

UNDERCLIFFE UNCOVERED

TALES FROM OUR TOMBS

AUTUMN
2022

• Chair's Comments •

It seems like only yesterday when I walked around the Cemetery for the first time. I stood in front of the Holden and Illingworth monuments and was blown away by the grandeur of the place, and its history. I could see the opportunities. Today I find myself Chairman of Undercliffe Cemetery Charity. I am really not sure how that happened, but I will endeavour to put my business experience to good use.

Taking over this role from Allan Hillary is a great challenge, one I am very much looking forward to. Allan has done an unbelievable job in building a team which has transformed the Cemetery from something that looked quite neglected to a place that we can all be very proud of. Thanks to Allan, we have a strong and very capable team of volunteers. There are great challenges ahead but also opportunities and I am absolutely sure the team can cope with both.

We will deal with the challenges as they arise, but the opportunities we can make an immediate start on; there is no time like the present. One such opportunity relates to flora and fauna. From the feedback we have had, we know that many people think we should strike a balance in making some areas nature friendly whilst maintaining a more neat and tidy appearance in many other areas. Recently, we have replaced old bird boxes and for the first time installed bat boxes and hedgehog hides. Soon we will be planting small fruit trees to attract more birds and there are plans to sow wild flowers. Bee and butterfly friendly shrubs may also be planted. We do need more volunteers who specialise in this area, so please join us if you have the knowledge. Over time we can make Undercliffe Cemetery a much more attractive place for wildlife and for visitors. Striking the balance and respecting all areas of the Cemetery is key to making this a success.

Our groundwork volunteers have recently benefited from better accommodation, storage facilities and more equipment; it is important that we continue to invest. Some companies and individuals have generously donated funds for specific items of equipment, and we would encourage more to come forward and help us.

Engaging with the local community is high on our agenda. It is important for young people to be aware of their heritage. Local history, the First World War and the Industrial Revolution are all part of the curriculum. The Cemetery is Bradford's history in stone. It's the perfect place for our youngsters to learn about the history of this great city.

Updating our old records system to make it more accessible is a project we started twelve months ago and we are making good progress. The digitisation of the records has revealed that there are over 2,000 graves at Undercliffe with only one occupant. We must try to make families aware that they have a family plot, and we will have to devise a way of doing that. This is one of our greatest challenges.

Undercliffe Cemetery is a treasure and a place of great historical value, but it is also a working Cemetery and there are still plots available. Please support the charity in whatever way you can, perhaps becoming a sponsor or by volunteering or becoming a friend. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Steve Lightfoot



• A Call For Research Volunteers • Find your Inner Detective ...



... by being a researcher at Undercliffe Cemetery. We are a friendly bunch of detectives who research the stories of those buried in the Cemetery. Whether you are interested in the great or the poor, the villain or the hero, there are plenty to get your teeth into. Also, there is an opportunity to rescue the long dead from oblivion by helping us transcribe the records. You might find your talent in promoting the Cemetery, working in our education scheme or connecting with other organisations. Failing that we always need practical help on tour days, guiding, working in the cafe and we always welcome cake bakers!



• Garvey - New CWGC Stone & First World War •

Readers of our last newsletter may recall an item on Michael Joseph Garvey, a First World War casualty from January 1919. Michael Joseph Garvey's final resting place was unmarked until very recently, when the erection of a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone at his burial place recognised his service and sacrifice. Jen Houlden, Michael's great niece, provided a strong case for the headstone to be erected, and after 6 years of waiting, finally, a headstone now stands.

We can now share more information on this fascinating story, having made contact with Jen.

Michael Joseph Garvey was born in Bradford in the second quarter of 1895, the son of Thomas Garvey who came to Bradford from Ballinlough, Co. Mayo, Ireland and Mary Fleming of Bradford. The family lived at 2 Wellington Street, Stott Hill, Bradford; up Otley Road and not far from Undercliffe Cemetery. This area of Bradford was very popular with Irish immigrants; the majority of families on the 1901 & 1911 censuses were originally from Ireland. Thomas was a quarry man, big and strong, and legend has it, he could down 12 pints whilst the clock struck midnight. He could also lift a horse!



