

From *The Bath Chronicle and Herald* of Sat 13 Jun 1925 p16:



When the proposal was originally made for converting closed burial grounds into open spaces for recreative purposes, it gave rise to considerable controversy, many letters appearing in our columns disapproving of the scheme on sentimental grounds. The burial grounds in question are those of Walcot and St. Michael's, and such transformation has been effected in their appearance since they were made over the Corporation for development—the former a playground for children, and the latter as a rest place for those of maturer years—that probably those who were formerly the strongest opponents of their conversion can now, with the scheme completed, see little object to.

At Walcot the whole of the gravestones have been collected and, placed in rows near the old chapel, the whole being railed off to form a separate enclosure. This clearance of the ground leaves about an acre and half of open space all in grass, commencing at the bottom of George's Place and sloping down to the Avon. The area adjoining the river—about one-half of the whole—is practically level, and it is going to be a splendid place for "young Walcot" to amuse itself in.

St. Michael's open space is not nearly so large, and has a much more sedate appearance, but when the seating accommodation which has been decided upon is installed, it is likely to serve admirably those who desire quiet place to read or rest.

They are two valuable additions to Bath's open spaces, and the Parks Committee of the City Council are to be congratulated upon the excellent results of their conversions of the useless to the useful.

AT THE OPENING.

By the invitation Alderman Percy (Chairman of the Parks Committee) there was a fairly large gathering at the formal opening of the grounds on Friday last week, the first visited being the Walcot old burial place. Ald. Jackman was accompanied by Mrs. Jackman and Miss Jackman, and those accepting the Chairman's invitation included the Mayor (Ald. Cedric Chivers) and the Mayoress (Madame Sarah Grand).

In addition to those invited, there was a large assembly the uninvited—the children of Walcot—whose very keen interest in the opening of the ground demonstrated their appreciation of what was being provided for them. The young folk almost choked the main entrance, and many more lined the wall of the houses backing on to the ground. Veteran cricket bats others roughly hewn out of a board, together with stumps of like rough and ready character, were carried by a number of the boys, who had thus come prepared make use of their new playground at the earliest opportunity. They were not kept waiting long, for within a quarter of an hour the Mayoress threw open the iron gates, a crowd of boys and girls swept through on the run, the boys on the wall dropped from it to the grass, and there was a rush to the lower part of the ground where they deployed all directions. The measuring out of cricket pitches was quick work, and Walcot juveniles were quickly themselves in the brilliant sunshine.

The opening of the St. Michael's ground followed immediately afterwards.

Here Alderman Jackman pointed out that, whereas the Walcot ground was a playing place for the kiddies, this was to be an old people's rest, and when the seats were put in they would be able to come there from the centre of the city. He was certain it would be much appreciated.

The Mayoress declared the ground open.

The company then proceeded to the chalet in Victoria Park, where they were the guests of Alderman and Mrs. Jackman at tea, and before the tables were left they were cordially thanked for their hospitality at the instance of the ex-Mayor (Councillor Hacker) seconded by Councillor Smith.