

Friends of the Down Cemetery

Issue No. 8 - Spring 2020

National Federation of
CEMETERY FRIENDS

www.fotdc.org

Chairman's Ramblings



On the 23rd January 2017, we hosted our first public meeting to start the Friends of the Down Cemetery, although we had been negotiating with Wiltshire Council for some time before this, I classify this as our Birthday so: **Happy 3rd Birthday to FOTDC.**

It seems that we have carried out an awful lot in this short time, with grave clearing, historical research and wildlife activities. I think one of the highlights was the commemoration of the end of the First World War, which over 60 people enjoyed.

Over the last twelve months we have set up our computer data base, and so far, have entered every plot in the cemetery, transcribed and entered nearly half of the non-conformist graves and started digitising the burial records.

We have also expanded the insect pollination meadow to twice its original size and installed a large flower planter outside the non-conformist chapel. It was awash with colour over the summer and has now been planted with over 100 spring bulbs, so should look great again this spring.

Over the summer, a large group of you have been busy clearing the front area of the conformist area of the cemetery, making a great difference. We then moved over to the non-conformist area removing sapling trees and clearing graves of Brambles and Ivy.

I think that we are starting to see improvements in the overall look of the cemetery.

Enough of the past, lets look to the future, we have some exciting projects lined up for this year. With Wiltshire council's permission, we will be looking to increase our

pollinators meadow to its full size. We will be using a turf cutter to remove most of the grass in this larger area. We also plan to have a path cut through this area so that you can stroll through the

meadow. We are also looking at suitable edging to border the meadow, this may be a suitable low hedge.

As there is a worldwide push to plant more trees, we will be looking at gaining permission from Wiltshire Council to plant some new trees in the cemetery. We have found a suitable area which has no burials in, and with permission would look to plant a variety of Fruit trees. These have been chosen as they remain relatively small, provide pollen for insects and fruit for wildlife.

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Trowbridge
Garden Centre



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Chairman's Ramblings (continued)



Last year we installed a large planter outside the non-conformist chapel and filled it with shop brought bedding plants. These we brought from a local garden centre. This had a large cost to our group (although it did look great). This year I would like to try something new. I propose that we seek volunteers to grow bedding plants from seeds for us.

The idea would be that FOTDC would provide the soil, seed trays, pots and seeds. Any volunteer that had a spare window-sill or green house would then grow the seeds, prick out to large pots, then after the last frost we would plant up these young plants. If this trial is a success, we would look to do this most years and even expand the project by adding more planters. If you are interested and have your own favourite, we will

be more than happy to provide you with these seeds.

We will be also looking to complete the transcription of the non-conformist graves, so that we have completed one side of the cemetery. This work is essential before any more of the stones deteriorate. This work has already proved invaluable with people contact us from around the world wanting information on there relatives final resting place, which we have been able to provide them. We have also been donated another laptop, so this will mean that anybody who would like to assist me in digitising burial records, will be more

than welcome top come to the history centre and help. This will be a long process, so any help will be appreciated.

And if this is not enough, we are looking into the restoration of two war graves that predate the first world war. (see we few, we happy few, we band of Brother).

And of course, the most important task of all, clearing areas of the cemetery and graves so that once again this once neglected area can be somewhere that the town can be proud of.

If you have any suggestions or would like to help with any of these projects (even just monitor the bird or wildlife population) please get in touch. Even if you can only space 20 minutes this would help. Please contact me at Robertw@fotdc.org



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Robert

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers...

On 19th July 1909 there was a large and deadly explosion at Trowbridge Barracks

Two Gunners Sidney Harrild (age 19) and Richard Murray (age 26) where removing primers from shells, it is also believed that powder was also being removed. The powder in seven of



the cartridges exploded. This explosion killed the two gunners and left Gunner Wells seriously injured.

Wiltshire Times reported:

“ with full military honours , the remains of Gunners Murray and Harrild were laid to rest on Tuesday afternoon, the awfulness of the tragedy and the

solemn progress through the street of the soldiers with their dead comrades combining to make this occasion one that will not be forgotten”

As can be have seen from the pictures, people lined the streets as the procession passed by and it is reported that hundreds of local people formed a square around the grave behind the military personnel.

Photos can be seen online at Trowbridge Postcards and Ephemera: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjGe34kX>



The Committee

Chairman	Robert Wall	Robertw@fotdc.org	01225 777266
Vice Chairman	Lynn Drewett		
Treasurer	Dom McDonald		
Membership	Robert Colebourne	Robertc@fotdc.org	
Secretary	Jenny Wall	jenny_wall63@hotmail.com	

Nature Corner

Wood Pigeon

(Columba Palumbus)

Description

The wood Pigeon has a white patch on the outer wing coverts, very conspicuous in flight, and white patched either side of its neck. Head, neck, lower back, rump are bluish grey with purple and green reflections on the nape of its neck. Under parts purplish on breast, bluish grey on flanks and belly. They are approximately 40cm long with a wingspan of 75cm, and weight 480g. Their life span is up to 10 years.



