



# UNDERCLIFFE UNCOVERED

TALES FROM OUR TOMBS



## • Chair's Comments •



It's taken two years to photograph and transcribe 51,000 records into our new database, and this month we will see the completion of the records for the Unconsecrated section of the Cemetery. I would like to thank the ten volunteers who have been involved in this project. Some of the handwriting in the 1930s and 1940s was absolutely appalling, so it has not been easy, but we have got there and this month marks the end of the first phase. What a marvellous achievement this is – and at zero cost. We have already started photographing the records for the Consecrated section and will start transcribing these this month. We anticipate it will take at least another two years to complete the project but we are a determined bunch and will not give in until it's complete.

As we continue to transcribe the records, more interesting stories will emerge, and our team of researchers stand ready to do their bit, revealing more of the fascinating history of Bradford and the Undercliffe Cemetery 'residents'.

In the meantime, we welcome all records enquiries, and the West Yorkshire Archives are also ready to answer your queries.

Another milestone is the formation of our Flora and Fauna team. There are only a few members at the moment but we hope that more volunteers will join us. The first two projects will be to develop a Chapel Garden which will brighten up the Cemetery and encourage more wildlife, birds and butterflies, whilst maintaining the heritage. An information board will be installed to tell the story of the wonderful chapels that were designed by architects Lockwood and Mawson. The second project is to record and plot the location of all the most interesting varieties of trees. This will enable us to put together a Tree Trail. Some of the trees go back 100 years, others have been planted more recently.

The groundwork team who work on a Tuesday morning, and other days by arrangement, are short of manpower, so we hope more volunteers will join us. Our winter programme will include making the T section more accessible, restoring more monuments, and clearing unused areas of the Cemetery to make more plots available.

Probably more schools than ever before are engaging with the Cemetery, bringing children to the annual Remembrance Service, which this year is on Friday, 10 November, and also attending tours conducted by their teachers or by our volunteer tour guides.

You can help us in so many ways: by volunteering; by sponsoring us; or simply by becoming a Friend of Undercliffe Cemetery. Please remember our social media channels, our monthly news bulletins and quarterly newsletters will keep you up to date.

**Steve Lightfoot**



## • Remembrance Service •



This year we'll be hosting our annual Remembrance Service on Friday, 10 November, from 10.30 a.m. Our service has become one of the best-attended events of its type in Bradford, with more and more schools asking to be represented. Naturally, we are delighted to welcome them to this moving service, and indeed some of the pupils will be involved in an event laying crosses on the Cross of Sacrifice by the Undercliffe Lane entrance to remember certain men who died across a range of conflicts, from Crimea onwards, who are buried or remembered in Undercliffe. Presenting the service with us will be the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bradford, the Dean of Bradford Cathedral and a Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorkshire. Our aim is to create an event that will leave abiding memories of those from here and far away who made the ultimate sacrifice.

**Please accept this invitation to join us.**





## • Tours •

Our last tour of the season took place on Saturday, 28 October. The Hallowe'en-themed 'Ghost Tour' was conducted in the misty, murky late afternoon to take full advantage of the gathering gloom that makes Undercliffe Cemetery such a spooky place at night. Forty visitors were regaled with terrible tales, while ghostly children and the Grim Reaper himself flitted from grave to grave. Thanks go to the volunteers who braved the inclement weather to make bring our ghosts to life, and the café team who fed and watered guests after their frightening experience!



Our September tour, 'Uncovering Undercliffe', was also a success. With Irene Lofthouse taking on the persona of Nancy De Garrs, the Bronte family nurse; gravedigger Graham Swain (who really should be on the stage) explaining funeral terms and gravedigging practices to a fascinated audience; Deborah Stirling, ably assisted by Yorick, regaling us with Victorian mourning customs; Andy Joyce showing us the tiny paupers' plot containing over sixty bodies; and Walsh's Funeral Directors telling us of how customs have changed over time, it was a tour with a difference. Around sixty people attended, split into three groups, and all agreed they'd had a very informative and entertaining morning. We're hoping to repeat this tour next year for those who couldn't make it this time, plus we will be having an 'Uncovering Undercliffe 2' with a whole host of new topics. Watch this space or our website for more details!



