

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON CEMETERIES

INFORMATION

The Seventh International Colloquium on Cemeteries will take place at the University of York on Friday, 19th May. This day event comprises an informal meeting of researchers in all disciplines with an interest in cemeteries; a particular focus is placed on new and emerging research. Postgraduates are particularly welcome.

Bookings for this event are now being taken. A fee of £25, payable in advance, will cover costs associated with attendance including refreshments and a light lunch. Please make cheques payable to the *University of York*. The next page of this document comprises a booking form, and you should complete and return the form, with your cheque, to Dr Julie Rugg, Cemetery Research Group, CHP, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD. The deadline for booking is 12th May. You are advised to book promptly, since there are a limited number of places.

The Colloquium will take place at the Alcuin Research Resource Centre at the University of York. Please do not bring a car to York, since parking is extremely limited both in the city and on the campus. There are regular trains to York from London, Scotland and the west of the country. For overseas visitors, access is particularly easy from Manchester Airport: a regular direct train route connects the Airport with York.

Taxis are available outside York rail station, and will take around 20 minutes to get to the University of York's main campus. The cost of the taxi fare should be no more than £5.00. A map of the campus is available on

<http://www.york.ac.uk/np/maps/hes.htm>

The event takes place in the Alcuin Research Resource Centre, which is building 39 on the downloaded map. If you ask a taxi to drop you at the Alcuin Porter's Lodge, the entrance to the ARRC is essentially between buildings 35 and 39 on the map. The entrance is up a flight of stairs: registration and drinks will be available in the lobby from 8:30.

If you require accommodation, the following link to the City of York tourism website indicates local guesthouses:

<http://www.thisisyork.co.uk/york/insideout/stay/index.html>

It is perhaps best to try and arrange a stay somewhere close to the city centre, off Bootham (eg Longfield Terrace, Grosvenor Terrace, Queen Anne's Road, Sycamore Road).

NOTE: A traditional aspect of the Colloquium is an informal meeting the night before the event (ie Thursday 18th), for drinks and a meal. This year we will be gathering in The First Hussar on North Street - which is very close to the rail station - from 7:30pm:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/newmap.srf?x=460077&y=451749&z=0&ar=Y>

The Seventh International Colloquium on Cemeteries

BOOKING FORM

Name

Address
(to which a receipt will be sent)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Email

Any special dietary requirements?

The cost of attending this day event is £25, and is payable in advance.*

****Please make the cheques payable to THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK****

Send the cheque and the booking form to: Dr Julie Rugg, Cemetery Research Group, CHP, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD. A receipt for payment will be issued.

Seventh International Colloquium on Cemeteries, 2006

Friday 19th May,
Alcuin Research Resource Centre, University of York

PROGRAMME

- 9:30-9:45 Welcome and introductions
- 9:45-10:30 Ronnie Scott
The Cemetery and the City: The Origins of the Glasgow Necropolis, 1825-1857
- 10:30-11:15 Bel Deering
From Asbos to X-rated: exploring the social diversity of the cemetery
- 11:15-11:30 COFFEE
- 11:30-12:30 Dennis Bilbrey
The situation of the cemeteries in Berlin and the development of new ideas to preserve their historical substance
- 12:30-1:30 LUNCH
- 1:30-2:00 Andy Clayden and Katie Dixon
Woodland burial: what is the significance of the memorial tree?
- 2:00-2:30 Janet Eldred
The second funeral: burying ashes and/or placing memorials
- 2:30-3:00 Leonie Kellaher
Cosmopolitan 'rootedness' and the ethnic cemetery
- 3:00 DEPART

ABSTRACTS

Ronnie Scott

The Cemetery and the City: The Origins of the Glasgow Necropolis, 1825-1857

The Glasgow Necropolis, the first garden or ornamental cemetery in Scotland, opened in spring 1833 on what had been a private park, on a hill opposite the city's medieval cathedral. The cemetery was developed by the Merchants' House, one of the two burgh institutions in the city, as both a civic amenity and a way of turning an unproductive asset into a profitable concern. The Necropolis soon became a significant cultural enterprise, attracting the custom of the emerging middle classes and the attention of visitors to the city.

This paper outlines the development of the cemetery, and examines how its proponents gave the site and its structures meanings that contributed to the commercial and cultural success of the project. The paper also summarises how the public, visitors and other commentators responded to the cemetery and to these intended meanings. Père Lachaise was an important cultural reference point for the Necropolis and its developers, featuring in the first informal and formal proposals for a garden cemetery in Glasgow. This paper discusses to what extent the French pioneering cemetery was used as a blueprint or as a validation for the proposal, which created a significantly different landscape and symbolic institution from the Parisian exemplar. Finally, the paper explores the early funerals and monuments that were enacted and constructed in the Necropolis, demonstrating that the people of Glasgow not only embraced but extended the meanings given to this important symbolic space by its promoters.

Bel Deering

University of Sussex

From Asbos to X-rated: exploring the social diversity of the cemetery

Visitors to cemeteries and churchyards exhibit a wide array of value systems, harbouring perceptions that range from sacred and sombre to scary or seductive. These values impact on behaviour and mean that cemeteries perform social roles varying in scope from a site of mourning to gang territory. The multiple roles, however, are not always complementary. This research examines real and potential conflict, resolution and the influence this has on the cemetery environment.