Michael Joseph Garvey enlisted for service with the Royal Field Artillery under the Derby Conscription Scheme on 2 March 1916 and arrived in France on 31 December 1916. He remained there until 19 August 1917, when he came home to the UK having been shot in the left wrist in Ypres. Once convalesced, Michael transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps on 29 November 1917. However, before being posted back overseas, Michael fell ill and was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the lungs on 5 March 1918 and was fully discharged from the army on 4 April 1918, being classed as unfit for service. Michael was issued with the Silver War Badge on 15 April 1918 as well as instructions on how to wear his badge to emphasise his inability to, rather than his unwillingness, to fight for King and Country. Michael's commanding officer referred to him as 'a very steady, well conducted man who has been wounded in defence of his country'.

A section of Michael's RFA battalion in France.



Tragically, Michael's condition worsened, and he died aged 23 on 5 January 1919 just seven weeks after the Great War ended. To add to the family woe, Michael's mother Mary died the following month, aged 51. Michael and his mother were buried in the same plot: Unconsecrated P260, and records showed no trace of a headstone of any kind being erected; memories are of a mound marking the location.

Jen's research into the Garvey family point to the family being strong supporters of the Irish Republican cause, and that a family farm in Co. Mayo was used to hide guns and ammunition under haystacks.

Another twist in Michael's story, is his name is on the beautiful memorial tablets at the old St Mary's Roman Catholic Church. He is in fact the last of their congregation to be remembered, his death coming as late as it did. Why did Thomas give permission for Father Garvey (same name different family) to mark his death in this way having not marked his death at Undercliffe Cemetery? We don't know, but we celebrate being able to remember Michael as we do all servicemen and women at Undercliffe.



• Allan Hillary •

The media are fond of referring to long-time, much-loved, and high-profile personalities as 'National Treasures'. If at Undercliffe Cemetery we were to apply a similar analogy to one of our own volunteers, then nobody is more deserving of that glowing sobriquet than our recently retired Chair of Trustees, Mr Allan Irving Hillary. And such is the esteem in which he is held that the Trustees have been anxious to ensure that his close association with the Cemetery is maintained.

Allan's consuming interest in Undercliffe Cemetery dates from the time when he was a local ward councillor, and specifically during his term of office as Lord Mayor of Bradford in 2003-04 when he contributed the foreword to Clark and Davison's book, *In Loving Memory*. His passion for his native city and its rich heritage, coupled with his public service as a member of its municipal governing body, provided the catalyst for Allan's energetic and spirited involvement with the Cemetery. He became a member of the board of Trustees of the Undercliffe Cemetery Charity and was soon elected Chair, an office he occupied with outstanding fidelity for fifteen years.

Allan's leadership style has been distinguished by the qualities of diplomacy, determination, and vision, complemented with attributes of great friendliness, and excellent communication and 'people' skills. (We all know that his endearing personality has the ability to charm the birds off the trees!) These characteristics have proved to be greatly beneficial for the prosperity of the Cemetery, and as a pleasing result of the happy and profitable collaborations he has fostered, and through his hard work and perseverance, the profile of the Cemetery has been raised considerably not only locally but at national level too. He has 'pulled into the tent' (to use one of his own favourite phrases) many people with diverse talents and interests whose contributions to the Cemetery's care, maintenance, preservation, and stature have resulted this year in The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The formal award of this rare and prestigious accolade coincided most fittingly with Allan's last few days in the office of Chair.



My own 'tent' experience happened a decade ago when, after forty years of 'going it alone' at the Cemetery, I was unwittingly whisked inside the hallowed marquee by Allan who, before too long, had installed me as his deputy! In the capacity of vice-chair, it has been my very great privilege to work closely with Allan, and to be always considerably impressed and much inspired by his unswerving commitment to Undercliffe Cemetery.

Fellow volunteers will join me in expressing profound thanks to Allan for his munificent contribution to the cause of Undercliffe Cemetery as Chair, and for elevating it to a high place among Bradford's great heritage assets. We are, of course, delighted that he is continuing his valuable association with the Cemetery in his new role as Honorary President of the Charity.

John Jackson

• Recent T&A Coverage •

We would like to acknowledge the ongoing support we receive from our local daily newspaper, the Bradford *Telegraph & Argus*, and let everyone know how much we appreciate its coverage in helping spread and share our stories. We use all modern social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, to significantly grow the coverage of all those interested in Undercliffe from across the globe, but there's nothing better to look after our local audience, many of who may perhaps be not too tech savvy, than our good old T&A! We hope to give them many more stories to cover in the years to come.

In the last fortnight alone, we've had articles published on:

- (a) our Brothers In Arms military tour and the Averdieck brothers
- (b) the volunteers and their work
- (c) the life and times of William Gay, Undercliffe's designer
- (d) our award ceremony of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services and
- (e) our local councillor Si Cunningham singing our praises in Council sessions.