Distribution

The Wood Pigeon is a permanent resident of the British Isles and widely distributed, wherever there are trees and can be also found around farmland, town parks and gardens.

Nesting

Normal site for a nest is a tree, hedge and sometimes Ivy. In towns where it is semi-domesticated it will nest on houses or ledges. The nest is a flimsy affair composed of thin twigs. The eggs are a glossy white and usually laid in pairs and can be laid at any time of the year, but usually later than the end of March. There can be two broods per year with incubation being 17-18 days and is shared by both sexes.



Food

Eats buds, leaves, berries and fruit. Takes food from the ground as well as bird tables. In farm area will eat grain, but is quite adapt at eating most things.

Fun Fact

The reason you do not see baby pigeons is that juvenile pigeons are identical to their parents

Nature Corner

Ladybird (Coccinellidae)

Ladybirds are familiar garden beetles, with over 40 species, with many being predatory, feeding on Aphids and other insects.

Harlequin Ladybird – *Harmonia Axyridis*

A non-native species, but now the most common. 8/10cm long and come in a variety of colours and markings. The two most common are black with two red spots or orange with 18 black spots. Larvae reach 10mm and have two orange stripes and are spikey.



Two spot Ladybird – *Adalia 2-punctata*

Adults are 4-5mm and vary in colour. Common colours are red with two black spots or black with two red spots. The larva is dark grey with orange markings.

Seven spot Ladybird – *Coccinella 7-punctata*

Adults are 5-8mm and are almost always red with seven black spots. The larva is grey with four pairs of orange markings.



Eyed Ladybird – *Anatis Ocellata*

The largest reaching 8.5mm, usually red with 14 black spots, which are often circled in yellow. The larva is grey and spiky with orange markings

Cream spot Ladybird – *Calvia 14-Guttata*

A brown ladybird with 14 cream spots. 4-5mm with the larva being grey with two pale markings



Orange Ladybird – *Halyzia 16-Guttata*

An orange ladybird with 12 to 16 white spots, about 6mm. Larvae are yellow/cream with black spots

Twenty-two spot Ladybird – *Psyllobora 22-Punctata*

A 3-4mm long yellow ladybird with 20 to 22 spots. Larvae are yellow with black markings

Fourteen spot Ladybird – *Propylea 14-Punctata*

A 3-5mm yellow ladybird with a pattern of 4 to 14 black markings. The larvae are grey with white markings.



Most Ladybirds adults overwinter in sheltered places often in large groups. In spring the adults emerge and disperse, mate and lay eggs. Predatory species lay eggs on plants infested with aphids, those that feed on mildew, chose theses infested plants. Many species can have several generations during the summer.

An invitation to become a friend of The Down Cemetery

The Down Cemetery is a grade II listed Victorian cemetery, opened on the 13th December 1855.

The Friends' aim is to assist the council in keeping the cemetery as something that the town can be proud of. Our mission will be to clear overgrown graves, transcribe headstones (before inscriptions are lost to erosion), photograph all headstones, plot graves and make this information available to the public.

We will be looking at ways to conserve and repair graves and mausoleums with our partners, James Long.

Nature conservation is also a large part of our aims, including bird feeding and nest sites, bat boxes, hedgehog boxes, wildflower meadow and anything that we can do to enhance the cemetery as a wildlife haven.

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Tel. No.

Email

Your details will only be used by FOTDC

Individual membership costs £2.00 per year (year runs January to December).

Corporate membership is £6.00 per year.

Please return the completed form to:

Robert Colebourne. 31 Innox Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9AT

**This newsletter has been produced by the Friends of The Down Cemetery.
We would welcome contributions for future newsletters.**

JAMES LONG  (MASON'S) LTD

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QUALITY HEADSTONES, MEMORIALS & GRAVESTONES

Cemetery Activities



Top and right

Clearing a grave - Before and after.



Below

Transcribing a headstone. Many of the graves have frost damage making the engraving difficult to decipher. Which is why this work is so important



Diary for Spring and Summer 2020

Date	Activity
Thursday 12th March	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Saturday 28th March	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Thursday 9th April	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Saturday 25th April	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Thursday 11th April	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Saturday 25th April	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Thursday 14th May	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Wednesday 20th May	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Thursday 21st May	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Saturday 23rd May	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Thursday 11th June	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Wednesday 17th June	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Thursday 18th June	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Saturday 27th June	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Thursday 9th July	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Wednesday 15th July	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Thursday 16th July	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Saturday 25th July	Working Party 10am - 12 noon
Wednesday 19th August	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Thursday 20th August	Grave Transcription 10am - 3pm
Saturday 12th September	Heritage Open Day 10am - 3pm
Bat Walk	To be confirmed

We meet at the Non-Conformist Chapel. If you are only available to make part of the morning, we still look forward to meeting you.

How can you help?

We are always looking for more volunteers to help with the following:

Cemetery Gardening, Gravestone Transcription, History Centre Research, Computer Processing, Nature Conservation, Grant Applications and Fundraising.

If you know of anyone who may be able to help, please ask them to join.

If we all found one other member, it would move the project on, so that we could accomplish this year's goals.