



National Federation of
CEMETERY FRIENDS

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Chairman's Ramblings

Well, this has been an unusual year, where we started in lockdown, moved to socially distanced working groups, and then were allowed more freedom. Now as I write this, just before Christmas, it looks as though we will be heading to stricter regulations again.

But on a much happier note, whilst we were allowed to work at the Cemetery we managed to do more than 733 working hours (compared to 126 for 2020), so congratulations to all of you that helped in keeping this project alive. I would like to also thank the dedicated people that work behind the scenes to keep this group working smoothly. Also to Sally and Linda for their tireless effort to keep the raised flower planter near the consecrated chapel front door looking wonderful all summer long.

Over the last 12 months, we have completed a wide variety of tasks. We managed to complete the transcribing of the headstones on the consecrated side of the cemetery which means that, as soon as I have added these to the database, we will have a complete record of the inscriptions on the headstones in the old section of the cemetery. A big thank you to all that took part in this. On the subject of the database, I have now completed the transcribing of all of the burials on the un-consecrated side of the cemetery, which shows that we are a few short of 8500 burials in the non-conformist side, which range from 1865 to 1984, when the last public record is available. I am talking with Wiltshire Council to give us access to the record right up to the present day, which will complete this task. So over the next twelve months we will be looking to take photographs of these graves and add them to the database.

At the start of the year, we increased the size of the pollination corridor to twice its original size, and have placed a variety of plants in this area. Thank you to Lynn for her tireless work on this area.

A major task over the summer months was the sanding down and painting of the front gates and railings. When I first thought of this idea it seemed a simple task, little did I know how long it would take and how much paint. Thank you, Paul and Helen, for all the extra days that you helped me with this task. I am sure that you all agree that it was well worth it and it now looks wonderful. I would at this point like to thank George and Patricia for their large financial contribution towards this project.

Continued overleaf

We received two grants this year. One from Wiltshire Council, which has brought us new bird feeding poles, bird feeders and new nest boxes. The second grant from Trowbridge Town Council will go towards purchasing a new heavy duty battery-operated strimmer. This will assist in keeping the weeds down in some of the graves. Thanks to men's shed, we now have a large new notice board at the entrance to the cemetery. All working party dates and activities will be listed, so make sure you keep an eye on this board.

A new project for this year was the laying of poppy crosses on all of the graves of those buried or remembered on graves, of the men and women that paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of this great nation. This has led to a side project of research of all the fallen. We now have over 160 graves and I am creating a file to remember them by. (This is now 3 files). We were joined in the laying of crosses by members of the Royal British Legion and the Mayor of Trowbridge. I hope that this becomes an annual event.

Over the summer we held two guided tours of the cemetery, which were well attended.

In addition to all these activities we managed to clear large sections of the cemetery of unwanted vegetation.

Now, as we look forward to a new year, we will be looking to continue all these tasks and more.

We will be looking to continue the work on the pollination corridor, creating a wildlife haven in the middle of the cemetery; also we will be planting a small orchard near Sir Roger Brown's mausoleum. We need to install our new (squirrel & woodpecker proof) bird boxes and monitor their usage.

We have been given permission to trial some ideas for row markers, which will greatly assist in finding specific graves.

We also need to come up with a solution to lifting and turning (safely) over, the large headstones, so that we can add their inscriptions to our database, as well as being able to place headstones on their correct graves, and tidy those that have fallen apart. So, any suggestions, please let me know.

As we have been congratulated on a brilliant job on painting the front gates, side gate and railing, we will be completing the task by doing the same with the exit gates and railing.

We intend to host 3 tours over the summer, WW1, WW2 and pre and post the world wars; these will all be repeated twice to give people a chance to attend. We have also been asked to do a few private tours.

We hope (restrictions allowing) to do some tours with guest speakers (bat watch and wildlife) so watch this space. All tours will be offered to members first.

If this was not enough, we will continue to clear the cemetery of unwanted vegetation, so now, more than ever, we need your support. So, spread the news that we are making a difference and are always looking for new members to help with a variety of tasks.

So a **BIG Thanks** to all you wonderful volunteers and see you in 2022.

Robert



Missing—have you seen these doors?



