A Victorian cemetery as a visitor space
Janine Marriott (Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust)

Cemeteries and graveyards traditionally had one main role, however during the last 40 years many have evolved from burial space to visitor space. It is now possible to watch a film, view art, take a tour or watch theatre in a place of the dead. How and why did this transition occur? Is the presence of the human remains part of the draw to these sites, or a hinderance to their new uses? Drawing from experiences working in heritage sites and current doctoral research this presentation will share one case study that shows how the change can take place. Arnos Vale Cemetery is the first Garden Cemetery in the South West and was built in 1839. It is the last resting place of over 200,000 people, a listed landscape, a Site of Conservation Interest (SCI) and continues to be a working cemetery. Over the last 10 years, it has developed into a heritage site by offering a range of interpretation and public programming. Much of the interpretation at Arnos Vale is based around the stories of the lives of those remembered there but the public programmes also allow for challenging and sensitive issues to be examined. This paper seeks to explore the tensions between the visitors using the site for remembrance, tourists on a day trip, and local residents using the green spaces for leisure and local history.

Public life among the dead: jogging in Malmö cemeteries
Pavel Grabalov (Norwegian University of Life Sciences)

Urban cemeteries in the Swedish city of Malmö witness a great variety of usages, and are not just limited to commemoration practices. However the social acceptance of nonconventional activities on cemetery sites is still debatable. This paper aims to explore jogging as one among many activities in Malmö cemeteries and to understand people’s opinions about this activity. Three urban cemeteries, differing in size, location and design were examined through three methods: observations of activities, a study of social media and an online questionnaire. The activities in these Malmö cemeteries vary depending on the sites’ features, and are never limited to the primary functions of these spaces. Jogging is an essential part of the activities in each of the cemeteries and does not visibly conflict with the other functions of the cemeteries. At the same time this study demonstrates evidence that for many users cemeteries remain special localities with their own set of behavioural norms where jogging is still questionable. The research proves some similarity between the functions of the urban cemeteries in Malmö and formalized parks and their potential for accommodating a variety of functions which should be explored in future research. In the context of increased urban development a better understanding of the current role of the cemeteries within the urban fabric appears highly relevant for green infrastructure and public space planners. The presentation of the paper also includes directions for future research.

The problem of ‘first’: looking at the first decade of the modern cemetery
Ian Dungavell (Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust)
Highgate Cemetery was established by an Act of Parliament which regulated its operations. But how did they decide what should be in that Act? Was it based on earlier Acts establishing cemeteries? Tracing back to the first of such Acts, I realised that my question would remain: what did they base that one on? So my focus switched from finding the first cemetery Act to understanding how the first cemetery was governed. But which was the first cemetery? That led to two questions: what do we mean by ‘cemetry’; and what do we mean by ‘first’. The terms have been used very loosely, so no wonder there has been a lot of debate about which cemetery should wear the crown. Looking more closely into the contenders, it seems that the ‘first’ was not the Rosary Cemetery in Norwich, the favoured candidate of Historic England, but Rusholme Road Cemetery in Manchester. And Rusholme Road was influential. Its governing document set the template for later cemeteries established by a trust deed, and the cemetery it spawned in Liverpool, the Necropolis, directly prompted the establishment of St James’s, the first cemetery to be founded by an Act of Parliament. Looking into that, the reasons why an Act was needed become clear.

**Revisiting the Public Grave: An in-depth study into public grave burials at Manchester’s first municipal cemetery, Philips Park 1866-1870**

Michala Hulme (Manchester Metropolitan University)

On the 25th October 1866, the family of four-year-old Jonathan Hope walked the two miles from Ancoats to bury their youngest son. He was the first person to be interred in a public grave at Manchester’s Philips Park Cemetery. By the end of the century the percentage of people interred in a public grave at Philips Park stood at just over 87% of all recorded burials. Despite the high numbers of public grave burials in municipal cemeteries throughout Britain, we surprisingly know little about the people actually interred in them.

Using the grave receipts of 1,500 public grave burials that took place between 1866 and 1870, this paper will take an in-depth look at those that were buried in a public grave. The aim of this work is to add a new understanding of working-class attitudes towards death and burials - paying particular attention to the role of burial clubs in working-class communities and the public grave’s affiliation to pauperism.

**The Kopje-crest and the Uniform Headstone: how the South African experience influenced the creation of a cultural phenomenon**

Ivor F. Perry (University of Durham)

This investigation originates from a project on the inscriptions on the headstones maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The Commonwealth War Cemeteries tend to be regarded as a cultural norm – even a British, or military tradition. Yet this phenomenon is not traditional, and is only British by virtue of the nationality of their founder and director, Sir Fabian Ware. His vision was in fact an international and Imperial one, and the ‘norms’ that the project produced were new both to the British Army and to the British civil polity. Fabian Ware’s active involvement with war graves began in 1914, and the complete architecture of policies and standards was in place by 1921. Yet the origins of these standards, and the contributions of a relatively few individuals, date back more than ten years previously, to the Second Boer War of 1899-1902, and to the subsequent reconstruction. The discussion will consider the interment of British soldiers, particularly Other Ranks, before during and after the Boer War. It will show how the ‘tradition’, if any, of burying and commemorating individual soldiers really began in South Africa. It will illustrate how some of the key players in the non-combatant operations related to the war appeared later as equally key players in the early development of the Imperial War Graves Commission. Finally, it will sum up the cornerstone policies of the Imperial War Graves Commission and identify the correlations between them and the lessons learned from South Africa.
Threshold, pathway, foci and space: A journey through two WW2 military cemeteries

Andy Clayden (University of Sheffield)

This paper follows the same journey made through two WW2 military cemeteries located on the outskirts of the city of Luxembourg. These are the Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial designed by the architects Keally & Patterson and landscape architect Alfred Geiffert; and the German Military Memorial Cemetery designed by the landscape architect Robert Tischler. The paper uses original plans, drawings and photographs to explore how the designers responded to very different design briefs that were inevitably shaped by their respective experience of victory and defeat. Both cemeteries are enclosed by woodland and contain a similar number of individual graves yet through the designers’ manipulation of space, movement and materiality they each create very different experiences for visitors.

Disposing of ‘necro-waste’

Daniel Robins (University of York)

This talk will draw on the conceptual framework underpinning my thesis, which analogises corpse materials as waste, otherwise known as ‘necro-waste’ (Olson, 2016). The thesis specifically asks ‘what is the value of ‘necro-waste’? In other words it aims to understand how corpse materials can be recycled as the UK Death Industry develops alongside wider environmental social change. By taking a waste orientated approach to corpse materials, the talk sets out to achieve two things. First, it will provide a comparative analysis of cremation and natural burial, exploring the challenges that the necro-waste presents to the operation of each method. Second, it will challenge what it means to dispose of the dead by using the concept of ‘necro-waste’ to interrogate the wider concept of disposal; adding to its understanding as a process of meaning management, rather than a process of meaning deletion (Munro, 2001). It is thought that this could aid the development of Death Industry protocols and wider UK policies involving the management of the dead.

Consolation, individuation and consumption: towards a theory of cyclicality in English funerary practice

Julie Rugg (University of York)

This paper suggests a new meta-narrative for understanding change in Westernised funerary practice over time, shifting away from the conception of dichotomised swings between periods when death was somehow hidden or problematic, and times during which death was regarded as ‘tame’, accepted and largely unproblematic. Instead, this it is proposed that funerary practice runs rather in a cyclical pattern, as innovation, gradually absorbed as a mass option, provokes new innovation. This pattern not seated within the desire for the lesser-status members of society to emulate the elite or garner ‘respectability’. Rather, it reflects a more essentialist search for consolation that is undermined by the threat to individuation by industrial-level scales of operation and professionalization. Within this framework, consumption is posited as a facilitator and the bereaved make active choices – depending on their unequal resources – amongst a range of products and services to secure consolation. The example of England will be used to evidence cycles of change, and draws material from a range of sources. In particular, the paper will use this overarching framework to offer an interpretation of the change in use from churchyard to cemetery and from cemetery to crematorium, and the recent development of natural burial. At the heart of the paper is the core contention that the literal scale of mortality – the size of the community and the number of dead that community has to deal with – is a more significant determinant of change in funerary practice than chronological periodisation.
Death and the city: how cemeteries cope with change

Dirk Rieber (University of Wisconsin Milwaukee)

‘He who rejects change is the architect of decay. The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery.’ This statement of the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom James Harold Wilson in 1967, exemplifies the most common perception of cemeteries as being insusceptible to change. But cemeteries are not ahistoric places and like any other human institutions they are exposed to changing socio-cultural, demographic, political, and economic parameters to which they are bound to respond. Due to its volatile history and development the City of Berlin is equipped with an infrastructure meant to serve about 5 million citizens. Among this oversupply of infrastructure are approximately 224 cemeteries with an overall area of designated burial space twice as much as needed until the year 2050. Vacant plots are a common sight nowadays on German cemeteries and many of them are operating below break-even. This raises questions about the operational efficiency of cemeteries and many cities and municipalities are looking for alternative usages of their burial grounds to reduce their financial overhead. But cemeteries are not just normal enterprises; every business decision has to be made with the awareness about the extraordinary background of the death care industry, its perception and recognition by the larger public, as well as the respectful intercourse with the bereaved and the proper handling of the deceased. This study revolves around the change management and the strategic management of cemeteries in Germany especially triggered by demographic shrinking effects, the fiscal belt-tightening of German cities and municipalities, and the changing burial customs.

Cemetery design: a neglected landscape?

Jennifer Lewin (Conservation Accredited Architect)

The cemetery and churchyard commonly present problems with maintenance issues, contentious memorialisation sensibilities, economics and allowing for an evolution of rituals and customs. If Architecture began with the tomb, has the storyline for cemetery design been lost along the way? This landscape interface between mortality and immortality could be seen as it has in the past, as the greatest design brief of all, but current design ethos is surely falling short. Is this landscape a place of exclusive use for the visiting bereaved and has it been so in the past? Why are aesthetics so often a contentious issue? The historical cultural use of The Cemetery could in fact be described as multi-functional. From Neolithic mass gatherings to the churchyard as place of teaching, birth, marriage and death ceremonies, the Victorian garden cemetery as parkland, arboretum and visitor destination and the ‘green burial’ as a bio diverse sanctuary, there is a rich precedence for integrated community use. If a brief was considered at the outset, for a working, multi-functional landscape, could this overcome common problems and create sustainable community heritage? Inspired by Loudon’s seminal book, On the Layout Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries and drawing on conservation projects, study at Bath University’s Ritual and Belief MSc module, and interviews with cemetery managers and funeral directors, this paper presents a contemporary brief and a sampler layout for a working cemetery to illustrate the ethos put forward.

Who is your neighbour? The issue of non-parishioner burial fees

Brian Parsons (Independent Researcher)

The Burial Act 1852 created and empowered Burial Boards to provide cemeteries for the interment of those living within their parish. Financed by the fees from those interred, a higher non-parishioner charge was levied on those desirous of utilising the cemetery but not living within the Board’s boundary. Research has identified that although non-parishioner status remains today (and is now known as ‘non-resident’ burial), its intended purpose of preserving burial space
through the deterrent of a higher charge has been subjected to wide interpretation. In addition to
the purchase of graves and interment fees, it been applied to the use of facilities and also
cremations. The additional cost could be double, triple or even quadruple the resident charge.
Whilst this paper argues that the definition of non-resident status requires clarification and
consistency of application, it also questions whether the concept remains fit for purpose.

Memorials in migration: death, dying and burial in a displaced English convent, 1794–
1829

Hannah Thomas (University of Durham)

This paper examines the history of the convent cemetery of the English Canonesses of the Holy
Sepulchre, and associated changes to death, dying and burial practices within the community -
physically, spiritually and culturally. Founded in Liège in 1642, where they lived as an English
convent in exile for some 150 years, the Sepulchrines were forced to migrate from mainland
Europe to England in 1794 as a result of revolutionary changes sweeping the continent. After
arrival in England, the Sepulchrines created an illegal cemetery in 1799 for community use,
thought to be the oldest Catholic cemetery in continuous use within the British Isles. Hitherto-
unknown evidence presented from a study of this cemetery reveals much hidden information about
community interactions with the local population, their interactions with legal and administrative
authorities and the wider question of religious toleration. The existence of this cemetery also
challenges accepted assumptions of the development of English cemeteries (as distinct from
churchyards) and their associated burial culture, often held to have developed as a result of
Victorian urbanisation and industrialisation. Specifically Catholic burial grounds were not legally
allowed under English law until 1852, meaning that these communities of returning English female
religious had to discretely create their own cemeteries in order to provide an appropriate
communal memorial space, some seventy years earlier than their secular counterparts.

George Alfred Walker’s burial reform discourse in mid-nineteenth-century England

Kelly Mayjonade-Christy (Paris-Sorbonne University)

George Alfred Walker was one of the very first sanitary reformers to be actively involved in the
burial reform debate which took place in the 1840s in England. Although historical interest in
Walker is not new, most historical works have focused on the sanitary reformer Edwin Chadwick.
There are only a few academic articles specifically dedicated to Walker, and yet such articles never
offer a thoroughful analysis of Walker’s contribution to the burial debate—although Peter Jupp had
been calling for it since 1997 (The Changing Face of Death).

