

UNDERCLIFFE CEMETERY NEWSLETTER

**AUTUMN
2020**

Bradford's History in Stone

• NEWS ROUND UP •

• A message from the Vice-Chair of the Trustees •

Allan Hillary, Chair of Trustees, wrote in the Spring edition of this newsletter about the world-wide pandemic and how it was impacting upon Undercliffe Cemetery. He was rightly cautious about the future and, as we are all aware, the situation has unfortunately deteriorated. Bradford has been highlighted by the Government as an area of particular concern.

Several weeks ago the Trustees took the decision to postpone until Easter 2021 all tours and non-essential events. Our concern continues to be first and foremost for the welfare and safety of the cemetery's many visitors, and for our much-valued volunteers, and also for Andrew Barker who has remained on duty at the cemetery lodge in his role as Registrar and Business Manager to ensure, among many things, that burials and crucial administration matters continue to take place. The formal business of the Charity carries on, and the Trustees are grateful to Sue Crossley, in her volunteer role as Membership Secretary &c., for facilitating their meetings, and those of the sub-committees, through video conferencing. (One wonders what William Gay, the Bradford Cemetery Company's first registrar in 1854, would have made of 'Zooming', and of 'online platforms', and of the fact that we have lately established 'social networking' links with other heritage cemeteries - one being almost 12,000 miles distant in Karori, Wellington, New Zealand!)

Volunteers also continue to help in many different ways to support the Charity both singularly and collectively. Our grounds volunteers attend weekly, and practice stringent safe-distancing measures. We are extremely grateful for their valiant efforts in maintaining the cemetery's presentable appearance, and for making significant headway into areas that have remained neglected for upwards of forty years. Several interesting headstones have recently been uncovered, and this is good news for our active and industrious research team whose members remain enthusiastic about piecing together information about the cemetery's illustrious history.

Covid-19 continues to affect the lives of everyone. In her uplifting message, The Queen assured us that better days will return. Let us too hope that the end will soon be in sight, and that we - and Undercliffe Cemetery - will indeed be able to return to better times.



John Jackson

AGM - 2020

At a Trustee/Directors' meeting held on 7th September 2020, it was unanimously agreed to cancel our Annual General Meeting due to the Covid19 pandemic.

The decision was made with guidance from our auditor, the Charity Commission and Companies House. All statutory obligations will be finalised by the end of September 2020 and the twelve Trustees will remain in post until our Annual General Meeting in 2021.

More World War 1 finds.

With the greater number of ground work volunteers, the strimmings still getting done allowing for the recovery of other areas and since returning after the Covid suspension, we've discovered 3 more memorial stones to Great War casualties including another Bradford Pal.

We now know of 278 local men either buried or remembered here at Undercliffe and plenty of opportunities for Military Tour guides, when we can! On this point, we're very well covered for WW1 research but not so for other wars. If anyone would like to offer their services, **please let us know!**



• The tragic tale of Mary Ann Bailey •

A word of warning as we enter Autumn and the seasonally high winds we often suffer.

This is the tragic tale of young Mary Ann Bailey who was swept up in mighty winds outside Hanson Girls' School, Byron Street, on 23rd February 1911. She very sadly died of her horrendous injuries and is buried in Undercliffe (grave ref. - Uncon L90). Unfortunately her grave is in a very overgrown section of the cemetery, as pictured, perhaps a project for our groundwork volunteers to uncover?



On that fateful day in 1911, Mary, a sixteen year old pupil of Hanson Girls' High School at Barkerend, attended school early. After leaving her books and jacket in the classroom she ventured outside into the school yard where a "whirlwind" swept her up into the air to at least 20 feet, some say higher and some say she was level with a balcony attached to the school building. Her skirts were filled with wind but they did not act as a parachute and she fell to the ground, her slender body dashed violently on the concrete yard.

Mr G P Parsons who had been visiting the school and was waiting on the road for a tramcar, saw her fly behind the buildings and hearing a thud ran to her aid with Dr McEwan, who lived opposite. The school caretaker, Mr Whewell who had been fastening open the school doors carried her inside where it was found that nearly every bone in her body had been broken. She died soon after at about 10.30 am. Mr Whewell said that he had never known a gale like it and that when he had ventured out to open the gates that morning, he had taken a detour to avoid the worst of the wind.

The pupils were not told of her death until lessons had finished.

Mary A Bailey was the fourth child of Albert and Eliza Bailey who in 1901 lived in Lower Rushton Road. They later moved to Folkstone Street. Albert was a tramway engineer.

The finding of the Inquest was accidental death.

• Sources •

• Lincolnshire Echo: 24 February 1911 • Leeds Mercury: 24 February 1911 • Illustrated London News: 04 March 1911
• Census records • Birth, Death and Marriage records.

- A big welcome to our latest volunteer Chris •
AKA - Ronnie Lawson.

