
The opening

"Grangetown Gardens" was designed by William Pettigrew, the Scottish head gardener to Cardiff Corporation and municipal engineer William Harpur.

It was opened on June 19th 1895 by councillor Joseph Ramsdale, the deputy chairman of the parks committee.



The original bandstand as it looked and the park-keeper's hut can be seen in this photo

"A very large number of the inhabitants of Grangetown" gathered for the ceremony and the mayor proposed a toast to Lord Bute and Lord Windsor.

Mr D A Burn's Roath brass band entertained with a selection of tunes. There was also a celebratory dinner later.



Out of the pubs, onto the green

The bowling green dates from June 1906 and was opened by Councillor Dixon who spoke of his pleasure to see the ancient game alienate young men from public houses.

The green was "admirable for its smoothness" and opened on the same day as tennis courts.

It was resurfaced in 1910.

A timber shelter was built in 1913, a ladies shelter and urinals added before being dismantled.

The bowling club building on the right housed the air raid warden during World War II.

A more modern pavilion was built in 1964 but sadly the club folded in 2013 due to council cutbacks and the difficulty of raising the money to maintain it.

There are plans to bring the building back into community use with the help of local residents.

Who knows, the green may re-open one day?

120 years of Grange Gardens

By 1891, the suburb of Grangetown was growing rapidly but there was still no open space for the residents to enjoy.



Cardiff's parks committee approached the two main local landowners, Lord Plymouth and the Marquis of Bute. After negotiations, they agreed to donate three acres of land—mostly belonging to the Bute estate.

There was some initial concern that waste would be used to help level the site but eventually work started. The laying out of the park cost £2,374 and a bandstand was constructed in February 1895 - the first in Cardiff at the time - for the additional cost of £100.



The bowling green opening, 1906

Other garden features

A cast iron **drinking fountain** was presented in 1909 by Mr I Samuel (*below*). It was one of several in memory of his parents and brother, Louis Samuel MP in 1909. A replica was installed in 2000.

The **swings** in the children's playground were not added until the 1960s.

The **bandstand and railings** were removed during the war for their metal. The existing bandstand wasn't replaced until 2000 when it was restored at a cost of £325,000.



The war memorial



The war memorial was added in 1921 at a cost of £1,000, paid for by subscriptions.

It contains more than 330 names of men from the Army, Navy and Merchant Navy who died in World War I.

More details on its history and those remembered:

www.grangetownwar.co.uk

Heritage status

The gardens joined Cadw's register of parks of historic interest in Wales in September 2013.

It was included because it represents a "*well-preserved Victorian urban public park that retains much of its original layout*" and became the first of Cardiff's parks to include a bandstand and public tennis courts.

Shelter oddity



Just outside the park on Corporation Road is a wooden shelter, near the bus stop, which could date from Victorian times and is a listed structure. It was refurbished in 2014.

Further information

Grangetown Local History Society

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