

## **ON REFLECTION**

**Report on the talk and slide show presented by Dave Napier one of the Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery.**

### **WELCOME TO ARNOS VALE CEMETERY.**

At the meeting held at the Settlement, Ducie Road on 15<sup>th</sup>. April 2009 we were lucky enough to have as our guest speaker Dave Napier, one of the 'Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery'. Friends of Arnos Vale campaign to secure a safe future for the cemetery by fund raising, carrying out grounds maintenance and organising heritage tours and nature tours

He began by explaining that Arnos Vale is undergoing a big conservation and restoration project at the moment and all the buildings will eventually be restored and re-used.

The first half of the talk he gave us an insight into the layout and the history of this forty five acre site. He told us that the cemetery was set up when inner city churchyards became overcrowded. The Cemetery was established in 1837, Charles Underwood was the architect who designed and laid it out and the cemetery has taken over more land since its beginning.

In the late 1980s the cemetery was practically 'full' and was beginning to become very overgrown. 'Friends of Arnos Vale Cemetery' came together to protest when the owner wanted to develop a large section of the land commercially. In April 2001 the Bristol City Council made a compulsory purchase order and the ownership of the cemetery passed to The City Council.

He told us there are many listed buildings, memorials and graves on the land that are now getting specialist treatment as part of the restoration programme.



The second half of the talk he took us on a visual walk with slides through one of the paths of the cemetery telling us about the individual graves and the history of the families to whom they belong, very interesting for the family historians amongst our group. he also explained the meaning of the symbolisms on various graves.

By the end of his talk everyone was as enthusiastic as he obviously is about Arnos Vale Cemetery and the need to maintain the area for Bristolians who have a special interest in the site and for future generations.

If you wish to know more about this interesting and historic site go. To [www.arnosvalefriends.org.uk](http://www.arnosvalefriends.org.uk)