This paper therefore seeks to fill in this historiographical gap by exploring Walker’s contribution to
the burial reform debate through : first, the literature he published on the subject, that is to say
from the publication of his first work in 1839 to his last work in 1852 which, significantly,
corresponded to the passage of the first Burial Act. Secondly, through a study of influential
network he had developed in the 1840s, as illustrated by journalists and newspapers editors who
had rallied the Metropolitan Society for the Abolition of Burials in Towns that he had created in
1843.

The first part of the paper will explore the rhetoric, methods and strategies Walker mobilized to
organize public opinion in support of legislative action to reform graveyards. Fuelled by
humanitarian, paternalistic, Evangelical, utilitarian, and economic concerns, the different aspects
of his rhetoric will constitute the overarching themes explored throughout the paper. The second
part of the paper will try to assess the impact of Walker’s Metropolitan Society for the Abolition of
Burials in Towns and its influence, as well as those of its members, in promoting burial reform and
propagating Walker’s ideas.
What are the new challenges and opportunities for managing historic graveyards in Scotland arising from legislation-led changes to burial provision?

Susan Buckham (Centre for Environment, Heritage and Policy, University of Stirling)

In 2016, the Scottish Government updated the laws governing burial and cemetery management. The previous primary legislation, drafted in 1855, enshrined the ability to purchase burial rights in perpetuity. The 2016 act enables grave reuse and seeks to clarify procedures for burial authorities to deal with ‘ownerless’ graves and gravestones, many of which are historic in date. Local communities tend to perceive historic burial grounds as different from their ‘modern’ counterparts by virtue not only of their age but also by their incapacity to provide new burial space and it can be argued that this has resulted in a more ready acceptance of their greenspace and heritage values. At the same time, however, there has been little public debate to develop a detailed consensus for how historic graveyards should be managed and used as urban greenspace, heritage attractions and local amenities. This paper will consider how Scottish law influenced the ways in which communities might engage with burial space from the nineteenth century into the present day. It will assess the strengths and weaknesses within the framing of the new legislation to highlight the main issues that Scottish Government guidance should address in order to guide how the new law operated in practice to realise the best outcomes for urban greenspace, heritage and local burial provision.

Toxteth Park Cemetery, Liverpool: reflections on cemetery monument recording with students

Harold Mytum (University of Liverpool)

Archaeology students recorded one of the areas in Toxteth Park Cemetery as part of their archaeology field methods module. This paper described the process and assesses preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of this activity both as a pedagogic experience and as a contribution the recording and long-term management of the cemetery. Toxteth Park, as with most cemeteries in Liverpool, is managed by the local authority but is also supported by a friends group; it is listed on Historic England’s Parks and Gardens Register. This activity can provide both a focus and a test-bed for wider community involvement. The nature and quality of the data is also reviewed, and compared with churchyard recording projects undertaken in the past in the York area. The cemetery data is largely derived from a couple of decades of the 19th century as that was the period when this area was in heaviest use; in contrast a similar sample size from a churchyard generally covers a much longer period. The potential for analysis and interpretation is therefore significantly different in these different contexts.

Once and now – an overview of St George’s Field

Siobhan Maguire-Broad (Leeds College of Art)

This paper will be delivered as an illustrated talk, using contemporary and historical images of St George’s Field and images of the artwork I have made in response to it. St George’s Field is now a disused cemetery within the grounds of Leeds University. Using Barthes Camera Lucida as a theoretical starting point and an interdisciplinary approach, it will contain an overview of St George’s Fields rich historical and social narrative and will concentrate upon its transformation from farmland to cemetery to public park during the last two hundred years. Although St George’s Field retains its sepulchral atmosphere and appearance, it hasn’t officially been used as a burial site for almost fifty years. Its first burial was in July 1835, and its last official burial was in October 1969. It is the final resting place of over 93,000 people and is now a park open to the public at the centre of the Leeds University campus. It continues to be used as a site for new memorials and memorialisation.
The fear and fascination with premature burial

Sian Anthony (Lund University)

The young, beautiful and rich widow Giertrud Birgitte Bodenhoff was buried in Assistens cemetery, Copenhagen on 23 July 1798 but was she dead? Family stories claimed she had been buried alive but unconscious (skindød in Danish) from an excess of opium. They suggest that when grave robbers opened her coffin to steal her jewellery, she woke up and they killed her to conceal their crime. An exhumation on the 9 January 1953 took place to investigate the stories. The posture of the skeleton in the coffin combined with other evidence led to the conclusion that she had been murdered. With advances in forensic taphonomy (understanding processes happening after burial), this conclusion requires re-interpretation. The burial environment is not static and the skeleton will not always be in the same position it was placed in at the time of burial, or indeed after being left by grave robbers. The evidence can be tested against body positions found in other coffins excavated archaeologically. The story also provokes questions on how we assess other burials with the same interpretation. The fear of being buried alive is long attested and the Bodenhoff story is used as a Gothic horror story for tourists. Perhaps the fascination with such stories, particularly one involving a prominent member of society is inevitable and will never disappear but they continue to be used to create a darker ‘other’ sense to cemeteries.

2016

Parramatta St John’s Cemetery: a Colonial response to burial management?

Harold Mytum (University of Liverpool)

Detailed study of the St John’s Cemetery, Parramatta, New South Wales, reveals the rapid development of a regulated system of interment in a defined burial ground physically separated from the church. This is in sharp contrast to the first burial grounds in Sydney, now built over, which continued the British tradition of interment around Anglican places of worship and a pattern of overcrowding. Sydney was founded in early 1788, with Parramatta following by the end of that year as a farming centre. It rapidly developed into a planned convict settlement. This paper outlines the development of St John’s Cemetery over time, from the first memorial in 1791. A number of British and Irish traditions can be identified in monument forms, but the layout and pattern of use reflects the way in which Parramatta was planned in many ways from the start, unlike the more organic original centre of Sydney. It can be argued that the experiment in hygienic and ordered burial at Parramatta provided a colonial template before such a pattern became established in Britain.

The research also indicates the way in which the use of satellite imagery can assist in assessing the current state of cemeteries and creation of accurate plans. The most recent phase of research at Parramatta was possible because of a grant from the Society of Antiquaries of London.

The cemetery guidebook and the cemetery visitor

Ian Dungavell (Chief Executive, Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust, London)

Many people today imagine that cemetery tourism is a new phenomenon, part of the ‘heritage industry’. But some nineteenth-century cemeteries were intended as tourist attractions right from their earliest days, not just as places for the bereaved to mourn. Visitors would be improved by reading epitaphs, admiring the art of the memorials, and escaping the noise and pollution of the metropolis. Guidebooks were published and some cemeteries became so popular that ways had to be found to keep visitors out.
This talk will be a case study of guidebooks to some of the London cemeteries which opened in the 1830s and 1840s. How did guidebooks present the cemeteries? Who wrote them, who published them, and who bought them? Are they useful historical sources for understanding the appearance and operation of a cemetery at a distant point in time? And what can they tell us about the visitors themselves, and their experience? Although this talk is focussed on London, perhaps there are conclusions to be drawn relating to other UK cities and towns.

The design of American Military Cemeteries of the Second World War

Andy Clayden (Department of Landscape University of Sheffield)

At the end of the Second World War the next of kin of American service men and woman who had been killed during the conflict, had a choice to either have the body repatriated or for the remains to be permanently interred in one of 14 Military Cemeteries and Memorials that would be created by the American Battle and Monuments Commission (ABMC).

This paper draws on the memoirs of Major General Thomas North who in 1946 was appointed by General Eisenhower as Secretary of the ABMC with responsibility of overseeing the development of these new military cemeteries. North’s memoir provides a fascinating insight into how the different cemetery sites were selected, the specific requirements of the design brief and how each design team would be chosen to include the most eminent designers and artists of the time. The paper goes onto explore in more detail the design and implementation of the Cambridge American Cemetery at Madingley that was formally dedicated in 1956. It draws on an archive that includes original drawings, photographs and correspondence between members of the design team and staff at the ABMC and site visits and interviews with ABMC staff.

Grave Concerns: the role, place and reflections of the gravedigger in disposal of the dead

Dr Stuart Prior and Dr Helen Frisby (University of Bristol)

Cemetery literature to date has consistently overlooked the importance of gravediggers, which is surprising considering that their activities mediate and shape many aspects of funerary history and archaeology. Full-body burial has been the preferred mode of disposal of the dead in the British Isles from at least the introduction of Christianity in the seventh century AD, up to the mid-twentieth century. Yet we know virtually nothing about gravedigging practice. Since the 1980s, the process of gravedigging has become increasingly mechanized, with the result that traditional tools and techniques are fast disappearing.

Gravediggers influence virtually every aspect of burial of the dead, and continue to do so long after the deceased have been forgotten by family and community. This paper examines traditional gravedigging techniques, the gravedigger’s role in the control and management of burial practice, the conventional tools and techniques employed in locating, cutting, backfilling and reopening graves, exhumation practice, the role of the gravedigger as caretaker of funerary space and associated occupational folklore. Data is drawn from an ongoing oral history and archival research pilot project in South-West England, which is capturing surviving historical knowledge concerning the gravedigging profession in order to better understand underlying social and cultural processes.

The National Association of Cemetery Superintendents in Scotland

Revd Dr Peter Jupp

The National Association of Cemetery Superintendents (NACS) was founded in 1913 as a professional association to improve British cemetery facilities, benefit bereaved families and
advance the training, quality and recruitment of cemetery managers. With the increase in provision of local authority crematoria, the NACS changed its title to the National Association of Cemetery and Crematorium Superintendents in 1932. (Its current title the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.)

Whilst the NACCS was organised regionally as well as nationally, a Scottish branch was not established until 1942. This paper analyses the origins and context of the founding of this branch and explores the issues on which its activities focussed for its first ten years. These included wartime deaths (civilians and Armed Forces), cemetery management, lawn cemeteries, training and recruitment, and the relative merits of burial and cremation. The members were aware of how much the branch invigorated their work in Scotland. The paper assesses the national contribution of Scottish members and how much the Scottish and UK situation had changed by 1952.

The paper draws from Leverhulme Trust-funded research at Durham University 2008-2011 on the development of cremation in modern Scotland. Among many library and archive sources, the author is especially grateful to the ICCM archives in the Jill Rodacan Centre, City of London Cemetery, and to the Cremation Society archives at the University of Durham.

The economics of Victorian private cemeteries – planned to fail?

C R Fenn (MA Victorian Studies, Birkbeck University)

Britain holds many early Victorian burial grounds that were built as a private speculation to house the dead of the growing and modernising cities. To mention them today is to conjure up images of un-maintained memorials falling into decay and submerged in undergrowth, while the site is neglected and bankrupt.

A commonly-accepted wisdom is that this state came about as a result of a fundamentally-flawed business model. This argument assumes that the success of a privately-run cemetery was premised on a continuous supply of virgin land, with capacity for new burials long into the future. Many of these graves were sold in perpetuity absolute thus limiting the capacity of the ground and blocking the opportunity for later reuse and resale. Therefore, when faced with increasing demand for burial space from a growing population, the cemetery found itself without a purpose when its supply of virgin land ran out. No longer relevant, it would be unable to maintain itself. Reformers would discourage wasting further money on burials. A cumulative state of decline and neglect of these sites would be the inevitable outcome.

Yet when they were first founded, these private cemeteries grabbed the popular imagination, with a financial ‘bubble’, speculating in new burial grounds. Clearly, as the population grew there would always be a need to properly dispose of them when they died. Many of the cemetery companies’ customers, the purchasers of the burial plots, were patently expecting a level of permanence and decency for their dead, as they invested heavily in dramatic and sentimental monuments. Had they been fooled into buying into an impossible dream? And were the owners and financiers, the shareholders, so naïve that they were tricked into buying into a speculation bubble? With access to funds, investments and innovative thinking, was private enterprise singularly unable to adapt to the future? This essay reconstructs the financial ethos behind these speculative enterprises, and challenges the real reason for decline. It appears that the actions of central and local government meddled with and frustrated the commercial cemeteries at various times, before setting up publicly-financed rivals. When these struggled, it passed legislation that granted advantages to the public sector over their private rivals.

The paper compares two cemeteries, the private cemetery at Norwood, south London, and the Ryde Cemetery, Isle of Wight, founded by a local authority burial board. The findings suggest that the commercial business model was not flawed in itself: it could have been successful had not central and local government undermined it (sometimes accidentally, sometimes intentionally) by their laws and actions. But by doing so they dragged down the business of both private and public cemeteries.
A tale of two cemeteries: securing new burial space in London during the interwar period

Brian Parsons

The expansion of London during the early part of the nineteenth century prompted the opening of the first wave of proprietary cemeteries such as Kensal Green, Highgate and Abney Park. These were followed by Burial Board cemeteries established under the Burial Acts 1852 and 1853, along with a further raft of private burial grounds in the 1870s. However, after intensive usage for around sixty to seventy years it would be the interwar period when a third wave would emerge as burial grounds were nearing capacity; between 1918 and 1939 eleven cemeteries opened in the London area. Securing land and establishing new provision was, however, a complex, time-consuming and costly task.

