to create a massive habitat pile with the cut materials. The workday will now resume its monthly sessions on Sunday afternoons as part of the Friends programme of care for their Victorian cemetery.



*Volunteers helping with clearance work
Photographs courtesy of Leslee Barron*

The Friends also plan to run more Family Open Days plus butterfly, bat, and tree themed walks. In addition, members of the local community will lead various heritage and history walks and talks while the surveying and recording of the flora and fauna continue. They are members of Econet, an umbrella group of various Reading Friends groups.

The 11.5-acre cemetery is owned by Reading Borough Council and has a Grade II listing, as well as the Gatehouse and two monuments.

Contact: Teresa Verney-Brookes, teresavb@btinternet.com

Website: www.econetreading.org.uk/

Also joined as Associates:

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council- Bereavement Services

They wish to support newly formed Cemetery Friends in the borough which has eight working and one closed cemetery.

Contact: Assistant Bereavement Services Manager, Chris Willis.

Email: chris.willis@rotherham.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/deaths/guide-funerals-cemeteries/1>

Samantha Perrin: Cemetery researcher and author.

Email: misssamperrin@gmail.com

Correction

Friends of Loxley Cemetery, Sheffield

Please note that the name for the contact is Verity Brack and we apologise for the incorrect spelling for this and in the caption credit in the last NCF Newsletter:

Email: loxley.secretary@yahoo.com

Website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofloxleycemetery/>

Let us know

Please keep sending the newsletter editor your news stories and events (contact details are on the back page). You get publicity for your events, a place to trumpet your successes, and a chance to air your woes. We get the articles to fill and update our pages.

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