

Friday 23rd May 2024

C/L/A/026, Church Lane Building, University of York

INFORMATION

The 26th Cemeteries Colloquium will take place on **Friday 23rd May**, 8:45 to 17:15 GMT. This in-person, day event comprises an informal meeting of researchers in all disciplines with an interest in burial places, and a particular focus is placed on new and emerging research. Postgraduates are particularly welcome.

The Church Lane Building is on the University of York's West campus: the link [here](#) will connect you to a campus map. The campus is readily accessible by bus: the buses for the University are clearly marked 'U2' and depart from bus stands across the road from the main railway entrance. It's possible to pay by card on the bus, and the journey takes around 20 minutes. Alight at the Heslington Hall stop, which is close to the roundabout at the top of Innovation Lane. The Church Lane building is five-minute walk from the roundabout.

There is paid-for parking on campus, but no guarantee can be made that a space will be available.



The cost of attending the event is £45, payable by attendees and speakers. Please purchase tickets via the Eventbrite site: search for '26th Cemeteries Colloquium'. Full catering is provided throughout the day.

The Church Lane Building is fully wheelchair accessible.

There is a long-standing tradition of drinks and dinner the night before the Colloquium. I will be delighted to see you at the Three-Legged Mare on High Petergate (near the Minster) from 18:00 on Thursday 22nd May.

*Dinner has been arranged at North South on Bootham, a bistro specialising in local tasting boards. Attendance at this buffet meal costs an additional £22, including a glass of wine. For those who have opted to attend the meal, we will be walking from the pub to North South (c.5 minutes' walk), where we are expected at **19:30**.*

The cost of accommodation is not included in the conference fee. York is a beautiful city with many hotels at a range of price points.

Three-Legged Mare, High Petergate



North South, Bootham



26th Cemeteries Colloquium

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8:45-9:00	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
<i>Session One: Planning and Policy</i>	
9:00-9:30	<i>Jakub Hrubý</i> Prague's cemeteries – from the present to the year 2050
9:30-10:00	<i>Bel Deering</i> 'She always hated swimming': burial grounds in an age of floods
10:00-10:30	<i>Stuart Prior and Helen Frisby</i> Not your usual burial: accommodating multicultural needs in a local authority cemetery
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
<i>Session Two: Problematic deathscapes</i>	
10:45-11:15	<i>Ryan Clarke</i> A century of change: burial of the cholera and Spanish flu dead in East Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire 1832-1920
11:15-11:45	<i>Beth Timmins</i> Understanding mass graves as dissonant sites of heritage
11:45-12:15	<i>Olga Nešporová</i> Cemeteries in borderlands and regions of significant population change

12:15-13:00	Lunch
<i>Session 3: Historical considerations</i>	
13:00-13:30	<i>Josie Wall</i> The development of the garden cemetery: funerary landscapes and monumentality at Highgate and Père Lachaise c.1804-1914
13:30-14:00	<i>Anna Fairley</i> A GIS Exploration of memorial placement and urban dynamics in 19th-century Liverpool
14:00-14:30	<i>Brian Parsons</i> A 'Magnificent' crematorium? The proposed crematorium in Brompton Cemetery
14:30-15:00	<i>Jan Logeman</i> The visibility of the dead: transatlantic differences in funerary marketing and business practices during the 20th century
15:30-15:45	Tea break
<i>Session 4: Heritage and tourism</i>	
15:45-16:15	<i>Brent Elliott</i> Tales from the Vienna cemeteries
16:15-16:45	<i>Ka Lok No (Carlos)</i> Factors restricting the promotion and sustainable development of Chinese cemetery tourism
16:45-17:15	<i>Janine Marriott</i> Uses and users of 19 th -century cemeteries: the case for audience evaluation
17:15	CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND CLOSE

ABSTRACTS

Jakub Hrubý

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Prague's cemeteries – from the present to the year 2050

Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, evaluates the sufficiency of public amenities in their current state and in comparison with demographic projections to 2050. An update to the Prague Population and Public Amenities Forecast 2023-2050 was released in 2024, and an update for 2024-2050 is now being worked on. This project includes an assessment of the sufficiency of the funeral infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of the city. This relates in particular to the sufficiency of grave space capacity in cemeteries, the walkability and commutability of cemeteries in different parts of the city, the specific requirements of religious groups and new burial methods. For the purposes of this project, a sociological survey was also prepared with more than 1000 respondents, which is interested in the preferred way of disposing of the body of the inhabitants of Prague, interest in new burial methods or the relationship to local cemeteries in the city and the way they are used by the inhabitants. My contribution will mainly focus on the results of the project and the sociological survey, while other tools for the care of cemeteries in Prague will also be mentioned in passing.