Over Remembrance weekend, the T&A plans to cover all thirteen pairs of brothers who were included in the Brothers In Arms tour - there are some truly heartbreaking stories amongst them.



• Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service Presentation at City Hall •

Jacqui Ambler

Tuesday, 27 September 2022 was a special date in the Undercliffe Cemetery Charity calendar. It marked the next chapter of our QAVS story, after the public confirmation of our award on Thursday, 2 June, which had kick-started the late Queen’s Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend for us in style. Our Chair, Allan Hillary, had arranged for the official presentation of the award to be made in the august surroundings of City Hall, and we were honoured to have the presence of the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Ed Anderson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Roger Whittaker, and the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Councillor Martin Love.

The Lord Lieutenant introduced the proceedings. He welcomed all to the event, and highlighted the significance of the QAVS award, which is equivalent to an MBE. He explained that there had been a steep rise in applications from across the region in recent years, and that only a percentage of these were successful, so he congratulated us for coming through the various stages of the rigorous assessment process. He highlighted the excellent work that volunteers are engaged in at Undercliffe Cemetery and shared the citation on the award certificate that succinctly states what it is for:

‘Preserving Bradford’s proud history in stone and a beautiful green space for all to enjoy’.

The certificate goes on to confirm that the award is perpetual ‘for such period as the group continues to provide its current service’.

The Lord Mayor added his tribute to the wide range of Cemetery volunteers engaged in the different areas of Cemetery ‘life’, including maintenance and renovation, research, events, promotion, burials and overall management. In addition, he acknowledged the important work of past volunteers, including Christine Chapple who, with her husband Tony, set up the original Friends of Undercliffe Cemetery and were successful in persuading Bradford Council to compulsorily purchase the site back in the 1980s, and Colin Clark who was instrumental in sustaining all the different aspects of Cemetery work for many years until the appointment of our first official co-ordinator. Both Christine and Colin have sadly passed away and are memorialised in the Cemetery, but we were delighted to welcome Colin’s widow, Ann Clark, to the celebration event. Ann was herself Cemetery Registrar for many years, and a tremendous supporter of the Charity and of Colin’s work.



Our Chair, Allan Hillary, was duly presented with the beautiful crystal award that will be a permanent reminder of this accolade. The accompanying framed certification of the award will be one of the last personally approved and signed by the late Queen. Allan’s acceptance speech echoed a deep appreciation of the work of all volunteers who contribute to the running of the Cemetery. He recognised that the Charity is now a much larger organisation than previously, with many ‘strings to its bow’ and volunteers with a whole range of skills that they freely contribute to maintain and develop the Cemetery. In addition, Allan extended grateful thanks to the contractors and suppliers who aren’t Cemetery volunteers, but who nevertheless support the Charity in ways that are greatly valued, for example by providing machinery and expertise to reinstate monuments, landscaping areas that were previously an eyesore, and providing essential materials such as strimmer line, enabling the volunteers to keep large areas of the site as attractive and accessible as possible.



The subsequent presentation of the QAVS badges was one of the highlights of the afternoon, with well-deserved applause for each volunteer. The delight of recipients as they shook hands with our dignitaries and received their badges was skilfully captured on camera by Tim Hardy, our social media co-ordinator. Tim is now endeavouring to distribute these photos by email. Please let Tim know your email address if you haven’t received your photo as yet.

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As part of the event, but unbeknown to Allan, arrangements had been made to recognise his own superb and sustained commitment to the Charity. Allan has been on the Board of Trustees for over fifteen years, and has been Chair for the majority of that time. The end of September 2022 saw his transition to the newly created role of Honorary President, recognising the esteem in which he is held. Grateful thanks go to Steve Lightfoot who takes over the mantle from Allan as Chair. Volunteers had previously been able to recognise Allan's enormous contribution at the Charity's AGM in the Cemetery Lodge. However, we felt that it was fitting for our own ex-Lord Mayor to receive an appreciation of his service at his other 'home', City Hall, where his Lord Mayoralty is listed on the roll of honour on the wall of the banqueting hall where the celebration was taking place.

