



National Federation of
CEMETERY FRIENDS

www.fotdc.org

Chairman's Ramblings



Welcome to all members old and new, I write this newsletter as the spring bulbs start to show and the snowdrops blossom.

Firstly, I must apologise for the 50% increase in membership costs, although this is a steep rise in cost, I hope that you agree £3.00 is not too much to ask.

Over the next few pages, I will give a brief overview of the Annual General Meeting which was held on the 23rd January at Paxcroft Mead, which outlines the work that we completed in 2022 and look forward to the tasks we are looking to complete in 2023.

As part of ongoing projects for the cemetery we are looking for volunteers to assist with wildlife studies. We as a group currently own a day/night wildlife camera, bat detector, binoculars and humane moth trap. If anybody is interested in assisting or knows of anybody that may be interested in wildlife surveys to include all aspects of flora or fauna. If you have a passion for birds, insects, or any wildlife please contact me.

I have been very lax in the production of newsletters in the last couple of years and would like to get back to four per year. If anyone would like to help by writing an article, which could be about your family history (as long as they are buried in the cemetery), cemetery architecture or any wildlife articles that you may wish to contribute, please don't hesitate to contact me.

We are now doing well selling bird food to raise funds for projects, so please take advantage of this quality product at reasonable prices. Do not compare what we sell to cheaper inferior brands that are available. We also always strive to cut back on wasteful packaging, by buying and providing everything in recyclable packaging. Remember it pays to be a member for great savings so please spread the word to family, friends and neighbours.

Renewals of membership are now due, so please bring them along to the next working party, or pay direct into our bank (email chairfotdc@gmail.com for details) or drop them to either me or Robert Colebourne.

Membership of the group is strong, but we are still in search of new members, to either assist with ongoing work or just to show support for the cemetery. Membership dues help with much needed funds.

Continued overleaf

Just think if we all found just one new member each not only would we double our membership, but we would have raised enough money to buy a second strimmer. So spread the word, ask a friend, or neighbour as all are welcome and remember small amounts of gardening outside have been proven to be good for your physical and mental health.

Robert

Annual General Meeting Report - 23rd January 2023

This year again the AGM was well attended - it must be the draw of free tea and biscuits.

The report that was given for those that could not attend was as follows:

In 2022 the total hours worked at the cemetery was 617.5 plus 100's more in research. The previous year was 712.5 this decrease was due to in 2021 we managed to complete the transcribing of all the headstones.

Membership continues to rise, 2020 had 54, 2021 had 75 and 2022 had 82 members and 5 corporate members.



A big thank you to Sally and Linda for their hard work with the planters beside the chapel, especially considering the hot weather.



We borrowed this Weed Wacker machine from Trowbridge Town Council which allowed us to clear the path edges around the cemetery of the ever spreading weeds and grass. In some areas, as much as six inches of the paths were cleared back.



Our group makes such a difference. This can be seen by the before and after pictures above.

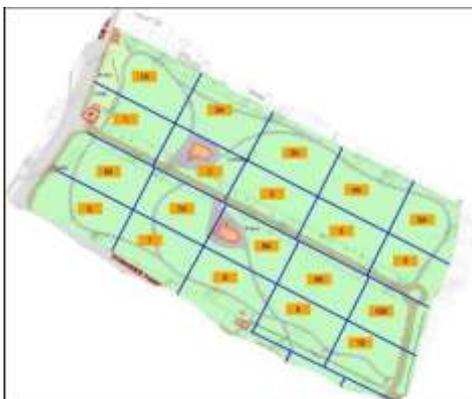
In 2022 we completed painting the cemetery exit gates. Now the front side and back are completed.



We trialled painting grave row makers on the curbs of the paths in order to make it easier to identify a particular grave. This approach seems to work, with the marking surviving the winter weather, so we will be expanding this project over the coming year.

Looking Forward to 2023

Several of the headstones and curbs are in need of moving to their correct positions, tidying or turning over. With this lifting rig which was purchased with a grant from Trowbridge town council, we should be able to start this process.



A new idea for this year will be to try and tackle the ever-growing problem of weeds, brambles, and sapling trees in graves. We will use the map shown to only work on a section at a time until completed. We will be looking to work as a team with a group moving forward cutting saplings, then followed by a group strimming then followed behind by a group gathering the cut down vegetation and taking it to the curb side. We will also cut down overhanging branches and trim bases of trees.

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Nature's Corner

Green Woodpecker *Picus Viridis*

Description

Recognised by the bright green upper parts, rich crimson crown to middle nape, greyish green under parts, black patch on either side of head, yellow rump, and black tail with greenish bars. Adults grow to a length of around 30cm with a 40cm wingspan. Weigh around 180g with a lifespan of between 5 to 10 years.



Distribution

The green woodpecker is a widespread resident but is not found in Ireland and the very north of Scotland. It lives all year round in or around broadleaved mixed woodland and heath like places with bushes and clumps of trees. It regularly feeds on large lawns and other open grassy areas.