Laying poppy crosses on the graves of the fallen



New Bird Feeding Station



Before
and After
Grave Clearing



Specialist Monumental Mason based in the Market Town of Devizes Wiltshire

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Email: danbod1981@gmail.com

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Nature's Corner

Common Pipistrelle

Pipistrellus Pipistrellus

Description

Length 3.5cm long with a wing span of 20cm, weighing 3.8grams. The common Pipistrelle has dark, golden-brown fur, a slightly paler underside and a darker mask around the face. Its flight is rapid, with lots of twist and turns.



Feeding and Roosting

These nocturnal mammals feed on midges, moths and other flying insects. They find these in the dark by using echolocation. They roost in tree holes, bat boxes, even roof spaces in houses, often in small colonies. They are common in woodland, farmland, but also commonly found in towns.

Breeding

During the summer, females form maternity colonies. The males attract females by creating courtship territories approximately 200 meters in diameter; these territories are maintained from mid-July through to the end of October. Mating occurs during the autumn while fertilisation does not occur until after hibernation, due the female being able to store sperm. Females fall pregnant in May and June. Females nurse their pups through July and usually are weaned by August.



Baby Pipistrelle

Females reach maturity in about one year.

Extra facts

The common pipistrelle is so small it weighs less than a 2p coin. Despite its small size it can easily eat 3,000 insects per night.

In 1999 the common pipistrelle was split into two different species on the basis of the different frequency of their calls. The Common Pipistrelle uses a call of 45kHz, while the Soprano Pipistrelle echolocates at 55 kHz.

On a warm still summers night you can watch these wonderful mammals at the cemetery. We also have our own heterodyne bat detector which converts bat calls to a sound which we can hear.

Nature's Corner

Jay

Garrulus Glandarius

Description

A large bird with an approximate length of 14 inches, with a wingspan of 20 inches and weighing around 5-7oz. Distinguished by its reddish-fawn back, conspicuous white rump and alternating black, white and blue wings. Underparts are pale brownish buff. The crest is whitish, striped with black with pale blue iris. They can live up to approximately 5 years.



Distribution

A woodland bird that also enters into parks and large gardens. It can be watched feeding on the ground under trees. It can also be found collecting acorns. The jay can carry several acorns in a pouch under its throat, plus in its bill, and like squirrels buries hundreds each year for consumption in the winter and spring. Jays sometimes can be seen deliberately placing ants on the feathers, behaviour known as anting. The purpose is unclear but may be to rid themselves of parasites.

Nesting

The jay has a bulky nest of sticks low down in thick brush. They lay 4 to 5 eggs around April-June. The eggs are between 0.7 and 0.9 of an inch and bluish or light brown with brownish spots. Incubation is around 18 days.



Feeding

The jay will eat most things from caterpillars to small rodents, chiefly insects in the summer with some eggs and chicks from smaller birds. They will eat acorns in the autumn and winter.

Extra fact

Although found throughout Europe, jays have become scarcer in the United Kingdom. Currently, we are lucky enough to have a pair visiting the cemetery.



A guided tour
of the cemetery



Receiving the grant
from the Mayor of Trowbridge



The new Notice Board
courtesy of Men's Shed



The newly painted railings

A Warm 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.

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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
robertc@fotdc.org

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

Diary for Spring and Summer 2022

| | | |
|---|------------|----------|
| Saturday 22 nd January 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Thursday 10 th February 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Saturday 26 th February 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Thursday 10 th March 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Saturday 26 th March 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Thursday 14 th April 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Saturday 23 rd April 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Thursday 12 th May 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Saturday 28 th May 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Thursday 9 th June 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |
| Saturday 25 th June 2022 | 10am -12pm | Cemetery |

We meet at the Non-Conformist chapel (which is the chapel on the left as you enter the cemetery) The session run from 10am until 12pm. We have a variety of tasks that need doing on these mornings from gardening, bird feeding, wildlife studies and general tidying. If you are only able to make part of the morning, we still look forward to meeting you.

The Committee

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--|--------------|
| Chairman | Robert Wall | chairfotdc@gmail.com | 01225 777266 |
| Vice Chairman | Lynn Drewett | | |
| Treasurer | Dom McDonald | | |
| Membership | Robert Colebourne | Robertc@fotdc.org | |
| Secretary | Jenny Wall | jenny_wall63@hotmail.com | |
| Committee | Paul Dickenson | | |
| Committee | Mark Rhodes | | |

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.