Bel Deering

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'She always hated swimming': burial grounds in an age of floods

As climate change brings a greater frequency of extreme weather events, so cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds alike face issues ranging from coffins floating in newly dug graves to floodwaters breaking open mausolea and dispersing bodies from their previously final resting places. Newspapers seize upon such events with great sensationalism, but this paper takes a more measured and pragmatic look at the technical, financial and emotional challenges flooding can bring. Floods can be caused by a range of mechanisms including pluvial, fluvial, and groundwater sources. While each of these brings a different suite of issues, they share commonalities in the impact that they can have on burial grounds. Structural damage to the site and individual graves is one major aspect. When flood waters recede, they can reveal damage to memorials and burial ground infrastructure which presents challenges from both technical and economic perspectives. But, perhaps more significantly, flooding also has emotional and mental health repercussions for the family, friends and community of the deceased. This paper draws on conversations with cemetery managers, churchwardens and community members to explore what it means for our burial grounds to have such an uncertain future. It argues that the social and personal costs of flooding outweigh the financial impacts in many ways and presents the case for community

engagement as a fundamental strand of both flood planning and flood recovery for burial grounds.

Stuart Prior and Helen Frisby

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Not your usual burial: accommodating multicultural needs in a local authority cemetery

Drawing upon our interviews with frontline cemetery operatives and administrative staff working for an urban local authority in south-western England, here we will explore cemetery staff experiences of providing burial services for a multiethnic, multicultural population and recount some of the challenges encountered and how these are overcome. The Equality Act 2010 and internal industry standards (notably the ICCM's Charter for the Bereaved) oblige burial authorities to provide a service which recognises user needs, without unfairness or discrimination. From initial contact with newly bereaved families, through the grave selection and funeral arrangement process, digging and construction of graves according to specific requirements, 'taking a grave' on the day to backfilling and maintenance, we will showcase how frontline staff exercise both technical and emotional knowledge and skills when responding to – and attempting to balance – the wide range of religious and other cultural needs in relation to body disposal within the communities they serve. This physical and emotional labour is carried out amidst a backdrop of technical challenges governed by the need to adhere to appropriate religious and burial practices, which are set against ever-decreasing budgets and staffing resources, as well as public sensitivities around perceived 'fairness' of access to cemetery services.

Ryan Clarke

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A century of change: burial of the cholera and Spanish flu dead in East Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire 1832-1920

Cholera first appeared in Britain in 1831, originating from India, where it had spread across Europe during a time of increasing global mobility. Subsequent outbreaks of cholera occurred throughout the nineteenth century, most notably in 1848-49. The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-20 marked a culmination of a century of infectious disease and subsequent burial reform. These diseases not only claimed countless lives, but they also overwhelmed local authorities and an infant and overstretched burial industry. Somewhat out of necessity, and partly through scientific and practical advancement, the period 1832-1920 witnessed an evolution in how diseased cadavers were handled and laid to rest. This paper will explore the care and burial of diseased cadavers during this period. Reference will also be made to the introduction of new cemeteries and the campaign for municipal crematoriums, as a direct response to disease. This exploration will be conducted through the lens of two contrasting English regions: East Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. Both

regions employed different strategies to provide appropriate care of diseased cadavers, but their conundrum remained the same: a lack of suitable burial space. This problem had profound implications on both the storage of diseased cadavers and the manpower required to handle the resulting backlog. This will highlight the necessity for burial reform and society's speed of change in this crucial area. This paper will subsequently explore the care and burial of diseased cadavers in both regions with particular focus on the 1832 and 1848-49 cholera epidemics and the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-20.

Beth Timmins

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Understanding mass graves as dissonant sites of heritage

The excavations and exhumations of mass graves have proven an essential record in the ability to provide material evidence for those impacted by conflict – primarily the records which lead to the identification, location and possibility for memorialization of the deceased. This chapter consists of a representational analysis of mass graves and their meanings, integrating disciplinary perspectives from cultural heritage studies, archaeology, geography and anthropology. The term 'difficult' or 'dissonant' heritage, as pertaining to sites of disaster, death and tragedy will be explored and the argument will turn to refining these definitions as applied to the mass grave, which I argue should be understood separately as its own kind of problematical, unsettled kind of site. These sites of decay remind the individual of mortality, but when there is nothing left, or what is left is unknown, the remaining emptiness itself presents a frame of study. The absence of funerary material culture and how this shapes the political lives of dead bodies, as explored by anthropologist Katherine Verdery (2000) will be applied to the case of the mass grave. Archaeologist Yannis Hamilakis' exploration of 'spectacularised destruction' (2009, 39) and anthropologists Ida Susser and Jane Schneider's (2003) position on loss felt at a global scale will be critiqued. I argue this theory needs an application for when destruction is hidden and dispersed through the absence of material culture. Space therefore needs to be created to assess how we elide less visible and localised mass grave examples. This discussion will develop further ideas from museology, restitution and dark heritage to apply them specifically to the mass grave site.