Using Gunnersbury and Paddington Mill Hill Cemeteries as case studies, after outlining the events between identifying the need and accepting instructions for the first burial, this paper highlights some of the issues facing local authorities seeking to provide new burial space.

Cemeteries in Luxembourg: An introduction to a border region

Thomas Kolnberger, Project Coordinator (University of Luxembourg) and Christoph Streb, PhD-cand. (University of Luxembourg)

The University of Luxembourg’s research project titled “Material Culture and Spaces of Remembrance”, co-funded by the FNR (National Research Fund), focuses on the spatial and material attributes of graves in Luxembourg’s Greater Region (Luxembourg and its neighboring country regions and provinces of Germany, Belgium and France). The project is three-pronged focusing on (1) data gathering and spatial analysis, (2) history and (3) qualitative social research. As the project is in its initial phase, we want to outline the “necrogeography” of a small nation state and to present preliminary results and research question in context of our project.

The space of the German cemetery in today’s consumer culture

Anna-Katharina Balonier (University of Liverpool)

This research explores the space of the cemetery and the importance of its role within today’s consumer culture in Germany. It acknowledges the cemetery as a heterotopia (Foucault, 1967/1984) – a material site which embodies a multiplicity of meanings that attach to a range of functions beyond “the disposal of human remains” (Rugg, 2000:260). Previous research has identified cemeteries as spaces of connectedness (Francis et al., 2000), of re-negotiation of the deceased’s identity (Francis et al., 2005) and of rituals and rites of passage (Rook, 1985). This work extends these findings in relation to contemporary consumer culture. The study is based on a 15 months in-depth ethnography in South-West Germany involving observations in cemeteries, interviews with bereaved individuals and funerary professionals, as well as shadowing these professionals in their work in an around the cemetery. Findings so far contribute to debates in consumer research surrounding the constitution of space and place. It particularly explores the ‘context of context’ (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011) of consumption in German cemeteries linking changing consumer choices – for example regarding symbolic and material elements such as burial site or gravestone design – to the wider socio-historical context. An increasing demand for less rigid regulations within municipal cemeteries and for more nature-oriented burial options gradually change the German cemetery toward a space with less memento mori and more memento vitae. As a consequence, the perception of the cemetery is changing as it invites people to appreciate their flora and nature as well as their quiet atmosphere.

References
On the model of Père Lachaise

Ian Dungavell (Chief Executive, Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust, London)

In the early nineteenth century, the cemetery of Père Lachaise was perhaps the most famous in the world. One of the sights of Paris, it was claimed to be the model for numerous private cemeteries which were being established in England. Indeed, some have seen it as the impulse for the whole private cemetery movement. But isn't it odd that, given the traditional antipathy between the two countries – and so soon after the Napoleonic Wars – the English were happy to openly model their cemeteries on a French example? And that the style of burial ground which suited a culturally Catholic country could so easily be taken up by a nation of Protestants?

This paper will examine why Père Lachaise was particularly suited for adoption by the English as a model cemetery, and how it became familiar through representation in books and prints as well as several forms of modish public spectacle such as panorama, diorama, and even ‘naturorama’. Cemeteries were part of the exciting world of modern urban life and, if not universally admired, Père Lachaise provided the most attractive example. Very few people seem to have found nothing to like about it. Examination of contemporary accounts shows that in the English mind ‘Père Lachaise’ was not one single idea, not simply something slavishly to be copied, but more of a brand, a concise justification for a cemetery project which could encompass a variety of meanings. No wonder that so many cemeteries claimed to be ‘on the model of Père Lachaise’ but none looked like it.

Rethinking burial practice: William Godwin’s Essay on Sepulchres (1809)

Helen Stark (Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh)

In 1989 Alan Macfarlane posited that ‘In answer to the question, “What did people feel about death in this period and in what way did the feelings change?”,’ an obvious source of evidence is the poetry of the period.’ Taking as its starting point the assumption that literature can operate as a source of information about attitudes to death and burial practice, this paper will argue that William Godwin’s 1809 Essay on Sepulchres is positioned at the interstice of war, death, burial, politics and commemoration and in it, Godwin seeks to make a radical intervention in contemporary burial practice and concepts of commemoration.
The publication of Godwin’s essay, which proposed a new method to mark the bodies of the dead, coincided with thoroughgoing reform of burial practice occurring in France and Italy and renewed interest in these issues in England. It also coincided with a new focus on commemoration in Britain: as Holger Hoock notes, ‘Over the course of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the British Parliament voted for 32 monuments to officer heroes to be erected in St Paul’s Cathedral.’ Godwin, however, suggested that regardless of social standing or reputation, the bodies of the dead should be marked with white wooden crosses which would naturally decay. Yet this meritocratic, egalitarian scheme, paid for and managed by the public (rather than the Church of England) has never been read in light of these vital political and cultural contexts which reveal the hitherto-unrealised radicalism of Godwin’s proposal.

The spatial and temporal development of a cemetery landscape: the municipal cemetery of Mount Saint Lawrence, Limerick City

Hélène Bradley-Davies (Department of Geography, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick City)

The municipal cemetery of Mount Saint Lawrence opened on the 29th of March 1849. Located on the periphery of the then city, the fourteen acre site initially proved unattractive and the ‘new’ cemetery had to wait until 1855 for its first burial. Burials gradually increased over the ensuing decades, averaging at about 600 per year from the 1880’s to the 1950’s. The cemetery eventually became the key burial place for all classes of society in Limerick and as such mirrors the social geography of the city over the last 150 years.

This paper aims to firstly, reconstruct the spatial and temporal development of the surface geography of the cemetery, through a mapped analysis of the first inscriptions on the 7,805 extant grave memorials. Secondly, the degree to which social class and status determined the cemetery’s geography will be investigated. In order to explore this, an examination of the cemetery’s burial register will also be made, as many of those interred left no permanent marker above ground. This is particularly prevalent in the ’Poor Square’ and the ’Angle’ where numerous former residents of the city’s public and religious institutions are buried. Despite the high density of burials at these locations (in particular in the latter decades of the 19th century) there appears to have been a clear systematic plan for burial in place.

The analysis contained in this paper has been facilitated by an extensive survey of both field and documentary evidence by staff and students of the Departments of Geography and History at Mary Immaculate College and by staff of Limerick Museum and Archives and the IT Division of Limerick City and County Council.

Excavating the above- and below-ground materiality of a modern cemetery

Sian Anthony (Lunds Universitet, Sweden)

Excavations within the modern cemetery of Assistens Kirkegård in Copenhagen created a new and more tangible aspect to the cemetery environment. 1000 burials and cremations and any surviving gravestones dating from the 1800s to the 1980s were recorded and analysed before the bodies were reburied. The archaeological perspective includes the above-ground materiality and extends three-dimensionally into the below-ground contexts giving a rare integrated insight into funerary material culture of this period. The gravestones and plot decorations are interpreted together with the surviving burials highlighting differences in public and private material expressions of death combined with chronological change. This is an opportunity to challenge historical and ethnographic narratives on the materiality of modern death but it also reveals the physical consequences of cemetery maintenance practices. The work of the gravedigger lies within both worlds, above and below, tending to the burial plots but also handling of the older burials and creating charnel deposits to create new space. What happens to the discarded gravestones, the disturbed coffins, bodies and grave goods below-ground is an underexplored stage in the biography of modern cemeteries. By digging up the cemetery a new physical past was generated.
Temporary lodgings of the dead: patterns of catacomb usage at Brompton Cemetery

Matthew Pridham (ustee, Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery)

My previous work examined the usage patterns and social characteristics of those interred in the catacombs at Highgate Cemetery in London. It revealed a definite rise and fall of catacomb usage in the middle of the nineteenth century and how it was influenced by legislation. Most users of Highgate loculi were prosperous families from the local area, with a surprising number of deposits being moved to other locations. My recent work looks at Brompton Cemetery, the last of the ‘Magnificent Seven’ garden cemeteries. Brompton was built with thousands of loculi in catacombs, which were an important element of the cemetery design. Research conclusions are based on a transcription of the Burial Registers. Every catacomb deposit from the opening in 1841 to the end of the twentieth century has been documented in several ways. The analysis will compare the various usage elements between Brompton and Highgate. While the pattern of usage and the social characteristics of purchasers are similar, Brompton has a significantly larger group of removals than found at Highgate. It seems that for many families, a loculus was temporary lodging prior to a final resting place.

Cemetery sculpture outside the cemetery: Pre- and after-lives of Spanish funerary sculpture c.1900-1922

Chloe Sharpe (History of Art, University of York)

A focus on the physical context of the cemetery has both shaped and restricted the way in which Spanish cemetery sculpture has been understood until now. My paper considers the cemetery as a changing and expanding exhibition space with unique characteristics, in which the sculptor’s identity was erased in favour of the deceased, and in which most viewers of the sculptures were not predominantly motivated by artistic appreciation. I explore how sculptors sought to compensate for this by exhibiting these monuments in more conventional art spaces, in particular national and international exhibitions, often to great acclaim. Preparatory plaster works, sculptural fragments and variants were all shown, allowing the dissemination of the sculptural model both before and after the monument itself was installed in the cemetery. In several instances, the Spanish state purchased the prizewinning work for display in the National Modern Art Museum, adding a further spatial context for the work. Only in the unique case of Julio Antonio’s Lemonier monument, completed in 1919 when the young sculptor was himself dying, did the identity of the artist and the deceased become so conflated in the public imagination that, following a theatrical display of the sculpture in an exclusive exhibition, the sculpture entered a museum and never made it to the cemetery. Through this and other selected case studies, I analyse how the differences in form, function and spectatorship between these contrasting spaces significantly affect the meaning and interpretation of cemetery sculpture.

‘Walk down any street’: a South London funeral in 1965

Brian Parsons

Until the 1980s, visual media coverage of funerals in the UK tended to be restricted to high-profile ceremonies. As far as can be ascertained, the first documentary that included an ‘ordinary’ funeral can be traced to ‘Walk Down Any Street.’ Made in 1965, this fly-on-the-wall production with minimal commentary was filmed in south-east London and captures a family during two contrasting rites of passage: a funeral and then a birthday. The film commences with the former
and shows the family viewing the deceased in the home before the cortege leaves for the cemetery; a service in the chapel precedes the interment.

A short introduction sets the context for the screening of the funeral part of this documentary. The paper will conclude with a number of observations.

**Ashes creations: The incorporation of cremation ashes into objects and tattoos in British contemporary practices**

Sam McCormick (Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University)

This paper draws from a qualitative research study that investigated the irreversible incorporation of human cremation ashes into a wide range of objects and tattoos in British contemporary practices. Referred to collectively as ‘ashes creations’ the practices in the research included human cremation ashes incorporated or transformed into: jewellery, glassware, diamonds, paintings, tattoos, vinyl records, photograph frames, pottery, and mosaics. The study explored the experiences of two groups of people who participate in these practices: people who make and sell ashes creations and people who commission ashes creations incorporating the cremation ashes of their loved ones.

Starting as participants discovered and decided upon their ashes creation practice, the paper moves through the making and exchanging of ashes creations, and ends with an exploration of how ashes creations are lived with in participant’s ongoing lives. It argues that those that engage in the practice distance ashes creations from traditional material culture associated with death, such as urns, memorials, and shrines. Moreover, participants in the study collapse subject / object dualisms by experiencing ashes creations simultaneously as beloved possessions and as their loved ones whose ashes they contain. This paper explores the ways in which ashes creation practices reaffirm intimate relatedness between bereaved people and their deceased loved ones via concepts of nearness and continuity as ashes creations locate after-death relationships in the intimate spaces of bodies and homes.

**2014**

**Death rites of the rich and famous: exploring the effect of influential burials on garden cemetery development between 1800-1915, initial findings and research avenues**

Josephine Wall (University of Birmingham)

My undergraduate dissertation focused on the use of landscape and monuments in Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, between 1804 and 1915. It also examined the effect that monuments to significant or famous individuals had on cemetery development. My PhD thesis aims to build on this work by comparing the patterns seen at Père Lachaise to British garden cemeteries. The principal case studies for this comparative analysis are Highgate Cemetery (London), Glasgow Necropolis, Cathays Cemetery (Cardiff) and Key Hill Cemetery (Birmingham). This paper will review my findings at Père Lachaise and suggest ways in which the fieldwork there could be expanded upon and improved for the future. It details some of my attempts to do so during the recording I have so far undertaken for my PhD. I am an archaeologist by training and so much of my approach is based upon traditional landscape archaeology, applying methods more typically associated with pre-historic sacred landscapes to these 19th century ones. However this paper also explores how an inter-disciplinary approach can be valuable to this project, and suggests some avenues for interpretation and analysis. My thesis is at an early stage but this paper hopes to show the how interesting and beneficial I hope this research will prove to be to our understanding of garden cemeteries.
Funerary art in an Irish Cemetery, 1855-2014

Matthew Potter (Limerick Archives)

Mount Saint Lawrence, Limerick is the fifth largest cemetery in the Republic of Ireland with an area of eighteen acres and a total of 75,000 burials. It contains some 10,750 grave-markers, ranging from huge Celtic crosses to tiny iron crosses. This paper will present the findings of a survey conducted of the grave-markers in Mount Saint Lawrence. It will examine them according to typology, style, material and location within the Cemetery. Also examined will be the mortuary chapel and the two public monuments housed within the Cemetery. Finally, it will examine some iconographic elements indicative of specific Irish and Catholic provenance and make some comparison with older Protestant burial grounds in Limerick City.