In this paper we take two journeys in pursuit of deeper understanding of the social diversity in cemeteries. The first journey is a physical one which documents experiences and observations of interviewees about the activities common to burial grounds. It interrogates the reality, motivations and dynamics of visitors and considers how they assimilate their visit(s) into everyday life. The second journey takes place in the virtual dimension, travelling through websites and blogs to gain insight into the opinions and attitudes held about graveyards. Taken together, these voyages form the starting point for an exploration of alternative graveyard behaviours ranging from vandalism, to drug taking and sex.

The more extreme or transgressive activities recorded in cemeteries can be viewed as disrespectful, conflicting or inappropriate in a place designed for burial and mourning; this paper posits an alternative understanding. I suggest that the majority of visitors to cemeteries make a positive contribution and that both real and virtual excursions can promote and enhance the cemetery as a place for the living and the dead.

Dennis Bilbrey

Federal German Building Authority

The situation of the cemeteries in Berlin and the development of new ideas to preserve their historical substance

The Berlin cemetery scene is marked by a complex cultural heritage administered in a decentralised manner. One hundred and ninety-one cemeteries are used for burials: the municipal Senate Administration runs 69, and 115 are owned by Protestant and Catholic parishes. There are also Jewish, Russian-Orthodox and Muslim burial grounds as well as a British cemetery. All the burial sites together amount to an area of 1,5 % of the whole metropolitan area. The Berlin Senate Administration estimated that about half of the city's cemetery area is not required.

In 1989 the *Foundation for Historic Churchyards and Cemeteries in Berlin* started preserving exceptional historical structures. Since then nearly 700 objects have been saved from ruin. Later on these projects were improved and added also the aspects of nature preservation and cemetery management.

With the aim of developing model solutions a task group was set up by the Protestant Church in 2002. As a result the reorganization of their sites on an economic basis is being realised. But aside from the necessary quantitative changes it is also important to take into consideration the qualitative aspects of the Berlin cemetery landscape.

A transformation into a museum may be the opportunity to utilize the fascination of the spaces and to solve the problems especially affecting historic sites, where a different use is not possible anymore. The main point is to preserve objects directly on the spot which they are connected with. The objects are already there, the idea is to make them accessible. Finally the idea of a museum will create new images, a new context. The perception of the site will change in an abstract way, a new appreciation can be fostered and therefore reflect the increasing willingness to defend the existing heritage, even in financial aspects.

Andy Clayden

Lecturer, Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield

Katie Dixon

Landscape Architect and Postgraduate student

Woodland burial: what is the significance of the memorial tree?

The natural burial movement established a new burial aesthetic in which the identity and location of the deceased is potentially known only to the burial ground manager and the family and friends of the deceased. In the most common form of natural burial the grave is marked by the planting of a tree.

There has been very little research on why people choose natural burial either for themselves or their loved ones. There is also little known about the significance of the memorial tree to the deceased or the family and friends of the deceased. The paper reports on the findings of a recent study which tries to shed some light on what attracts people to natural burial, their choice of tree, and what it means to them. The study reveals that the chosen tree is much more than just an object to locate the grave, selected for its permanence and presence. The creation of habitat is important but the tree may also embody personal and cultural memory and help to facilitate a lasting relationship with the grave in ways which are not visible to the casual observer.

The study investigated a single woodland burial ground where there is an established friends group of approximately 300 members. The membership includes two distinctive groups, bereaved people who have a loved one buried at the site, and people who have purchased their own burial plot. The friends group therefore provides an opportunity to explore two very different perspectives on woodland burial. Firstly, bereaved people who have a range of experiences of the burial ground including; the burial, planting the tree and visiting and tending the grave. Secondly, pre-purchase members who have made the choice of a woodland burial in preference to other disposal options. A questionnaire was sent to each member of the friends group. The questionnaire was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data and included likert scale semi-qualitative questioning, open-ended questions and opportunities for feedback and qualitative comments.

Janet Eldred

York Cemetery Trust

The second funeral: burying ashes and/or placing memorials

A funeral is not just the main event at church, crematorium or cemetery on the day; everything that precedes and follows that event is part of the funeral process. There is often another ceremony - freer in form and content, often smaller and more intimate - for the burial/scattering of ashes, planting of memorial trees, placing of memorial benches, erection of headstones, etc., after the first funeral. Here, families can take a greater role in saying goodbye to their loved one, and this can also be an opportunity to resolve or heal any disappointments about or regrets from the first funeral.

Leonie Kellaher

The Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University

Cosmopolitan 'rootedness' and the ethnic cemetery

Processes implicated in globalisation are focusing attention on identities in a world where traditional ideas of people as members of fixed, distinct societies and cultures no longer hold. For some incoming and settled groups the cemetery can be a liminal space engendering cosmopolitan engagement, through evocation of place of origin whilst reflecting the genesis of a new situational identity. Geography and chronology are reshaped and history becomes spatial in cemeteries where burial has overtaken the repatriation option after a death.

This paper, based on an ESRC funded project to explore contemporary meanings of the cemetery for a range of ethnic groups, describes three - Irish, Cypriot and Gujarati – and the burial places they have maintained for their dead over varying lengths of settlement. Two sets of issues are addressed. First, to argue that, for members of minority and immigrant ethnic groups, cemeteries contribute to emergent and established meanings of community that transcend the familial and generational. Second, though cemeteries bridge worlds - of the dead and of the living and link places of origin and settlement, they also serve to distinguish - from host groups or other settlers. The balancing of assimilation and resistance, particularly where death is entailed, can shed light on the nature of cosmopolitan 'rootedness'.