Olga Nešporová

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Cemeteries in borderlands and regions of significant population change

Cemeteries represent a unique aspect of a country's heritage, encompassing various dimensions of cultural, historical, and social significance. More than many other forms of heritage, cemeteries often reflect what can be described as 'heritage from below'. This paper examines cemeteries in the borderlands of the Czech Republic, specifically the region

historically known as the Sudetenland. Before the Second World War, this area was predominantly inhabited by Germans, most of whom were expelled and replaced by Czech settlers after the war. These population changes led to a significant transformation of the landscape, which was further shaped under the Communist regime through policies such as collectivisation and changes to the nature of the national border. The presentation explores general trends in the transformation of cemeteries in the Sudetenland from the 1950s to the present. In addition, it includes a case study of a specific cemetery in the region. The research adopts an interdisciplinary approach, integrating anthropological fieldwork with the study of written sources and archaeological investigations. The paper situates these findings within the broader context of cultural and landscape changes and introduces the Land Gone Wild project, which combines archaeology, memory studies, and critical heritage studies.

Josie Wall

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The development of the garden cemetery; funerary landscapes and monumentality at Highgate and Père Lachaise c.1804-1914

Père Lachaise, the first garden cemetery, which opened outside Paris in 1804, was created in response to changing attitudes to death and overcrowding of Parisian burial grounds. This new form of sacred landscape became successful and was imitated in Europe and North America. Highgate Cemetery in North London opened in 1839 and was compared at the time to Père Lachaise, alongside other British cemeteries. This paper examines the landscape development of these two cemeteries up to 1914 and assesses how directly the Père Lachaise 'model' was applied at Highgate. Cemeteries help us understand the changing ways death was understood and ritualised through funerals, being spaces where these attitudes and meanings were actively negotiated. Both cemeteries were designed to accommodate visitors spending leisure time there, which also effected their form and function and allowed cemeteries and monuments to influence social practices more widely. Garden cemeteries offered new opportunities for monumentalising the dead, making gravestones open to a wider section of the public. This led to innovations in style, form and decoration. The elite explored ways of designing monuments which would maintain a differentiation between their graves and others in the cemetery. Although gravestones are erected as a focus for private grief and to aid with locating dead loved ones, monuments also present a curated identity of the deceased to the world. For those with a public profile, their monuments must also function as 'sites of memory'. This paper examines ways these monuments achieve this and their wider effect on cemetery development.

Anna Fairley
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A GIS Exploration of memorial placement and urban dynamics in 19th-century Liverpool

Until now, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and spatial analysis have been underutilised in the investigation of the development of extant historic cemeteries and their memorials. Using the main nineteenth-century cemeteries in Liverpool, UK, it is possible to explore how the material aspects of memorials affected, or were affected by, their location. The development of the cemeteries and the spatial organisation of memorials within them can reflect management style as well as personal choice, and comparing cemeteries reveals notable differences. On a wider scale, the relationship between the city and burial ground can be visualised and analysed. When considering not only the move of the burial place away from the city centre, but also the locations of the residences of the deceased, a wider picture shows the way the city and its inhabitants interacted with the cemetery.

Brian Parsons
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A 'Magnificent' crematorium? The proposed crematorium in Brompton Cemetery

Brompton Cemetery was opened in 1840 and like the other so-called 'Magnificent Seven' was owned by a private company with shareholders. Edwin Chadwick's Metropolitan Interments Act 1850 nationalised the cemetery, which continues to remain under control of the state. In 1874 the first cremation took place at Woking in Surrey under the auspices of the Cremation Society of England. Desirous of establishing a crematorium in the London area, Brompton Cemetery was suggested, but a site was found at Golders Green. In the 1940s the proposal re-emerged, but fortunately, was not progressed. A file held in the National Archive details the discussions between civil servants and the local authority concerning the construction of a crematorium in Brompton Cemetery. What is revealed is an astonishing approach to what today is a Grade I listed cemetery. This paper summarises the contents of the deliberations while commenting on the position of privately owned cemeteries in the mid-twentieth century and the progress of the cremation movement.