Alas, poor Yorick! The exhumations and reburial of the Baywater burialground of St George’s Hanover Square

Colin R. Fenn (Friends of West Norwood Cemetery)

This presentation reviews the politics and processes that were followed when the parish burial ground of St George’s Hanover at Bayswater was cleared in the winter of 1969. The story has been revealed through the investigation a single 6’6 x 2’6 burial plot at West Norwood Cemetery that holds thousands of remains exhumed and transported there for cremation and reburial there. The Bayswater ground operated for nearly a century before being closed in 1852, and was the last resting place of many notable Georgians, including authors Laurence Sterne, Ann Radcliffe and the artist Paul Sandby. Its clearance and reconstruction illustrates the post-war tensions between the needs of the living for good housing, the burden of maintaining a churchyard and falling income from a church seeking to maintain high standards. Its speculative sale was approached through a post-war lens of opportunism that held little value in history and traditional responsibilities, and that was prepared to take its challenge of historic burial laws to Parliament. Influence at the highest level was marshalled to approve the profitable sale, consequently weakening the presumed permanence of burials that had long been a tenet of the Anglican Church and enshrined in law. The process revealed almost no consideration of the historic burials. Its shadow lay over many closed burial grounds for decades, which might be sold in anticipation of receiving similar treatment when seeking permission for development.

Greener graveyards: the adaptive re-use of urban burial grounds

James Johnson (University of York)

This paper is intended to look into the possibility of the adaptive re-use of closed and disused urban burial grounds as public green spaces, as well as the possibility of expanding the use of an active burial ground to include use as a green space. This will be done by engaging with previous work on the subject, ranging from the pioneering suggestions made in John Claudius Loudon’s seminal book of 1843, to the use of burial grounds as green spaces today by local authorities and community groups. The potential environmental, community, and social benefits and reasons for such an undertaking will be examined. This will be through the use of established surveys and personal fieldwork. In order to bring to light the practicalities of such an undertaking, a number of case studies from around the north of England will be used to illustrate both the problems that may be encountered in a preserved or disused urban burial ground, such as disrepair or poor maintenance, and some of the many examples of sites already being put to good use in new ways.

Abandoning burial: explaining a regional shift towards cremation

Brian Parsons (Independent Researcher)
Although cremation commenced in 1885, it would be eighty later before burial was replaced as the preferred mode of disposal of the dead in England & Wales. Whilst this reflected a national shift, research highlights the existence of a significant regional variation. Focusing on the south west London/north Surrey area and using funeral directors records as the source of data, it can be established that the preference for cremation was reached at least a decade earlier. This paper argues that the availability of cremation facilities, a reduction in funeral expenditure, promotion by funeral directors and increasing awareness of the superiority of arrangements contributed towards the rejection of burial in favour of the cleansing flame.

The impermanence of memory: an archaeological assessment of tomb reorganisation in Hampshire and Sussex parish churches 1550-1900

Jude Jones (University of Southampton)

Much practical and theoretical research has been carried out by architectural and art historians on the influx of effigial tombs and mortuary memorials in churches during the 16th and 17th centuries in Britain. Archaeological interest is more spasmodic and often concentrates on such monuments in their idealised forms. What has become clear in my own recent research are the ways in which such tombs have subsequently been reduced, mutilated, moved around and occasionally totally removed from their original settings inside their churches. Often a narrative of neglect, deliberate iconoclasm or cultural contempt accompanies these alterations which results in the monument’s loss of inscriptions, heraldry, devices and other biographical signposts. Using a series of case studies, this paper examines the ways in which objects which were intended to memorialise individuals for all time lose their power and are diminished or reformulated as succeeding generations introduce new mortuary philosophies and change their ways of confronting and commemorating death.

Devising and testing a significance framework for burial space

Janette Ray, Julie Rugg, Sarah Rutherford and Louise Loe

This presentation reports on a research task undertaken for English Heritage: to devise and test a framework for establishing the significance of burial space for use in the planning process. The framework had to encompass a range of circumstances in which burial has taken place, from deep time Neolithic barrows, to historic cemeteries and churchyards and modern war cemeteries and woodland burial sites. The framework also needed to accommodate ‘marginal’ sites including institutional burial grounds and battlefields and be compliant with the National Policy Planning Framework significance categories. The devised framework was tested in 29 sites, and this paper reflects on both the processes and difficulties.

2013

Mount Saint Lawrence Cemetery, Limerick in the context of Irish municipal cemeteries

Matthew Potter (Limerick City Archives)

This paper will examine Limerick’s Mount Saint Lawrence in the context of the development of Irish municipal cemeteries. It will examine the circumstances of their establishment, their governance, dimensions, religious affiliation and funerary art. From 1830, garden cemeteries appeared all over Ireland. One of the first and most unusual was St Josephs in Cork which was founded by temperance reformer Fr Theobald Mathew when he purchased the defunct Botanic Gardens there in 1830. Dublin acquired two large cemeteries in the same decade, Glasnevin in 1832 and Mount Jerome in 1836. These were followed by Sligo Cemetery (1847), St Otteran’s Waterford (1848),
Derry City Cemetery (1853) and both Balmoral, Belfast and Mount Saint Lawrence, Limerick in 1855. In subsequent decades, municipal cemeteries were established in many smaller towns.

Irish municipal cemeteries were administered in a number of different ways such as charitable trusts, Boards of Guardians, borough corporations and (very seldom) joint-stock companies. They also varied in size from Glasnevin (1.5 million burials) to St Patrick’s, Clonmel (12,000 burials) and religious affiliation (denominational, theoretically non-denominational, separate Catholic and Protestant sections). Irish funerary art is also of interest as it produced one of the most unique and striking funerary memorials, the Celtic cross, which expanded with the Irish diaspora to achieve a world-wide distribution. A survey of Irish municipal cemeteries has never been undertaken before and is a valuable case-study of the nineteenth cemetery in Britain’s ‘Celtic fringe.’

The changing styles of inscriptions on headstones in urban churchyards in three English cities between 1600 and 1902

Sylvia Thornbush (University of Edinburgh)

The crudeness of crafting inscriptions on headstones declined in the late eighteenth century, even though some headstones were crafted using calligraphic inscriptions. This shift in styles reflected a change from a craft to an industry. The use of varied inscription styles was meant to aid in differentiating the different types of text. However, the choice of font was also, to some extent, meant to match the shape and decorative motifs chosen for the headstone. In some cases, the type of stone used disallowed the use of more elaborate inscriptions due to its strength. The sites examined in this study are four churchyards in Oxford, one in Scarborough and three in York. The headstones in this study were photographed in 2007, 2009, and 2010 during the summer. The examination of the variations of inscriptions on headstones in Oxford, York and Scarborough churchyards revealed some different trends. For Oxford, the majority of headstones contain Gothic inscriptions for the introductions, Block Roman styles for the inscriptions for the names of the deceased and a variation of (Block) Roman, Italics and Gothic for the other inscriptions such as ‘who departed’ or ‘aged’. For York, the trend lean towards less Gothic inscriptions for the introductions and mostly (Block) Roman inscriptions throughout. Scarborough contains more of a variation of Gothic, Roman and Italics for the introduction and Roman styles throughout the headstone, with the exception of the name of the deceased, which is not always in Block Roman lettering as is evident in Oxford and York.

Ghastly grim: the 17th century London churchyard gateway

Roger Bowdler (English Heritage)

Mors ianua vitae: death is the gate of life. This Christian topos found literal embodiment in a group of churchyard portals. Each sported emblems of mortality – skulls, skeletons, and most spectacularly the Last Judgment. Originally numbering just over a dozen, these unusual examples of Anglican architecture parlante are considered as a group for the first time. Their most likely initial source lay in Amsterdam. Hendrick de Keyser’s designs for doors to major new churches constituted over half the plates in Architectura Moderna (1631), compiled by Salomon de Bray. The post-1631 gateway at St Katherine Cree, featuring a recumbent skeleton in the tympanum, is clearly indebted to this book, and was echoed by a lost portal at St Leonard, Shoreditch. A skull-enriched portal was erected at St Olave, Hart Street (‘St Ghastly Grim’, according to Dickens’ 1860 The Uncommercial Traveller), at St Giles Cripplegate (1660), and elsewhere. The acme of the genre appeared around 1680, with a group of highly detailed reliefs of the Last Judgment. These can be seen as the Baroque equivalents of the medieval Doom painting. Examples survive at St Andrew’s Holborn, at St Mary at Hill and at St Giles in the Fields (1687); that from St Stephen Coleman Street was lost during WW2. In few cases are their carvers known.
Later, provincial, examples of skull-enriched gateways survive (at Kirkleatham, Ashbourne, Moberley, Ashby-de-la-Zouche). These portals are of note as late examples of the memento mori, and they show how enduring this long-established appeal to repentance was.

**The kiss of death: sex and love in the cemetery landscape**

Bel Deering (University of Brighton)

This paper explores the placing of sex in the landscape of disused burial grounds. Whilst legend-tripping literature considers graveyard sex as an intention-led activity aimed at raising the dead or invoking magic, my research uncovered a different facet of cemetery sex. Everyday conjugation in the sites I studied was driven by convenience, privacy and perhaps the edgework-esque thrill of heightened aliveness in a place of death. In unpicking the experiences and opinions of research participants, I explore the tensions amongst the living, and between the living and the dead. Within this study there was no consensus amongst participants as to the acceptability of sex in the graveyard. Some felt it was disrespectful to the dead and their relatives, some thought the dead would not mind, and a few postulated that the deceased might even be flattered. Theories of heterotopia go some way to explaining this range of opinions and indeed why sex is ‘allowed’ at all in the cemetery. Within these heterotopic spaces of uncertainty and otherness, rules and norms are subject to flexure. My research found that as long as the norm-bending was within site-specific limits, illegal or unacceptable activities may be overlooked. Extrapolating from the example of sex in burial grounds, I conclude that a symbiosis exists between the spaces of the dead and the living, whereby the everyday is protected from aberrance by the seemingly abnormal spaces of death.

**Social characteristics of deposits in the terrace Catacombs at Highgate Cemetery**

Matthew Pridham (University of Strathclyde)

This paper is taken from a dissertation which is the first large scale study focussing on a substantial group of individuals deposited in catacombs over a significant time period. It summarises a variety of social characteristics of more than 600 people deposited in the Terrace Catacombs in Highgate Cemetery, London, during 1839-1878. Using primary records, the demographics, occupations, prosperity, residence at time of death and relationships to others interred in the Terrace Catacombs are shown. The data reveal a largely homogeneous social group of prosperous people mostly from residential areas near to Highgate. Examination of who purchased the loculus shows when and by whom the interment decision was made. One in five of those leaving a will left some type of instruction in their will concerning interment or mourning. These individuals document Victorian attitudes to death.

**From Brooke Street to Brookwood: nineteenth-century funeral reform and St Alban the Martyr Holborn Burial Society**

Brian Parsons (University of Bath)

Largely prompted by the expansion of the urban population during the nineteenth century, in just over a seventy year period commencing 1830 the whole arena of death and disposal was transformed through legal, social, economic and religious influences. Legislation regulated the supply of bodies for anatomical dissection, death registration and the establishment of proprietary and Burial Board cemeteries along with formalising the function of the coroner, the construction of mortuaries and the first cremations. In addition, social commentators, individuals and organisations promoted an agenda of funeral reform, such as the Church of England Burial, Funeral and Mourning Reform Association and the Guild of All Souls, that were anxious to reduce funerary expenditure by eliminating ostentation. Supplied by a burgeoning number of undertaking
firms, obsequial requirements were driven by the fear of a pauper’s burial, a situation that generated accusations of manipulation and exploitation. While friendly societies existed to provide a savings mechanism to help finance the funeral, research indicates that in the 1860s a small number of burial societies were also founded by Anglo-Catholic churches. Commencing with a brief survey of the areas of change concerning the disposal of the dead during the period 1830-1900, this paper then reviews the work of the reforming organisations before examining the activities of the burial society attached to the church of S Alban the Martyr, Holborn in London.

**What lies beneath? The infrastructure of the Glasgow Necropolis**

Ronnie Scott (University of Strathclyde)

Studies of the material culture of cemeteries often concentrate on funerary monuments, chapels and other visible structures. This paper, by contrast, looks below the surface of the Glasgow Necropolis (first burial 1832) to examine rock-cut and brick-lined graves, family vaults, trenches for common burials, chambers for temporary burial and proposed catacombs. It also discusses the drains. This presentation will show that Scotland’s first ornamental, or garden, cemetery was as innovative below the ground as it was above, and incorporated both hygienic and security features that reflected the changing demands and expectations of the emerging middle class consumers of the growing and developing city. The paper will also attempt to trace the origins of these advances in the practices of David Hamilton, a leading Glasgow architect who contributed much to the design and material culture of the Necropolis, and Stewart Murray, an important gardener who was also a consultant to the developers of the Glasgow Necropolis.