Chris Haxby and Stewart Field, both Trustees and stalwart maintenance team volunteers, presented Allan with cards and gifts on behalf of us all. Somewhat uncharacteristically lost for words, Allan was clearly moved by this show of appreciation and we hope that he will enjoy some well-earned special occasions with his wife, Ann, with the gift voucher for Holdsworth House, an historic hotel and restaurant situated on the outskirts of Halifax. The house dates back to 1633 and is well known for providing an atmospheric backdrop to such TV dramas as *Last Tango in Halifax*, and has been host to many stars performing in the area, including the Beatles, back in the day! Allan was also presented with a copy of *A Bradford Pal: From Mill Town to the Battlefields of France* by John Broadhead. We hope that he will enjoy reading the story of a local lad who fought in the First World War, as he has maintained a passionate interest in the history of the First World War and has been the prime mover in organising the annual 11 November commemoration at the Cemetery.

Our afternoon concluded with an excellent buffet and a rare chance to socialise with the spectrum of volunteers, supporters and honoured guests. Our long-term contact at the *Telegraph and Argus*, Emma Clayton, who attended the event ensured that it was subsequently reported in print. Our crystal award will be a permanent reminder when it goes on display in the Cemetery Lodge in due course, along with the framed certificate signed by Her Late Majesty. Thanks again to all whose efforts have contributed to us winning this prestigious award!

• Volunteer Of The Quarter • Paul Waley

When I first visited Undercliffe Cemetery some years ago, I decided there and then that I would like to volunteer at the Cemetery when I retired. Retirement has proved to be a gradual process, but working all morning in the open air in the Cemetery is one of the highlights of the week for me. I've particularly enjoyed looking after one section of the Cemetery - the challenge is to keep the ivy and the brambles from restoring their hold. In the last year or so, I reckon I've cleared about thirty gravestones to reveal their inscriptions. That is a particular pleasure. The Cemetery is in particularly good and plentiful hands now, and it looks really beautiful, with a wonderful interplay between vegetation and neat, cleared ground, from rampant rhododendrons to Glasgow-style necropolis.



• Before & After Pics • Consecrated Section I

Many are the times when we hear visitors comment favourably on how much better Undercliffe now looks compared to not so long ago, and this has been a big factor in our QAVS citation mentioned elsewhere. We have several 'before and after' comparisons but perhaps none better than these, taken in Consecrated Section I.

It is difficult to believe they cover the same area but indeed they do! If you fancy playing your part and helping out with the grounds team, please get in touch. Much of the work at this time of year involves spending hours on grounds reclaiming; work that very much shows the fruits of your labour, as you can see, Tuesday is the day - and we'd love you to join us!



• Batboxes •

A recent newsletter article showed the several batboxes made by expert chippy and volunteer Chris Haxby, with some sterling ladderwork above and beyond the call of duty by volunteer Alan Milne. These are now up and established on several of the highest trees in the Cemetery. We do clip back overgrowth and control saplings when they impinge on headstones, but we're very careful to protect and use nature's beauty to add to the feel and atmosphere of Undercliffe.



• Tours This Year And Next •



By the time you read this, we'll have finished our 2022 Cemetery Saturday tour schedule. It has been a tremendous success for the Cemetery, raising substantial much-needed funds for us to help maintain and grow our aim to share the history of this remarkable place.

We hope all who were able to join us on the tours enjoyed it as much as our tour guides did. Our Education & Promotions team is meeting soon to discuss and plan the tour schedule for 2023 and we already have some ideas for new themed tours.

One of these is a subject close to many folks' hearts: we've identified the burial places of more than twenty licensees of some of the most illustrious, and indeed much less so, of Bradford's pubs and drinking houses. If only they could share some of their tales with us, but we will be doing our best to uncover some of their stories and will reveal all on one of our tours next year. We may or may not include the story of this grave, found recently by one of our Tuesday groundwork volunteers: 'Secretary Of the Bradford Teetotal Association' who died aged 22. Not the greatest endorsement for abstinence.

• And Finally • Caption Competition




We recently posted this picture on our social media pages and the response was terrific to say the least. Originally titled, "Is this most British photograph you'll ever see?". It shows one of our most popular guides, David Whithorn, sitting outside the lodge, wearing the uniform of a Bradford Pal, enjoying a plate of fish 'n' chips underneath a Union Jack during a shower!

Can anybody come up with a suitably witty caption for this image?


Best one will be featured in the next newsletter.

Please visit our 'Social Media' sites to keep up-to-date with the Charity's extensive activities, including an annual programme of events and guided tours.

Website  www.undercliffecemetery.co.uk

Facebook  Undercliffe Cemetery Charity

Twitter  @Undercliffcem

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