

Landican Cemetery

Wirral Parks, Coast and Countryside

Landican Cemetery

Landican Cemetery opened 22nd October 1934 and has approximately 3200 cremations and 400 full burials a year. The Cemetery is 29.63 hectares. In 2019 we have had over 60,000 burials and had over 193,000 cremations.

The Landican area is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1085 as Landechene (Church made of Oak (wood)) and as having a few houses and farm buildings and as Landican had no Chapel it is thought that this title refers to the church made of wood giving the name to the nearby area Woodchurch. In 1836-51 the area where Landican now stands was all tithe farms owned by John Wilson Patten MP, and tended by Mary Broster and Frederick John Williams. The fields and meadows, crofts, fields of clover, bee hives and cereal crops like oats were very productive due to good soil. Landican has 125 Commonwealth war graves as well as a number of interesting trees and ornamental shrubs. However its claim to natural history fame is its '*Mad March Hares*', which can be seen from March 1st as they pursue mates around the cemetery. Over the years, Landican has hosted too many ceremonies to name but a couple bear specific mention.



A Bridge too Far!

Brigadier Sir. Philip John Denton Toosey CBE, DSO, TD, JP was a war hero and prisoner of war in Tha Maa Khan Camp (Tamarkan) in Japan. The exploits of prisoners of war used to work on the 'Death Railway' were fictionalized and some feel misrepresented by Author Pierre Boulle with his book 'Bridge over the River Kwai'. Unlike his fictional counterpart (Col. Nicholson) Lt Col. Toosey was not a Japanese collaborator and worked courageously (and was often seriously beaten) to ensure as many of the 2000 similarly treated allied prisoners of war survived. Together they delayed the building of the bridge over the Khwae Yai.

Toosey encouraged obstruction of the Bridge, including the collection of huge numbers of termites to attack the bridges wooden structure and deliberately sabotaging the mixing of concrete to create weaknesses. When he was eventually liberated, and despite being in a very weakened state weighing just 47kg, he insisted on travelling into the jungle (300 miles) to ensure his men were successfully liberated, a true hero. The 'death railway' saw 12,000 Prisoners of War and 100,000 conscripted Japanese laborers lose their lives.



Dixie Dean

In March 1980 Landican Cemetery was proud to host the ceremony for William Ralph Dean, better known locally as Dixie Dean who played initially for Tranmere and then moved to Everton where he was particularly known for using his head.... to score. In the 1927 - 28 season Dixie scored 60 goals!! He sadly passed away at Goodison Park the place he loved.

European Brown Hares

Landican is famous for its hares and has appeared on numerous TV programmes like Countryfile and the One Show and has been visited by many naturalists throughout the years, in order to see these spectacular creatures in action. Unfortunately, Hare populations have declined by over 80% since the 1900, and are now a rarely seen spectacle in England's Fields and Cemeteries.

Hares belong to a group (Genus) called *Lepus* and whilst they belong to the same family as rabbits, they differ in a few significant ways. The hare's ears and hind legs are longer and they are very fast runners, and less obviously their young are able to look after themselves very quickly after birth. Hares are normally nocturnal, but from March 1st the drive for a mate causes these usually shy creatures to brave the daylight and are seen running around madly and boxing and fighting. These crazy looking 'unreceptive females' seemingly box over amorous males, who take quite a bit of dissuasion. The behaviour of the punch drunk males has given rise to the saying '*hare brained*' and an insane or crazy person is often described as being as '*mad as a march hare*'. The first written use of the phrase was in 1529. Adding to the apparent lunacy of the hare is the fact that for the rest of the year they are not really that social mostly living alone or in pairs and almost never seen during the day.

The March hare was a symbol of fertility throughout the medieval Europe, and is the basis for the Easter Bunny, although popular in Britain the belief came from Germany where it was recorded as far back as the 16th century. The belief was transferred to the Americas by European settlers, which is thought to then have been brought to the UK.