**Not architects of decay: the influence of cemetery management on burial landscapes**

Susan Buckham (Kirkyard Consulting)

The introduction of garden cemeteries in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century has been seen as heralding a radical change in attitudes towards burial and commemoration. By the turn of the twentieth century a new form of cemetery aesthetic, the lawn cemetery, started to emerge. Until recently, lawn cemeteries have largely been viewed as a triumph of the economy of management over cultural values and as evidence of society’s emotional disengagement with death. This paper proposes that in order to more fully appreciate the material variety, aesthetic qualities and the evolving nature of burial landscapes a greater emphasis needs to be placed on understanding how sites were managed. A review of Scottish cemetery management will show that the layout and appearance of churchyards were also subject to widespread change over the nineteenth century, suggesting that differences between burial landscape types may be more fluid than previously acknowledged.

**2012**

‘Casting into the great crucible of the present ferment all manner of time-honoured traditions’: burial legislation at the turn of the twentieth century

Julie Rugg, (University of York)

The first of the Burial Acts were introduced in the 1850s, and discussion of this legislation generally focuses on the mid-century period. However, it is arguably the case that the most radical of the Burial Acts was the penultimate Act, passed in 1900. This Act - unlike earlier Burial Acts – did not favour the interests of the Church of England and was decidedly secular in tone. Rather than presuming that each cemetery would be consecrated, with some unconsecrated space left available, the Act required that for each cemetery and each cemetery extension a case had to be
made for consecration. Furthermore, the local parish priest would no longer benefit financially from burials taking place in the consecrated section, even those where the service was taken by another minister.

The Burial Act 1900, together with three other key pieces of legislation, radically altered the legislative landscape for burial in the twentieth century. The Cremation Act of 1902 is reasonably familiar, but this paper also discusses the Local Government Act 1894 and the hugely important but entirely overlooked Public Health (Interment) Act 1879. These four acts operating in unison looked set to dismantle a centuries-old tradition of parish burial. However, secularity in principal did not necessarily lead to secularity in practice: exploration of the 1900 Act in operation shows continued and strong commitment to practice of consecration.

**The cemetery as machine**

Gian Luca Amadei (University of Kent)

The advent of the Industrial Revolution in the second part of the eighteenth-century England was fuelled by the invention of mechanical devices such as the hydraulic pump. The adoption of this machine had a fundamental impact in trade, commerce as well as transport. Its influence eventually reached out to unusual applications such as that of the catafalque - a mechanical device based on the principle of the hydraulic pump - which became a fashionable feature in nineteenth-century Victorian necropolises. The introduction of such a mechanical innovation into the Victorian Necropolis throws open a series of questions on the matter of burial rituals and the perception of death in the nineteenth century.

Taking as case studies Kensal Green Cemetery, Highgate Cemetery and Brookwood Cemetery, this paper will attempt to shed light on how and why these mechanical devices arrived to be used in these cemeteries in the first place. What were their purposes and use in those cemeteries? How these mechanical devices evolved? How these unemotional machines used for burial found their place in what were otherwise perceived as romantic spaces? And lastly did this process of mechanisation of the cemetery change the perception of death in nineteenth-century Britain?

**Robertson at the City: portrait of a cemetery superintendent**

Brian Parsons (University of Bath)

The origins of superintendent can be traced back to the establishment of proprietary cemeteries in the mid-nineteenth century. Responsible for day-to-day operations including supervision of grave preparation and routine maintenance along with administration and staffing, the remit has gained complexity through increased bureaucratisation and legislation, the preference for cremation and more recently from customer focus and centralisation of the service. Whilst the contemporary function has been comparatively well documented, little has been written about the development of the occupation in the early twentieth century.

This paper examines the contribution made to the formative professionalisation process by John Robertson, superintendent at the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium between 1913 and 1936. Drawing from cemetery committee minutes and those of the National Association of Cemetery Superintendents (NACS), archival records and published articles, a biographical note and short assessment of his work at the City is followed by the appraisal of three areas where Robertson’s influence can be identified: the founding of NACS in 1914; as a writer on cemetery management, and lastly, on the design of cemeteries.

**The management of historic cemeteries by friends’ groups**
Many historic cemeteries have only escaped from clearance or dereliction because of campaigns and direct management by friends’ groups. Despite a growing interest in cemeteries among conservation professionals in recent years, the involvement of local groups remains crucial, particularly for cemeteries of local rather than national interest. There has however been little examination of the factors behind the involvement of friends’ groups and the resulting impact of their work on cemetery character.

Historic cemeteries are rich in meaning and local value, but they are also potentially problematic spaces due to their ‘liminal’ status. Urban cemeteries in particular may be seen to threaten order through both the presence of death amongst the living and the presence of nature within the city. This paper will suggest that strategies for dealing with this liminal quality are expressed through the development of narratives about the cemeteries and their role within the locality. In turn the stories privileged through this process impact on the management and presentation of the sites. Based on initial research into three early Victorian cemeteries in Oxford, this paper will show how the interpretation of the history and contemporary value of cemeteries by local groups are ultimately expressed in their character and presentation. It will be argued that the reliance on volunteer groups makes local contexts particularly important in determining the future conservation of historic cemeteries.

The Edinburgh Graveyards Project

Susan Buckham (Kirkyard Consulting)

The Edinburgh Graveyards Project encompasses the three kirkyards of St Cuthbert’s, Greyfriars and Canongate and the two burial grounds of Calton Old and Calton New. The Project draws together existing information on these sites and develops this knowledge through new research linked to the following aims: to develop a body of knowledge relating to the graveyards that will help to improve our understanding and valorisation of the graveyards; to assess the current patterns of ‘use’ of the five graveyards and the potential for positive improvement; to recommend options for improved practical care and management of the graveyards; and to examine the potential for enhanced community participation in a process of creating a more financially sustainable model of stewardship. In order to meet these aims, the research collected new data on public perceptions of the sites which are more or less well-established ‘tourist’ destinations. The research considered possible management strategies for the sites, and in doing so collated data on the operational of a range of existing Friends’ groups. However, there is no ‘off-the-peg’ model for a Friends’ group covering more than one site, and where each site presents different interpretation challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, the need to take action is stymied by the lack of any imminent ‘threat’ to any of the sites in the project. The paper concludes with some reflections on public inclusion in the conservation of burial spaces.

A co-operative project in cemetery research: Mount Saint Lawrence Cemetery, Limerick City 1855-2010

Matthew Potter and Maura Cronin (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick)

This paper examines a project on-going at Mary Immaculate College Limerick since 2010. Exploring the place of Mount St Lawrence Cemetery in life of Limerick city (1855 to the present), the project has four distinguishing features: (a) It involves co-operation between a third level institution, a municipal authority, and local communities; (b) It brings together seasoned and novice researchers – faculty, postgraduates and undergraduates and (c) It combines research in contemporary documentary sources, digitisation of the cemetery registers, photographing and recording of the cemetery’s monuments, and a programme of oral history interviewing. The paper examines the work of the Mount Saint Lawrence Project over the past two years, focussing on three main themes: the ways in which the research was integrated in the final year history undergraduate programme, the preliminary findings of the register digitisation programme, and
the light thrown by the photography project on changing trends in religious devotion and iconography in a Catholic cemetery in urban provincial Ireland.

2011

**William McKelvie: the life and times of a Victorian cemetery architect**

Christopher Dingwall (Blairgowrie)

This paper will examine the life and career of William Ross McKelvie (1825-1893), one of the more prominent cemetery designers of the mid-Victorian era in Scotland. Born in rural Wigtownshire in 1825, William McKelvie was appointed Superintendent of Parks and Cemeteries in Greenock in 1852, aged just 26. From there, he moved to Dundee in 1863, where he spent the last thirty years of his working life in a similar capacity, dying in post in 1893. Although early records describe McKelvie as a gardener, later documents refer to him as a civil engineer.

This paper will consider those who are known to have influenced McKelvie's work and career, most notably Stewart Murray of the Glasgow Botanic Garden, who was closely involved in the design of Glasgow's Necropolis (1831) and Greenock Cemetery (1846), and whose ideas influenced John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843). Reference will also be made to the work of other prominent Scottish cemetery designers of the period such as architects James Findlater (1802-1873) in Dundee, and David Cousin (1809-1878) in Edinburgh. The paper will be illustrated with images of Greenock Cemetery (1846), where McKelvie began his career, and of his own designs for Dundee's Eastern Necropolis (1863), Balgay Park and Western Necropolis (1870), Wick Cemetery in Caithness (1872), Cathcart Cemetery in Renfrewshire (1878) and Duthie Park alongside Allenvale Cemetery in Aberdeen (c.1880).

**Mortonhall Cemetery and Crematorium: the search for burial space in south Edinburgh, 1945-1967**

Peter Jupp (University of Durham)

In 1945, the City of Edinburgh took up its responsibilities for post-War reconstruction. Allocating sufficient space for needs of housing, schools, agriculture, transport and burials proved increasingly complex. The Victorian solution had been to supplement the old parish churchyards by a reliance on private cemeteries but only three more private cemeteries had been opened between 1898 and 1928. Warriston Crematorium was opened in 1929 and by 1939 was the place of committal for one-sixth of the City's deaths. Leith Crematorium opened in 1939. However, both these buildings were in the north of the City. Whilst the death rate was declining, the boundaries of the City were expanding again to the south; the need for burial space in the south became pressing as the inter-war process of suburbanisation was about to recommence as soon as the War was over.

From 1945 the City Council sought for solutions to their problem, focussing on extending the churchyards of the old Colinton and Liberton parishes. The eventual result was Mortonhall Cemetery (opened 1960) and Crematorium (opened 1967). The former was Edinburgh's first in initiative in providing a new cemetery; the latter has proved so successful that the City has not yet needed a successor. The paper traces the successive difficulties and decisions in the project which took twenty-two years to complete.
**Disestablishment and burial grounds: the case of Wales**

Stephen White (University of Durham, University of Cardiff)

This paper will describe the lengthy process from 1868 - 1947 by which the Anglican Church of Wales came to be disestablished, and the consequences for its burial grounds. The paper will shed some light on what may happen to a Church's property (which will include its burial grounds if it has any) when a Church is disestablished, and remark on the fate, after disestablishment, of any public rights that exist in the burial grounds at the time of disestablishment, such as the common law right of burial in the burial ground of the parish of which one is a parishioner or in which one dies.

**Limb burials, the Lyke Wake and rosemary for remembrance: folk funerary custom and the Victorian cemetery**

Helen Frisby (University of the West of England)

This forum has regularly addressed the legal, the topographical, sociological, anthropological, archaeological and political aspects of the Victorian burial ground. It is certainly important that we try to understand cemeteries, then and since, from as many perspectives as we possibly can. However it strikes me that throughout, we have rarely considered the ritual aspects of burial during the heyday of the Victorian garden cemetery. What did Victorian mourners actually do in the cemetery? What about the catalogue of folk beliefs and customs which attended the burial liturgy, and burial grounds in general? From the widespread use of 'rosemary for remembrance' during the Victorian period, to the Lyke Wake Dirge and the curious custom of limb burials, this paper will support Julie Rugg's contention that 'modernity' did not perhaps have as great an impact upon popular funerary practice as has frequently been assumed.

**Burial Board cemeteries: a modern intervention?**

Julie Rugg (University of York)

In the England, burial boards were set up following the passage of the Burial Acts from 1852. This legislation was subject to modification: a new Burial Act was passed in practically every year of the 1850s, and further Burial Acts followed until the final Act was passed in 1906. The acts were accompanied by a set of ministry 'directives' on cemetery management. These directives presented best practice guidance based on scientific evidence, and were produced by the General Board of Health. Detailing – in 54 sections – how best to effect the most sanitary and sustainable burial system, 'Instructions to Burial Boards' certainly support Ragon's contention that cemeteries constituted 'the high place of the embodiment of administrative rationality.’ However, more detailed exploration of operational practice indicates that change was driven less by central directive and more by shifting commemorative preference. It remains to be asked, therefore, just how 'traditional' was the burial board cemetery?

**The implications of natural burial for the funeral profession**

Trish Green, Andy Clayden and Jenny Hockey

This paper explores the implications of natural burial for the funeral profession. Its discussion is underpinned by data gathered during a three-year ESRC funded project which explored the cultural, social and emotional implications of natural burial in the UK. The paper's arguments are supported by data from interviews with funeral directors who fall into three discrete groups: 1) individuals who extended disposal options for their bereaved clientele through buying land in order
to accommodate natural burial; 2) natural burial ground owners/managers who extended their on-site provision to include funeral directing; and 3) local funeral directors, whose connections with natural burial were forged via relationships with bereaved clientele choosing this disposal option for the burial of a loved one, and/or through relationships with natural burial sites and their owners/managers. The paper maps the different journeys into natural burial made by these individuals. It considers their attitudes towards the ethos of natural burial, that is, as an environmentally driven process (West 1991) and explores their engagement with the natural burial ground, wherein this disposal option culminates. In so doing, the paper investigates the tensions, challenges and indeed the opportunities natural burial might present for the 21st century funeral director, who remains more often than not the first port of call for bereaved people.