Nesting

It bores a hole into a tree trunk with the hole descending about a foot below the entrance, to an enlarged and rounded bottom. No nesting material is used. They usually lay 5-6 eggs between May and June. Incubation takes 18-19 days and is shared by both sexes. They only have one brood per year.



Young woodpecker

Food

Eats ants, ant eggs, larvae, millipedes, beetles and occasionally worms, using its long sticky tongue to probe nests.

Nature's Corner

Common Earwig *Forficula Auricularia*

There are over 2,000 known species of earwig worldwide, but only four are native to the UK. The main one is the common Earwig. The name comes from the old English for Ear Beetle.

The Common Earwig is mainly nocturnal, scavenging on dead plant material, animal matter, lichens, pollen, and other arthropods, and retreating to hide under stones or in rotten logs during the day.

The Common Earwig is about 13mm long, reddish brown in colour with a flattened and elongated body and slender beaded antennae, an obvious feature of earwigs is the pair of pincers or forces at the tip of the flexible abdomen. Both sexes have these pincers, in males they are large and strongly curved, whereas in females they are straight. Although they do have wings, they are usually reluctant to use them.



Female Earwig



Male Earwig

Female Common Earwigs are excellent mother laying their eggs in damp crevices, they guard the nest and gently clean the eggs, of which there can be between 30 and 50, until the young hatch.

After the larvae hatch, they undergo a type of development known as incomplete metamorphosis, in which the nymphs process through a series of moults. The stages between moults are known as instars. The females will have lost her maternal instincts when the nymphs reach their second instar. If they have not left the nest by this time they risk being eaten by their mother.

The nymphs are similar to the adults in appearance but their wings are either absent or very small. The average life span of the common earwig is around one year.



Contrary to old myths about earwigs, they do not crawl in people's ears. The tale of earwigs is that they would enter people through their ears and burrow themselves into the brain where they would lay their eggs. This however is not scientifically backed and holds no truth, as earwigs do not have an interest in crawling in people's ears.

Annual General Meeting report (continued)



We have planted the orchard (between the lodge and Brown Mausoleum) and will be looking at an official unveiling of the plaques sometime in the spring. We will also need to mulch and water the trees over the summer months (volunteers needed).



Over the summer we will check the structural integrity of the Rodway mausoleum before we start to clear the vegetation, from on and around the structure. When completed, we will look at having the building surveyed to determine how we should approach its restoration.

We have come to a point where the database that we use to store all burial information is no longer suitable for purpose, so this year we will look to turn this into an online database. The cost of the site is not an issue, but the real problem is the ongoing cost of running and maintaining it. We may look at sponsorship to do this.

We then briefly spoke about wildlife and newsletters, which I have covered in the chairman's ramblings.

The meeting was then brought to a close.

See you all soon

Robert

Friends of the Down Cemetery (FOTDC) Membership Application Form

The Down Cemetery is a Grade II listed Victorian Cemetery opened on the 13th December 1855. It boasts two chapels, four mausoleums, two monuments, gate house, gates and pillars all that are listed. Also, an abundance of history and wildlife.

The aim of the Friends is to assist the council in keeping the cemetery a place that the town can be proud of. Our mission will be, to clear overgrown graves, photograph all headstones, plot graves, making this information available to the public and enhance the wildlife.

If this is something that you may be interested in, please complete the form below.

Personal membership costs £3.00 per year

Corporate membership costs £10.00 per year (year runs January to December)

If you wish to pay by bank transfer, please email chairfotdc@gmail.com for details

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone Number _____

Emergency Contact _____

Email _____

Your details will only be used by FOTDC

Please let us know if you are interested in any of the following by ticking the boxes, please tick as many or as few as you wish.

Clearing graves and tidying cemetery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historical research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist with articles for newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assisting with grant applications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wildlife surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just keep me informed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return the form to either of the following:-

Robert Colebourne (membership secretary)

31 Innox Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. BA14 9AT

Email :robertc@fotdc.org

Robert Wall (chairman)

53 Foxglove Drive, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. BA14 7SQ

Email: chairfotdc@gmail.com

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HELP AND SUPPORT**

In your time of need
we'll take care
of all the
funeral arrangements
Call us 24 hours a day

- Funeral Pre-Payment Plans
- Memorials

**C S BOWYER
FUNERAL
DIRECTORS**

3 St Thomas Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8SF

01225 768846



Diary for Spring and early Summer 2023

Saturday 25 th February 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Thursday 9 ^h March 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Saturday 25 th March 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Thursday 13 th April 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Saturday 22 nd April 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Thursday 11 th May 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Saturday 27 th May 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Thursday 8 th June 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Saturday 24 th June 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Thursday 13 th July 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Saturday 22 nd July 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Thursday 10 th August 2023	10am -12pm	Cemetery
Saturday 24 th August 2023	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	paulfotdc@gmail.com	
Committee	Mark Rhodes		

How can you help?

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

Cemetery Gardening,

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.