## • Volunteer Profile: Andrew Barker former Registrar •

I first became involved with the charity in 2008 when I started as the deputy coordinator. My original role was overseeing the valuable work done by the volunteers and assisting the coordinator, Neil.

At that time, we had a number of external organisations who volunteered for us, including Agape which was there to support the recovery of people with addiction. We also had groups undertaking community service supervised by the probation service. There were a few volunteers who joined at a similar time to me including Val and Brian Wooley, Chris Haxby and Stewart Field. I soon realised the enormity of the task with the Cemetery being such a vast site; nevertheless, we worked out a revolving sequence of tasks to prioritise ground maintenance in different areas of the Cemetery.

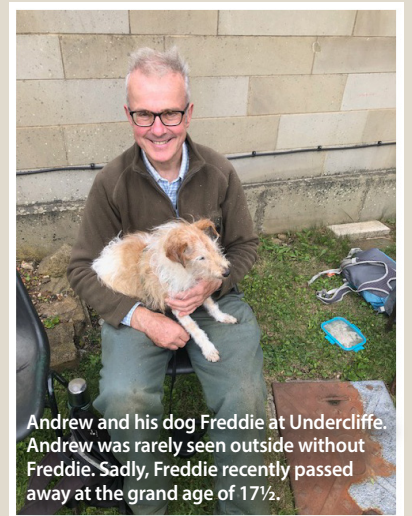
I had gained an RHS qualification from Shipley College, which is where I first met Neil. Neil and I had an excellent working relationship. I assisted him in organising many events with the help of the Trustees, one highlight being the 2014 three-day commemoration of the centenary of the beginning of the First World War. Neil was successful in securing a National Lottery grant which was used to produce a booklet highlighting servicemen and others buried in the Cemetery.

A local writer was commissioned to write a play highlighting the plight of soldiers fighting on the Western Front and their loved ones left behind in Bradford. The play was called *Back by Christmas* and was staged in the gazebo by professional actors, videoed and shown on a big screen in Centenary Square. It was an extremely moving portrayal of a lost generation of friends and neighbours.

Over the years, I've been lucky enough to meet many characters including the gravedigger Andy Craddock - he dug the graves by hand. Another volunteer was Paddy whose vocabulary was highly charged! Paddy volunteered several days a week, always bringing his tools in a large trailer which unfortunately one day collapsed in the middle of Bradford on his way home to Queensbury. In recent years, the gravedigger Graham Swain has been unfailing in his commitment to providing a first-rate service, many hours of which have been voluntary. He's ably assisted by Craig and John.

It was my intention to scale down my hours by the time I reached 60. However, the role of business manager came available for me. During the next four and a half happy years, the charity has grown its volunteer workforce for grounds maintenance, education and research.

My job was made easier by the continued support of the Trustees and others involved in the charity. I enjoyed the many meetings I had with Allan our former Chair and latterly with Steve. The volunteers are a fantastic group of dedicated individuals and I'm proud to have now joined their ranks, mainly focusing on the upkeep of the Commonwealth War Graves.



Andrew and his dog Freddie at Undercliffe. Andrew was rarely seen outside without Freddie. Sadly, Freddie recently passed away at the grand age of 17½.



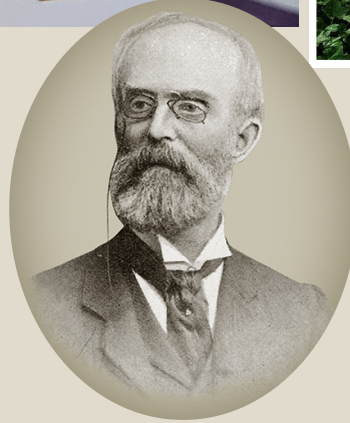
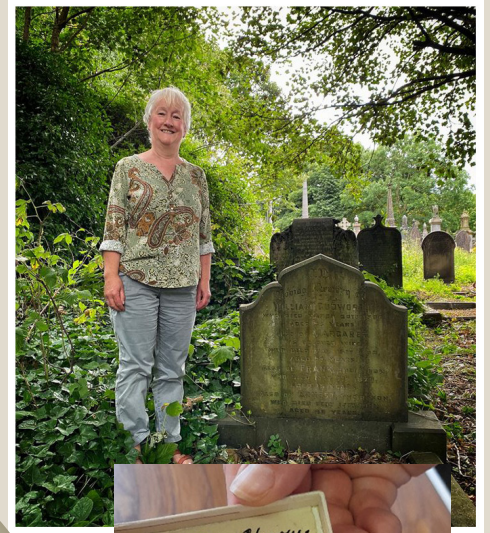


## • Alison Anderson & William Cudworth •

One of the authors who best described Bradford and its history, William Cudworth, is buried in Undercliffe. There is some doubt whether he was born in Bradford or Wakefield, but he spent the vast majority of his life in Bradford including some time at Killinghall Road, close to the Cemetery.