**Dark Enchantment or graveyards as places with the power to charm**

Bel Deering (University of Brighton)

Cemeteries and graveyards can intrigue, entice and transport the visitor. With their contradictory qualities of being open and yet closed, harbouring life and death, and bringing nature and architecture into close proximity they foster a sense of mystery; they have the power of dark enchantment. Enchantment comes about when a person is entranced or captivated by an event or place. The simple juxtaposition of the extraordinary within the quotidian can, arguably, bring about a shift or transformation from a disengaged to an enchanted state. In this paper I extend Jane Bennett’s thesis about the capacity of place to enchant and propose the idea of the dark enchantment of burial places. At first glance a graveyard might not seem to be a place of seduction or captivation, being more obviously associated with death, loss and despair. Looking behind this veneer of sadness, however, reveals that they are places with a rich and complex matrix of narratives that can embrace grief and melancholy alongside joy and excitement. Building on accounts from research participants I explore how graveyards can stir and bewitch the visitor both through their unique sensory landscapes and their slipperiness in being a link between life and death. This characteristic of being neither one thing nor another, of having a co-mingling identity, is what makes cemeteries so potent. I argue that where enchantment co-exists with death, and despair, so dark enchantment takes hold.

**A nineteenth-century initiative continued: London proprietary cemeteries in the twentieth century**

Brian Parsons (University of Bath)

Private cemetery companies flourished in Britain from the 1820s only to be challenged thirty years later by Burial Boards. Whilst the creation of public cemeteries temporarily suspended the involvement of the commercial sector in burial provision, proprietary cemeteries re-emerged in London during the 1870s with further enterprises following in the twentieth century. This paper examines the development of three private cemeteries established between 1909 and 1914. Drawing from reports in trade journals, company documentation and other archival material, the rationale for investment is explored along with progress in the early years.

**Cemeteries, sustainability and transformational marketing**

Louise Canning and Isabelle Szmigin (University of Birmingham)

Individuals around the world engage in one common yet fundamental activity that is of personal, emotional, social and environmental significance – disposal of the dead. As the global landscape becomes increasingly populated, so disposal choice becomes a critical environmental issue. Disposal of the dead is an essential aspect of our existence; it is an inevitable activity which cannot be avoided. As recognition grows regarding the need to move towards a more sustainable
form of existence, so the way of thinking must change amongst individuals, organisations and governments. Although burial accounts for less than 30 per cent of deaths in the UK, the challenges facing cemetery provision necessitate shifts in thinking and behaviour amongst various actors so that systems thinking is adopted to ensure the integration of macro marketing perspectives with respective micro-decisions; time becomes an important consideration amongst individuals as they take account of the future outcomes and consequences in their decision-making with regards burial; and consideration be given to alternative ways in which needs can be met other than the current extended “right to use” associated with burial.

Marketing (in its broadest sense) has a fundamental role to play as a change agent, improving value across society, including citizens’ quality of life. The intention of this paper is to examine ‘transformational marketing’ and its potential contribution to addressing the challenges faced by cemeteries provision and sustainability in the UK.

‘That eccentric use of land at the top of the hill.’ Cemeteries and the contestation and construction of place

Katie McClymont (University of the West of England)

Cemeteries occupy a paradoxical position in contemporary UK cities: they are at the same time public and often civically run, and private intimate spaces of grief and remembrance. Further, they are second only to parks in terms of size of urban open green space yet largely forgotten in both policy and academic planning literature. This paper aims to explore the meaning of some of these contradictions through the use of Lefebvre’s threefold conceptualisation of space, to see how official and unofficial interpretations of cemeteries coexist and conflict, and what implications this may have for the use and management of these hidden places. It draws on interviews with cemeteries managers and observation in cemeteries from throughout England and Wales to outline two arenas of contestation. First, that of the cemetery’s role within a city, and second the role of the space inside the cemetery boundary. The differing constructions of these spaces raise questions for spatial policy makers about acknowledging multiple and potentially conflicting constructions of cemetery space and the possibility of acknowledging ‘spiritual’ values within planning and land management.

2010

Delusions of grandeur? The influence of civic pride, private sentiment and business practice upon the cemetery landscape at York

Susan Buckham

This paper offers a case study of burial and commemoration at York Cemetery from 1837 to 1901. The cultural significance of cemeteries is embodied by their design as a specific form of burial landscape and by their use as an arena to express social relationships as signified by the selection of a burial plot, funeralservice, memorial and inscription and by visits to the gravesite. York Cemetery’s own unique history was embedded within the nationwide – indeed international – movement to establish modern cemeteries. A study of burial and commemoration patterns reveals that throughout the1900s patronage by the local community together with the York Cemetery Company’s business practices created an unusual level of material harmony and homogeneity within the cemetery landscape.

At York, the archaeological and documentary sources reveal that the deceased’s family or representative could select from a series of possible options at each stage of burial and commemoration. Whilst the cemetery owners ultimatelyregulated the extent of choices, the
The study concludes by making the case that at York, in contrast to case studies of other cemeteries, private sentiments and familial relationships rather than competitive social display proved more influential to the evolving design, management and use of the site.

The cemetery in the countryside: continuity and modernity

Julie Rugg (University of York)

Theoretical debate on cemeteries generally relates to one of two discourses: that cemeteries demonstrated the hold of middle class ideals on the construction of urban environments, where even in the realms of death the expression of status and class were a central concern; and that the cemetery was essentially a modern phenomenon that displaced and marginalized the dead, so reflecting a profound societal unease with evidence of mortality. These models position the cemetery very firmly in the context of the nineteenth-century city, where rapid population growth led to a dislocation of traditional burial practices. In the case of England, during the nineteenth century the hold of the Church on the spaces of death was challenged: by law, intramural churchyards could be closed to new interments. The sacred space of the churchyard was usurped by secularised cemetery space: in this physically distant and professionally-managed locale, activity was governed by scientific principles.

This paper argues that these discourses are simplistic, and tend to reflect the opposition of one stereotype with another. Churchyards constituted highly politicized space, where economic issues could be central and where social marginalization was routine. Evidence of an abrupt ‘dislocation’ is questionable. In the ‘modern’ period, the use of churchyards has continued, and remains commonplace. Furthermore, cemeteries did not necessarily undermine the role of the Church. In the 1850s, new burial legislation required that such sites should be at least part-consecrated. Apportioned land within the vast majority of cemeteries came under the control of diocesan authorities: such space was to be regarded as the parish burial ground, and remained the freehold of the local vicar. This paper questions the notion of a dichotomized distinction between the ‘modern’ cemetery and ‘traditional’ churchyard by reviewing data relating to the history of the cemetery in the countryside.

The labyrinthine law of disposal of the dead: the complications, the complexities and the convention

Nicola Rees

This paper presents ongoing PhD research examining the legal framework, rules and regulations of the Church of England relating to disposal of the dead with some comparison with state regulation. The paper reviews the roles of the PCC and incumbent as regulators and policy makers in the churchyard. A key point in the research is establishing the functional public authority status of the PCC for s6(3)(b) and 6(5) Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) (contra to finding of House of Lords in Wallbank litigation) by reference to the on-going case law usually linked to social housing and care homes for the elderly, and using tests developed by the courts.

The paper encompasses discussion of the ‘victim’ defence (s7(7)) HRA 1998 to a finding of functional public authority; examination of the case law from the consistory courts in relation to burial regulations, particularly regarding epitaphs; and the case law in relation to exhumation to
demonstrate potential breaches of Articles 6, 8, 10 ECHR. The theis also reviews land and property law issues relating to potential breaches article 1 protocol 1 ECHR.

This paper will focus on current area of research into the legal background for s215 Local Government Act 1972, which passes responsibility for maintenance of closed churchyards to local authorities. The paper explains the legal process and legal responsibility, and highlights areas of contention.

The significance of an historic cemetery site to local sets of interest

Leonie Kellaher and David Lambert

Cemeteries are frequently sites of contestation. Grave owners and cemetery managers; clergy and the public; interest groups and mourners; 'romantics/conservationists' and 'tidiers'; new and traditional user groups - to cite a few of the groups that can sometimes find themselves in opposition. The living and the dead rarely seem to be pitched in battle, though 'the liminal power of the mourner' (Turner, 1969) sometimes seems to invoke the dead to render the living more powerful or dominant in contest.

A study of West Norwood Cemetery, undertaken from 2008 through to the summer and autumn of 2009, aimed to understand how far and in what ways the local community valued the Cemetery. It was undertaken in two phases; first came an account of the landscape, made up of the vegetation and monuments and recommendations for their management. Second came a survey of around 100 people who lived or worked locally, who visited or knew of the cemetery and were prepared to say what aspects of the site they valued. This paper summarises the main findings and speculates on the possibilities for bridging gaps between the different sets of interest, insofar as such bridging is necessary for the Cemetery's sustainability.

New scenes for the dead: Natural burial sites and their distinguishing sovereignty

Hannah Rumble

This paper is concerned with identifying if there are distinctions between natural burial sites and other more familiar, 'traditional' burial places using the case study woodland burial ground of my doctoral research. This particular site is consecrated and affiliated to the Church of England. The provider’s aim is to establish a deciduous native woodland, hence why the site is referred to as a 'woodland' burial ground. On the one hand the legal aspects of this provision make the site similar to a churchyard, whilst functionally and aesthetically, it shares much in common with other burial places: so what is distinctive about this provision? I will argue that generally what sets natural burial sites apart from other places of interment for the dead is that these places are therapeutic landscapes in which the aesthetic veneer of the natural landscape, together with often diminished topographic markers to the presence of the dead below ground, emphasises life and continuity and also lessens visitors inhibitions so that some visiting behaviour incorporates activities not normally associated with a cemetery or churchyard. I shall also point to the fact that these therapeutic landscapes for the grieving have prompted some criticism that natural burial grounds embody a denial of death precisely because the natural world is often given sovereign status in these places. Ultimately, this is what sets natural burial grounds apart from other places for the dead; for these new scenes no longer guarantee that the dead will have sovereign status in the landscape.

2009
Exhuming St Mungo’s, Glasgow’s forgotten pioneer cemetery

Ronnie Scott (Glasgow)

The pioneering St Mungo’s Burying Ground, which was established by Glasgow Town Council in 1832, introduced a number of modern and rational improvements over the crowded churchyards of the city. The three drivers of the cemetery were a rapidly rising population, a cholera epidemic and a changing set of beliefs around burial and commemoration. The cemetery was remarkable in a number of ways: it was lit by gas, drained by sewers, planted with shrubs and had wide carriage roads round and through it. The publicity material placed an emphasis on amenity, security, hygiene, greenery, high-quality materials and designs, property rights and creating a space that would be pleasant for visitors. In many ways it was similar to the much larger Glasgow Necropolis, which was developed by the Merchants House of Glasgow and which opened the following year, but it proved far less fashionable, and was soon overshadowed by its nearby rival. After an initial flurry of sales, trade dropped off, and part of the property was sold in 1859. The ground was closed under the Public Health (Scotland) Act 1867, and the site was finally cleared in 1902. This paper explores how an emergency provision for disposing of the victims of cholera became a pioneering cemetery, through the actions of James Cleland (1770-1840), the energetic and prolific Superintendent of Public Works of the town council.

Burying Enza: The Spanish ‘Flu 1918-1819 and the disposal of the dead in London

Brian Parsons (University of Bath)

The Spanish ‘Flu Pandemic of 1918-1919 killed tens of million worldwide. In England it is estimated that around 228,000 died during the three ‘waves’ – June/July, October/November 1918 and in February the following year. While much research has been carried out into the onset and spread of the Pandemic, issues concerning disposal of the dead have received little attention. Drawing on range of archive materials, including newspaper reports, council minutes, Medical Officer of Health reports, cemetery registers and funeral directors' records, this paper gives an insight into how the funeral industry and cemeteries dealt with an unprecedented number of funerals during the second and most virulent wave of the pandemic.

Urban Burial Places in England c.1700-1840

Natasha Mihailovic (University of Exeter)

Focusing on Bristol and York, this paper will present a general outline of the treatment of urban burial grounds during the long eighteenth century. It will consider their upkeep and their use for purposes other than burial, before considering the responses of parish authorities to their increasing overcrowding, which took the form of extensions or the establishment of separate additional burial grounds. As part of this, it will look at the ways in which burial grounds were continually reshaped in accordance with the needs of the living, for example in the process of street-widening. It will also offer a pre-history of nineteenth century burial debates, assessing the attitudes of urban residents towards spaces of the dead and discussing the nature and extent of opposition to urban burial in the century and a half prior to its becoming a cause of widespread concern in the 1840s, and its outlawing over the course of the 1850s.

Burying grounds in mid-nineteenth century Glasgow: the cause of reform

Peter Jupp (University of Durham)
Throughout the nineteenth century, the city of Glasgow exhibited many of the difficulties in a rapidly urbanising and industrialising environment. Its high mortality rate and its poor levels of public health increased pressures on burying ground provision, further exacerbated by local patterns of wealth distribution and of migration, the structure of local government, and the characteristics of funeral arrangements in Presbyterian Scotland. These were the major factors behind the conditions in Glaswegian burying grounds which social reformer found unacceptable.

This paper seeks to present varieties and conditions of burying ground provision; to analyse successive attempts at burial reform; to analyse the degree of success and failure with which reformers met; to compare them with developments south of the border; and to illustrate the Scottish way of death in nineteenth century Glasgow.