Jan Logemann
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The visibility of the dead: transatlantic differences in funerary marketing and business practices during the 20th century

The commercial deathcare industry, which emerged on both sides of the Atlantic in the decades around 1900, faced reputational challenges and public criticism since its inception. In many ways, funerals were a 'taboo market' and industry professionals soon saw the need to develop strategies to 'legitimize' their businesses. This paper analyses comparatively the marketing and publicity efforts by German and U.S.-American funeral firms throughout the twentieth century. While they faced many similar challenges (e.g. critiques of immoral profiteering, market collusion, manipulative business practices), they developed strikingly different responses. The German funeral profession increasingly promoted understated funerals and limited the visibility both of so-called 'Funeral Institutes' and of the dead themselves. Advertising for deathcare services, too, became almost minimalist by the 1950s. American 'Funeral Homes' by contrast, advertised prominently in their communities and made the 'viewing' for the deceased, frequently in a lavishly adorned settings, a cornerstone of their business model. To understand such differences, the paper delves into the trade literature and business records from both countries, but also into their respective public debates surrounding the morality of markets in deathcare.

Brent Elliott

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Tales from the Vienna cemeteries

Vienna may have been the earliest European city to end churchyard burials and establish extra-mural cemeteries, seven of which were opened in 1740. Vienna may be said to have served as a testing ground for other innovations in cemetery management; in the 1780s the Emperor Joseph II instituted a programme of reform, transferring control of burial from the church to the state, and opening a new hygienic cemetery, St Mark's, designed to be free from superstition and the cult of the dead. In the 1870s the mayor of Vienna, Cajetan Felder, created what was then Europe's largest municipal cemetery, and to increase its prestige and popularity, undertook a programme of exhumation of famous Viennese from other cemeteries and their reburial in the new Central Cemetery - possibly the first cemetery to be planned from the beginning for cemetery tourism.

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Factors restricting the promotion and sustainable development of Chinese cemetery tourism

As a form of tourism that gradually emerged at the beginning of this century, cemetery tourism was first accepted by the general public in China in the form of visiting the imperial tombs, which is a special form of cemetery tourism. Since the 1980s, with the development of Chinese archaeology, many archaeological sites have been excavated and converted into museums, which still attract a large number of tourists. Meanwhile, as an important base

for patriotic education, Martyrs' Cemeteries have also been included by primary and secondary schools across the country as destinations for tomb-sweeping activities on Qingming and Chung Yeung Festivals. However, compared with the model of cemetery tourism around the world, especially in Europe, this model has not been widely promoted in China. The reasons for this are not only related to the taboo on death in traditional Chinese culture, but also to the transformation of urban cemetery planning since the 1950s, the cremation system implemented in the 1960s, and the cemetery management regulations implemented in the 1990s. In the process of urbanisation, many clan cemeteries have been relocated to city cemeteries, creating a new landscape. This new form of cemetery construction, which emphasises standardisation, has hindered people's willingness to enter the cemetery in many ways, which seems to be one of the factors restricting the large-scale development of cemetery tourism in China in the future. In order to remove the colour of folk beliefs from the cemetery, commercial operating cemeteries are adopting a variety of improvement design plans to increase the possibility of developing tourism.

Janine Marriott

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Uses and users of 19th-century cemeteries: the case for audience evaluation

Historic cemeteries are multi-use sites with many different audiences engaging with them in a multitude of ways and there has been some work exploring who these audiences might be. A number of cemeteries in the UK now have champions or support network: a Friends-of group, a Trust, a volunteer network, or someone within the owning local authority who work hard to promote the site. However, what is less clear whether these champions are aware of who is engaging at a site level and why. I use mixed site heuristic research to explore what kind of analysis is undertaken by these cemeteries to understand the outcomes of activities and installations undertaken on site, and to what extent audience understanding is used to inform new site interpretation, event offers, infrastructure, and site management or to understand the impact of work previously undertaken. This research suggests that most historic cemeteries are not currently engaging with audience development and heritage marketing practices that are more standard in other types of public spaces and explores why this might be. The research also looks at whether understanding audiences' characteristics, needs and expectations is necessary for 19th-century cemeteries, as the nature and use of these burial grounds is very different to other parks, gardens or heritage spaces. It also suggests which tools and techniques might be taken from the heritage sector that could be used to understand audiences and to ensure that the sites are offering what is needed and understanding what could be offered.