Chris explains why he became a volunteer at Undercliffe:

'Born in the late 1950s in Idle, my association with Undercliffe Cemetery stems from my childhood days, visiting with my mother a grave at the bottom steps of the cemetery, then I did not know why my mother visited nearly every week, but as I grew older, I realised my Grandparents' maternal side were buried there, Percy Oates and Florence nee Dennett, little did I know then at my mother's sadness at losing her mother just before her 21st birthday at only 50 years of age.

After spending nearly 30 years in public service in Bradford I retired some 5 years ago and now having time on my hands I started to research my family tree, I discovered that I had three generations of my family buried at Undercliffe.

I discovered my mother Joyce was born and raised at 88 Undercliffe Lane and her family were well connected with St Augustine's Church.

After some research I visited the cemetery and located my 2nd Great grandfather's grave David Bennett and his five sons.

His other son, my Great grandfather Jackson Dennett and his wife Martha Harriet nee Higginbotham are buried with my Grandparents at the bottom steps of the cemetery.

After a little help from Andrew the registrar, I was then able to locate where my other 2nd Great grandparents were buried, that was about a year ago.

I was inspired by the warmth and friendliness of the volunteers who cut the dense undergrowth back and revealed the grave of my 2nd Great uncle, Joseph Bamford Higginbotham and his family, with further help the volunteers eventually led me to the grave of my 2nd Great grandparents, David Higginbotham and his wife Ruth nee Bamford.

That was the start of my services as a volunteer at the cemetery, something worthwhile to do and keeps me fit and healthy.

The cemetery is an awe inspiring place, new discoveries are made frequently and I enjoy the rewarding experience from the work done. Working as a team and helping to maintain the cemetery and giving something back to the people of Bradford is so important and highly recommended.'



Before



After

This particular stretch of Undercliffe Cemetery is now known as...

LAWSON'S WAY BD3

•Two men named Robert Milligan•

A case of mistaken identity.

The recent international outcry about historical figures connected with the slave trade caused a spike in views on the cemetery's website. This arose from confusion about two men with the same name - Robert Milligan. However, the sudden interest was not in 'our' Robert Milligan (1786-1862), but in London's Robert Milligan (1746-1809), a prominent late eighteenth-century merchant who had interests in a company connected with the Jamaican slave trade. He was chief promoter of the building of the West India Docks, and his statue was recently removed from in front of the building that houses the Museum of London Docklands.

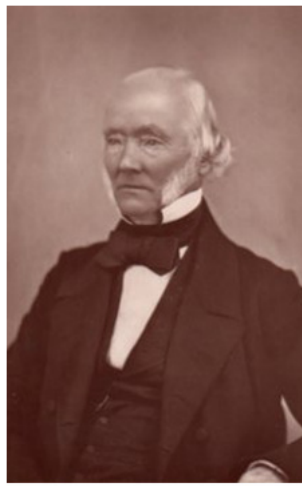
Readers of Stuart Firth's well-researched article about Bradford's Robert Milligan would have realised that he had no connection with the slave trade. In fact, he was vehemently opposed to it. Milligan served as the town's first mayor in 1847, and as its MP between 1851 and 1857. He was one of several local businessmen who were instrumental in founding the Bradford Cemetery Company, which was incorporated in 1852.

Robert Milligan's funeral was one of the largest public spectacles in Victorian Bradford, and it was also one of the most important in Undercliffe Cemetery's history. His mortal remains lie beneath a huge grey granite monument in a prominent position on the central promenade.

The adulatory inscription proclaims that "his talents and industry, guided by integrity and honour, raised him to high distinction as a merchant", and that "he was generous and warm-hearted in his hospitalities, liberal in his support of religious and benevolent institutions."

Milligan's funeral service was conducted by the Rev Dr Benjamin Godwin whose grandson, Alderman (later Sir) John Arthur Godwin (1852-1921), was destined to become Bradford's first lord mayor in 1907. He too was laid to rest in Undercliffe Cemetery.

John Jackson.



Volunteer Updates

Just a couple of absentees, this is the latest of our growing collection, often over a dozen on Tuesdays and a good few on Wednesdays, **please come and join us!!**



Herbicide Treatment

We've plans to lessen a continuous, ongoing and age-old problem in the Cemetery, weed and bramble growth. Many ground-work and research volunteers comment on how quickly the fruits of their labours are lost after uncovering areas and burial plots by the rapid re-growth of weeds and brambles.

Ted and Chris, ground work volunteers, will be attending a two day Herbicide Treatment course at Shipley College in late October. As beneficial and rewarding as this will prove to be, the cost, which has been paid, is substantial as it will be for the supply of the products we need.

Any financial contributions Members could make would be greatly appreciated, cheques to the Cemetery or our Virgin Money giving option, (see attached link). The work will be concentrated around the main walkways and well visited plots and we really do believe this will continue our efforts to show Undercliffe in all its true glory.

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1014373>