The paper is a product of the Leverhulme Trust funded research project at Durham University on the history of cremation in modern Scotland. It draws on materials in the Mitchell Library Glasgow, the archives of the Scottish Burial Reform and Cremation Society, the Cremation Society archives at Durham University and the London School of Economics.

**Grave re-use: a feasibility study**

**Fiona Stirling (University of Sheffield)**

Grave re-use was common in the UK for hundreds of years, but legislation introduced in the mid-nineteenth century made the practice illegal. As a result, cemeteries must continually expand in order to accommodate further interments. Many cemeteries incorporate vast areas of old burial that generate no income, are no longer visited and are poorly maintained. The recent proposal by Government to reintroduce grave re-use seems straightforward in theory, but UK cemeteries were not designed to be re-used. Above ground there are monuments, planting, buildings and recreational and burial use to be considered. Below ground there are multiple burial plots, each containing burials at different depths and from different periods.

This research investigates the implications and feasibility of introducing grave re-use at a site-specific level, using two case studies in Sheffield. To capture the full complexity of the cemetery landscape, the research combines four different methods including in-depth analysis of the records relating to the cemeteries’ establishment and management, field observation of cemetery practices and the use of the landscape, qualitative interviews with cemetery professionals and other stakeholders to ascertain their perceptions of the cemetery and of grave re-use and detailed grave-by-grave mapping using a Geographical Information System (GIS). This integrated and innovative approach offers a unique understanding of the two case study cemeteries and detailed analysis of the potential to introduce grave re-use.

The research demonstrates the need for a comprehensive approach to implementation of grave re-use, but indicates the likelihood that this will have to be tailored towards the individual cemetery, depending on its age, past management practices and regulation, its current status for burial and its development of other roles and identities.

**A short history of exhumation from lawful burial, in the context of criminal investigations, in England, with specific reference to some of the more unusual cases since 1809**

**David Rogers (Staffordshire University)**

This paper will examine the aetiology of ‘exhumation from lawful burial’ (ELB) in the context of criminal investigations, with specific reference to the secular and ecclesiastical law. It will also examine how ELB has become a valuable part of the crime investigators armory of investigative strategies concerning death enquiries. Historically, the use of ELB by Coroners appears to have been common-place as the deceased were buried speedily after death. There was a requirement
for the coroner and jury to view the body before he (the coroner) deliberated upon the cause(s) of
death. This was for two reasons; the first issue was one of identification, the second was to
establish whether there were any visible signs of injury, and whether those injuries may have
resulted in that persons death.

Since the creation of the modern police force (1829) and specifically the creation of the Criminal
Investigation Departments, the investigations of suspicious deaths have been undertaken by the
police. The current legislation concerning ELB is the Burial Act 1857 (c.81), and the Coroners Act
1988 (c.13) (soon to be amended). During the last 200 years there have been in excess of 300
cases of ELB, and the rationale for some have been more bizarre than others. Reference will be
made to some of those cases.

Dead and buried? Disposal and commemoration in England before and after the Great
War
Helen Frisby (University of Leeds)

Some historians have argued that the Great War of 1914-1918 precipitated a decentring of the
corpse from popular commemorative ritual. One piece of evidence routinely cited for this argument
is increases in the cremation rate following the Great War. However I would suggest that the Great
War did not influence popular disposal and commemoration practices to the extent that some have
argued, and that even today the body remains firmly at the centre of popular commemorative
strategies. I will start by describing the commemoration of the dead during the pre-War period,
with particular reference to the ‘garden cemetery movement.’ Although the cremation rate
increased after the Great War, this increase was initially modest; as late as 2000, around 28% of
disposals were still by burial, suggesting that for many people the body still remains a focal point
for commemoration. Meanwhile it is common practice for ‘cremains’ to be carefully disposed of,
with considerable effort often expended in commemorating the deceased at or near to the actual
site of disposal. This section of the talk is illustrated with photographs of inventive commemorative
strategies observed in a Garden of Remembrance in Leeds, West Yorkshire. It is therefore clear
that there remains a long-standing, entrenched popular association between disposal and
commemoration of the dead.

Going back to nature: routes to disposal in the natural burial ground
Andy Clayden, Jenny Hockey and Trish Green (University of Sheffield)

The paper explores the reasons why people are choosing natural burial, either for themselves or a
deceased relative/friend. It presents data from a 3 year ESRC-funded programme of empirical
work in UK natural burial grounds which is exploring the extent to which natural burial represents:
creative resistance to modernist disposal strategies, as epitomised in the cemetery; an aspect of
the re-enchantment of death and a resurgence of Victorian romanticism; a form of ecological
immortality expressed in a more collective response to death; or an indicator of postmodern
trends towards more individualised lifestyle options? Preliminary data suggest that answers to
these questions lie in the very particular responses of individuals to the diversity of interpretations
of the concepts of natural burial. Our paper therefore examines the key dimensions of this
diversity for the users of these burial grounds - and makes the often close relationship between
bereaved people and the new providers of natural burial a starting point in an account of the
factors which influence individuals who have chosen this disposal option.

2008

Keeping the contradictions: researching death, dying and care of the deceased
Mark Powell (University of Sheffield)

The paper is concerned with the analysis of interview transcripts and aims to provide insights into personal perceptions of death, dying, and care of the deceased. The interview data draws on initial research undertaken as part of a three year ESRC funded project considering the cultural, social and emotional implications of funerary practices, grouped under the generic term of ‘natural burial’. The project will consider how varied interpretations, typologies and memorial practices have created diverse burial landscapes.

While the paper is based on research that does not directly refer to ‘natural burial’, it will locate our research in a current UK social context, and will have relevance to other research in more general terms. The paper will highlight the difficulties and dilemmas of investigating the emotive issue of death and will stress the need for researchers to adopt a reflexive analytical and interpretative style. The paper also suggests the importance of retaining seemingly ambiguous and contradictory statements when attempting to understand an informant’s cultural understanding of death, dying and care of the deceased.

Grief in the garden: the cultural production of suburbia

Ruth McManus, (University of Canterbury, New Zealand)

What happens to the geraniums when an avid gardener dies? In this paper I suggest that it is possible to map ways in which domestic places and spaces get enacted in and negotiated through engagements with death. Drawing upon ongoing research into New Zealand’s and UK’s attitudes to and practices around death, the paper discusses ways in which domestic suburban gardens operate as, and become sites to, renegotiate social relationships transformed through death.

Battle ground for burials: Kingsbury Lawn Cemetery

Brian Parsons

Despite the increasing profile of cremation in England during the interwar years, local authorities still needed to provide land for the preferred mode of disposal - burial. Those in urban areas with nineteenth century cemeteries approaching capacity looked outside their boundaries for suitable sites. In 1929 the Urban District Council of Willesden acquired land for burial purposes in an adjacent municipal area. Although it was not immediately prepared for burials, over the next thirty years the authority encountered an unprecedented level of opposition from Wembley borough. Willesden, however, was equally determined to realise the scheme. Despite the site being enclosed by railings, the ground consecrated, a chapel, lodge and shelter constructed, no burials took place. By default, the merging of the two authorities in the 1960s led Wembley to emerge victorious; Kingsbury Lawn Cemetery was finally abandoned. Drawing from council minutes, official reports and other sources, this paper traces the remarkable story of the cemetery that never was.

The Council for the Disposition of the Dead, 1931-1939: a cul-de-sac for funeral reform

Peter C. Jupp, (University of Durham)

By 1930 the campaign for cremation was fifty-six years old. Yet the persistence of the British burial tradition had confounded most attempts by cremation’s promoters to persuade the British to adopt cremation as an alternative to burial. In 1930 over 99% of funerals involved burial. The Council for the Disposition of the Dead (CDD) was a new initiative of the Cremation Society, intended to promote cremation as one of several funeral reforms. These reforms would be pursued in cooperation with a wide range of other organisations both within funeral service and beyond,
including those concerned with public health, local government and the environment. The CDD was incorporated in 1934. Of its four aims, the third read, 'The improvement of the status of those concerned with the disposal of the dead'.

The paper suggests that the CDD found some of the funeral directing organisations among its most responsive allies. The decision was taken to make the compulsory registration of funeral directors the CDD’s first task. The paper will describe the opposition encountered to registration and the preparation of the ‘registration’ Bill presented to the House of Lords in June 1938. The Lords rejected the second reading of the Bill and the CDD was wound up in 1939.

The paper draws upon the CDD files in the Cremation Society archives in Durham University It analyses the CDD’s origins, aims and methods, its supporters and opponents, the evidence it adduced for funeral reform, and its eventual failure. Whilst concluding that the CDD eventually proved a cul-de-sac in interwar funeral reform, the paper suggests that the issues raised by the CDD helped promote a climate for funeral reform in the UK which would eventually bear fruit in the changed circumstances of the post-war Welfare State.

2007

A tale of two scandals: burial and cremation in Aberdeen, 1899 and 1944

Peter Jupp (University of Durham)

In 1899 the manager of a privately-owned cemetery appeared in court in Aberdeen. He had ensured sufficient burial space by exhuming and relocating coffins without authority or permission. The manager was imprisoned for six months and the city of Aberdeen made aware of the conditions in which the poor of the city were buried. The cremationist Dr Robert Farquharson, MP for East Aberdeen, used the occasion to press for a crematorium, cremation having been legalised in the UK in 1884. A crematorium was not built, neither were burial conditions much improved.

In 1944, a court heard how the manager of the privately-owned crematorium in Aberdeen (opened in 1938) had stolen 1044 coffin lids and two coffins, passing a proportion of them on to a local funeral director. He was imprisoned for three years. The case had immediate policy implications for the UK cremation movement.

The paper first provides accounts of the two cases and then compares them according to a number of issues. These include: the rise of cremation in Scotland; the provision and ownership of cemeteries and crematoria; funeral costs and poverty; religious identity and clergy involvement. The two cases thus illustrate aspects of the growth of cremation and decline of burial in modern Scotland.

Necropolis, metropolis: figuring the cemetery in Victorian writings about London

Sam Matthews (University of Sheffield)

From Lewis Mumford’s influential model of urban civilisation terminating in ‘the final cemetery, the Necropolis’ to Iain Sinclair’s vision of contemporary London as a ‘necropolis culture’, twentieth-century commentators have repeatedly defined the modern metropolis as a city of the dead. The dominance of necropolitan discourse in London literature has had a significant impact on representations of the city’s cemeteries, ahistorically subordinating the particular local, historical, ideological and affective characteristics of individual cemeteries to a transcendent vision of cemetery as city of the dead – in the terms of James Thomson’s 1874 poem, a ‘City of Dreadful
Night’. This paper argues that the relegation of the metropolitan cemetery to the realm of the figurative and symbolic has its roots in Victorian disenchantment with the cemetery as a solution to the problem of urban burial. As Victorian cemeteries grew in scale and multiplied in number, their significance shifted from pseudo-pastoral and suburban to metropolitan. No longer providing spaces of difference and psychic refuge from the expanding city, cemeteries came to duplicate, even darkly parody, London’s uncontrolled growth. As the cemetery came to be viewed as a threat to the living – as in Charles Dickens’s fantasy of London’s ‘enormous hosts of dead’ being resurrected while the living sleep, and their ‘vast armies’ leave no space for the living – the cemetery’s material and particular landscape was redefined as a symbolic space for the expression of anxieties about alienation, the loss of individuality and pressure of uniformity in the modern metropolis. This paper explores the pressure of necropolitan symbolism on representations of London cemeteries in a range of texts from the second half of the nineteenth century, including cemetery promotional material, sermons, newspaper reports, and literary texts by writers including Dickens, G. A. Sala, James Thomson, Richard Jefferies, H. G. Wells and Ford Madox Ford.

Non-conformity or unconformity? The case of Underbank Chapel Burial Ground, Stannington

Willy Kitchen (University of Sheffield)

This paper presents some preliminary findings of a study of headstones and burial records from the Unitarian chapel at Stannington, some five kilometres north-west of Sheffield. The mismatch between individuals named on tombstones and individuals listed in burial records suggests that it may be useful to conceive of each burial plot as having its own individual “life history”, in the same way that archaeologists have talked of the life cycle of individual artefacts or structures. A number of ideas will be explored in relation to this model, including a discussion of the influences of family, community and stonemasons in the production, reproduction and relocation of memorials in time and space.

Grave re-use: understanding the impact on the cemetery landscape and its community

Fiona Stirling (University of Sheffield)

In 2001, the House of Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee published its findings following an inquiry into UK cemeteries. One of their key recommendations was: ‘if the public are to continue to have access to affordable, accessible burial in cemeteries fit for the needs of the bereaved, there appears to be no alternative to grave re-use’.

Cemeteries were first established during the Victorian period to tackle problems of poor sanitation and lack of churchyard space in cities. Re-use had been common in UK churchyards for hundreds of years, but burial acts introduced during the 1850s made it illegal. This gave rise to the notion of burial in perpetuity which has resulted in a landscape that is socially and economically unsustainable. Many cemeteries incorporate vast areas of old burial which generate no income, are no longer visited and are poorly maintained. Theoretically, re-use seems straightforward, but UK cemeteries were never designed to be re-used. Consequently, potential areas for re-use are unlikely to be easily identified or conveniently grouped. Moreover, cemeteries also provide important sources of urban greenspace and ecological habitat and can be historically significant.