His books, including *Round About Bradford*, *Worstedopolis*, *Historical Notes on the Bradford Corporation* and his *Rambles Round ...* series, are truly definitive accounts of Bradford's rich history before and after incorporation as a borough in 1847. Undercliffe Cemetery provides Bradford's history in stone, William did the same with words. Please see our website for further detail on William's life.

You can imagine how delighted we were, therefore, to welcome Alison Anderson, William Cudworth's great, great granddaughter to show us some of the charms and trinkets William had collected through his life. Despite being very much a local man, he clearly enjoyed his travels to Asia and Australia and it was great to see the artefacts he collected. His grave is well visited and regularly has its QR code read. Why not visit and see for yourself? William is buried in the Unconsecrated section in plot I 144, close to the listed Moulson monument.



## • Recovered area for new burials •

We are particularly keen to point out to all those interested that Undercliffe Cemetery is still very much a working cemetery, not simply an old and historic burial ground no longer accommodating burials. On average, we bury or inter the ashes of three individuals every month – a huge decrease from when Undercliffe was operating at its busiest or even more recently. However, the sale of new plots, burials and interments are crucial in both securing our future financially and giving families the opportunity to remember their loved ones in a beautiful and favourite place. We know the demand is still there; we were asked at our recent Sainsbury's event (see later) whether we can still provide burials for loved ones – indeed we can and do.



One of the charity's staunchest sponsors and supporters, Thomas Crompton – Demolition & Ground Work Specialists of Bradford, arrived on site recently with heavy moving equipment to level and remove unwanted material from a significant area of unused, overgrown wasteland in front of the completely hidden nineteenth-century former stonemasons' yard near the bandstand/pagoda at the end of the Promenade overlooking Bradford city centre. The charity's intention, once the area is cleared and level, is to ask the University of Bradford's archaeology faculty to survey the site in the hope that we will be able to use the land for future burials or ashes interments.

In the meantime, plots are available in smaller and more isolated areas; our Registrar can provide any details needed.





• Sainsbury's supermarket fundraising •



A few of us spent a recent Saturday morning fundraising at Sainsbury's at Greengates, 2 miles from Undercliffe Cemetery. Helped by a well-festooned information desk, we raised a nice amount of money, spoke to 86-year-old Albert Huggins, nephew of Billy Huggins DCM who's buried at Undercliffe and who figures on some of our Great War tours and gained another very keen research volunteer. We noted how so many people said they'd either never been to Undercliffe Cemetery, or it had been so long since they'd last been they weren't aware of how much had changed (for the better, we add). If their promises are anything to go by, visitor numbers will be up! We'll be making contact with other local businesses to host similar events, so if you know anyone who might be appropriate please let us know.

Many thanks to Linda Guy and Sainsbury's for having us; in return we'll have a good number of Undercliffe volunteers helping with their Poppy Appeal collection in store when it starts in late October.

• Scott Motorcycles Event •

12 August 2023 saw the centenary anniversary of the death of Alfred Angas Scott, a true pioneer of Yorkshire and Bradford manufacturing, his speciality being 2-stroke motorcycles. Born in Manningham, Bradford, Scott developed and built motorcycles that were to win Isle of Man TT races in 1912 and 1913 and would help provide major transport and logistics links shortly afterwards in the Great War. The speeds his 2-stroke or 2-gear machines could achieve were remarkable for the time. As well as his obsession with motorcycles, Scott was a keen potholer and, sadly, after driving home from a trip in saturated clothes on an open Scott Sociable motorbike, he caught pneumonia and died. He's buried in Undercliffe and members of the Scott Motorcycle Club marked the occasion of his death at his graveside. They brought with them a truly spectacular Scott Flying Squirrel which worked perfectly and looked beautiful – as you can see from the photos.