This research aims to investigate the implications and feasibility of introducing grave re-use, using case studies from Sheffield’s burial provision. The project uses GIS to pull together a range of data including historic maps and burial records, to reveal and help understand the complex development of the cemetery landscape and to facilitate discussions with cemetery professionals regarding individual sites and their concerns surrounding re-use.
The return of the living dead: a dialogue between cemeteries and museums

Morgan Meyer and Kate Woodthorpe (University of Sheffield)

Within the last decade there has been a revival in museum and heritage studies, reflecting the growth of their cultural and economic role in contemporary Western society. Whilst there have been some efforts to explore how cemeteries could benefit from this revival, to date cemeteries have not been widely included or recognised as ‘heritage’ spaces in either policy or research.

This paper addresses this disparity and makes tentative links between cemeteries and museums in their wider social, cultural and institutional context, in an attempt to incorporate cemeteries into this heritage revival. Drawing upon two individual ethnographic projects on the Natural History Museum in Luxembourg and the City of London Cemetery respectively this paper discusses some of the similarities and differences between these two spaces, including their role and function in society. We also make comparisons of the persistent and contradictory role of the dead in the museum and in the cemetery, two environments within which they are both present and absent.

Building on this, we examine how the management of these two sites are widely influenced by narratives of normative behaviour around ‘dead people’ and what constitutes the conservation and preservation of the dead. In an attempt to understand how these issues can be managed on a daily basis, the representation(s) of the dead in the cemetery and the museum will be examined in depth, exploring the scope for fruitful dialogue between these two spaces.

Contested futures: contemporary practices in West Norwood Cemetery

Maren Kurz (University College, London)

During the course of my ethnographic fieldwork West Norwood Cemetery, one of the ‘Magnificent Seven’ Victorian cemeteries in London, became one of the focus points of my research. One of the main questions encountered throughout my work is how contemporary practices within the material and social dimension of the cemetery shape its future, with a particular emphasis on Victorian cemeteries as contested landscapes, contemporary heritage practices and material culture. This paper will explore these three themes from an anthropological perspective using an in-depth case-study of West Norwood Cemetery in order to provide ethnographic context. The paper will discuss examples of how the three themes are materially and/or socially articulated and represented within the cemetery landscape and propose ways in which they may be argued to be indicative of wider social phenomena, for instance by relating to our understanding of the past, in particular the role of the Victorian era. Utilising established anthropological concepts, such as the nature/culture divide and phenomenological approaches towards landscape and materiality, the paper will show that by utilising these in the study of the contemporary condition of Victorian cemeteries questions about the contested nature of the future of existing cemetery landscapes can be explored and that these questions relate directly to larger social concerns at the heart of the anthropological project.

Tension and negotiation: the everyday contestation and construction of culture, discourse and practice in the contemporary cemetery landscape

Kate Woodthorpe (University of Sheffield)

One does not have to look far nowadays to find evidence in the modern media of cemeteries making the news (see BBC 2003; 2005; 2006). Be it grave desecration, memorial regulation or safety in the local cemetery, they are sites that can frequently garner press attention, usually not for the most favourable of reasons. However, this attention does not equate to a general rise in the profile of cemeteries across the country which, this paper suggests, partly stems from the considerable ambiguities and contradictions that surround the contemporary cemetery in terms of its purpose, management and usage.
This paper is an overview of some of these ambiguities from the perspective of cemetery users and visitors, staff and the local community. It achieves this by exploring the cemetery landscape at different scales – moving from the detail of activity at the graveside, out to the management of the whole site and then wider still to the influence of cultural discourses of grief and conservation which frame cemetery management more broadly. Issues of contestation over ownership of grave plots, contradicting principles of rationality and the long term sustainability of the site come together in this shared dynamic space to both liberate and control activity and practice. It is how this happens and the effect this has on the cemetery landscape that is the focus of this paper, which is taken from an ethnographic project based at the City of London Cemetery.

2006

The cemetery and the city: the origins of the Glasgow Necropolis, 1825-1857

Ronnie Scott

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 burgess 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.

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

Bel Deering (University of Sussex)

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.

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

Dennis Bilbrey (Federal German Building Authority)

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.

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

Andy Clayden and Katie Dixon

(Lecturer, Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield; Landscape Architect and Postgraduate student)

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.

The second funeral: burying ashes and/or placing memorials

Janet Eldred (York Cemetery Trust)

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.

Cosmopolitan 'rootedness' and the ethnic cemetery

Leonie Kellaher (The Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University)

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 Gujurati – 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’.
‘Bury me in the cold, cold ground’: the demand for winter funerals in two Newfoundland communities

Ivan Emke (University of Newfoundland)

This is a case study of evolving burial policies in two Newfoundland communities, where the most contentious current issue relates to the burial of bodies during the winter season. Cemetery associations argue that it is too expensive to clear the snow and dig through the frozen ground, all the while avoiding damage to other monuments. On the other hand, some community members argue that they should have the right to winter burials, to assist with closure (instead of having to wait for a burial in the spring, which may or may not be accompanied with any formal ceremony).

This paper focuses on an analysis of the debate in two communities; in one, a group of citizens have been lobbying the local cemetery association for the right to have winter burials (between November and April all bodies are kept in a temporary vault, to be buried in the spring). In the second site, a recently-constructed winter vault has encountered some popular opposition, and the cemetery committee has been forced to reconsider its position.

This paper looks at how the arguments are constructed by the two sides, using economic rationality on one hand versus therapeutic needs of the bereaved on the other hand. In addition, there is consideration of the possible role of the economic interests of the cemeteries, the churches and the funeral directors. Finally, the paper looks at the history of winter burial in these (and surrounding) sites to provide some local context for the debate. The data is gathered from interviews with clergy, cemetery workers, funeral directors and citizen activists.

The ‘good’ and ‘bad’ disposal of the deceased

Kate Woodthorpe (University of Sheffield)

Arguably death is no longer the ‘taboo’ that was once infamously described as by Ariès, evidenced by the wealth of information available now on death and dying. In many ways this growth in a Sociology of Death is as a result of the development of the palliative care movement. This paper proposes that within a Sociology of Death the dying process and bereavement care have dominated discussion, and that the disposal of the body and memorialisation are the marginalised (the taboo) topics of today. To illustrate this there is an aversion to using the term ‘disposal’ in literature due to the connotations of rubbish and garbage attached to it, and there is a lack of sociological study into what happens to the body and its site of memorialisation in the longer term. Using concepts explored by Julia Lawton and Beverley McNamara of a ‘good’ and ‘bad’ death, this paper proposes that these concepts could be applicable to the disposal and commemoration of the deceased, which are highly visible in the cemetery site.

This paper is a presentation of preliminary data gathered at the City of London Cemetery on perspectives of cemetery landscape conservation. The cemetery is in an on-going process of preserving the historical elements of the cemetery, whilst providing a quality service for the users and ensuring that there is space for future disposal. Drawing on what is observed as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ activity and behaviour in the cemetery, it will discuss how patterns of activity and memorialisation are negotiated between the users and the staff of the cemetery, and the effect these decisions have on the cemetery landscape. This will include an exploration of what constitutes heritage and conservation, the use of permanent and temporal memorialisation, emotion management and ownership of the cemetery site.

A conservation management plan for the City of London Cemetery
Most cemeteries are historic. While only a tiny percentage of cemeteries are included on national lists of historic parks and gardens, the majority, being laid out before 1914, are historic in at least a local or regional context. Furthermore, while no one knows the numbers, it is likely that listing of built structures under-represents the historic interest of cemetery structures as a type. But if we want to avoid heritage and its connotations, cemeteries are special places, and their specialness is intimately bound up with their history. It is that specialness, and its preservation, that this paper will address.

In some ways, cemeteries are part of what has been called the parks ‘family’ – important green space, publicly accessible, designed landscapes, ornamental structures - and recognising this can be helpful to some extent. But it is essential that they are not treated as if they were ‘just’ parks – they have very different roles and very different different needs. A cemetery is a complex asset with overlapping values: providing choice of burial, cultural and emotional, heritage, ecological, amenity, townscape. The threats are equally complex: demolitions, vandalism, pressure for burial space, reduced maintenance budgets, a backlog of capital works, conflicting user-demands, skills shortages, lack of political and public awareness.

In working on the Conservation Management Plan for the City of London Cemetery, the team examined these issues in detail, and this paper will use the experience as a case study, illustrating the importance of such a plan, the problems it tackled and the solutions which, in liaison with the clients, it came up with.

The aesthetics of death: freedom and individualisation in the funeral art of Portuguese cemeteries of the 19th and 20th centuries

Antonio Delgado (University of Beira Interior, Portugal)

Here I want to look at funeral art as it may be seen in Portuguese public cemeteries designed in the 19th century, with some attention to the changes in outlook and urban planning that occurred in the late 18th. It was these changes that converted the cemetery into a new symbolic structure within the urban space. The cemetery we know today arose from the hygienic precepts of that earlier time.

In Portugal the emergence of public cemeteries entailed complications and indeed social conflict, the reason being that Catholicism dominated the individual conscience. The Church held a monopoly over death and salvation. The new urban ordinances secularized the cemeteries, making them public and declaring them the only structures for the interment of bodies, in the same way that they established the space for individual burial. In this sense the less wealthy were able to assert themselves, for now each individual was entitled, as heros had been in the past, to be glorified and to transcend the moment and memory of death.

With the cemetery of the 19th century there came into being the civic cult of the dead. The cemetery became a place where one could stroll and, through the medium of the funeral monument and epitaphs attesting to his or her moral and civic virtues, commune with the deceased. It was a museum that educated and catechized, while also it was a place of common liberty. In addition the cemetery became a new field for architecture and other forms of art, an area for the display of styles and forms, a space of vast metaphorical significance that reflected not only aesthetic tastes but also the conflicting games and forces of Portuguese society over the last two centuries.

Characteristics and patterns of classicism in the funerary art of Greece

Katerina Tsatoucha (Department of Architecture, Municipality of Athens)
The funerary art depicts the social conditions, as well as, the influences of current architectural and sculptural trends. Local tradition can be traced also in the aesthetics of this art. The case of cemeteries in Greece, over the 19th century, mainly the First Cemetery of Athens and the Cemetery of Syros reflects all these aspects. It is worth noticing that particularly the cemetery of Athens is associated with the rebirth of the New Greek State after four centuries of cultural silence. The New Greek funerary art that appeared and developed during 1850-1920 can be described as a creative time of reform and adhesion to ancient patterns. It could be argued that the following factors contributed to this: the excavations in ancient Kerameikos and the interesting finds of stelae which influenced and strengthened the patterns of the funerary art of the last decades of 19th century; the architectural culture in the city of Athens, as the modern capital of the New Greek State under the monarch of Otto, was the neoclassicism that had references to classical spirit; and the sculptural art of anonymous marble sculptors that was alive through centuries in the islands -mainly in Cyclades- was inspired by these patterns.

For the above reasons, the tendencies which dominated the sculptural works of the 19th century, including these of the most famous Greek sculptors educated in Europe, were tied to classical origins. There was a lavish production of stelae, temples, symbols, and details of decoration that have many similarities to Ancient Greek prototypes. The above characteristics were the most important factors that make the cemeteries of Greece and most of all the historical First Cemetery of Athens to present its own unique features that stand out from the rest of the Cemeteries in Europe of the same period.

From metropolis to necropolis

Liisa Lindgren (Central Art Archives in the Finnish National Gallery in Helsinki)

My paper deals with Lutheran funerary sculpture in Finland and the modernist rejection of the 19th century cemetery culture. The emotional weight of the elaborate 19th century culture was given tension by the dichotomies of time and timelessness, presence and absence, sorrow and comfort. Memorials with the popular theme of mourning represented absence sharpened by feelings of sorrow and loss that structured the modern experience of the world. The cemetery was seen as an ideal place for reflection on death, a space of melancholy.

The First World War changed attitudes to mortality. Luxurious angels and mourners became inappropriate displays of wealth and status, and last but not least of femininity. Classicism gave models for new, 'masculine' monuments, stripped of excessive decoration and sentimentality: mourning maidens were replaced by young men carrying attributes of art that link death with freedom and aesthetic experience. The comprehensive planning of modern cemeteries, based on principles of economy and democracy, deemphasized monuments in favor of open space and unbroken scenery.

As an allegory of 20th century modernism, the cemetery had a negative meaning. In the 1920s Oswald Spengler's views of culture were characterized by a cycle of growth and decay leading from living, flexible culture to mechanical and stereotypical civilization. Vaticalistic modernism saw cemeteries as horror images of a petrified culture. In the 1930s Lewis Mumford, the critic of cities, claimed that the cemetery was the end-product of erroneous development, the horror of Babylon and Nineveh, a necropolis. In the monuments was crystallized everything that is dead, obsolete and backward in society. Monuments evoke false expectations of eternity and continuity. As a living organism, the city's vital sign is its ability to renew itself. The vitalistic life rhetoric of 20th century modernism rejected melancholic reflection of death as decadence.