



# Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery

## Newsletter No.15 Spring 2022

English Oak (*Quercus robur*)

1937\*\*\*



*This beautiful oak is one of 40 in our cemetery presented in our latest publication (see below) in this year of the **Queen's Green Canopy***

### April Annual General Meeting

Able to meet once again in person, we duly followed the familiar agenda – with one important additional item. Our long-serving Treasurer, Barry Melbourne Webb, had decided he would stand down from the Committee after his years of impeccable service. It was proposed, seconded and approved unanimously that Barry be made an Honorary Life Member of the *Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery*. When the business was concluded we paused for a cup of tea before proceeding to the other chapel for the launch of our latest booklet (*see below*).

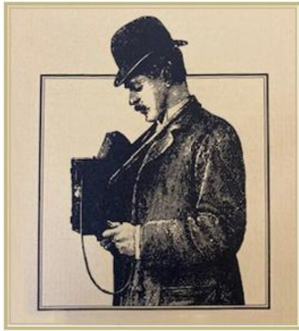
**Good news!** Although standing down as Treasurer, Barry was conscious of the need to find a successor. He suggested the position to a person with appropriate experience, and after attending one of our committee meetings, **Gwyn Reeves** has agreed to take on the position of Treasurer of the Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery. We look forward to working with Gwyn.

### A Hundred Years of Image Making 1850-1950

Based yet again on the meticulous research of Ann Bates, and written and produced by Carol Mellors and Sue White, this booklet reveals the wide circle of early photography enthusiasts that grew over a century in Tunbridge Wells, many of whom are buried in our cemetery.

Carol and Sue presented an excellent illustrated talk on this little-known aspect of our history – perfectly coordinated with Carol's entertaining commentary on the selection of photos screened by Sue. The booklet includes a map which indicates where the various tombs are located, so provides a guide for an interesting walk around the older areas of the cemetery.

## A Hundred Years of Image Making 1850-1950



Tunbridge Wells Cemetery



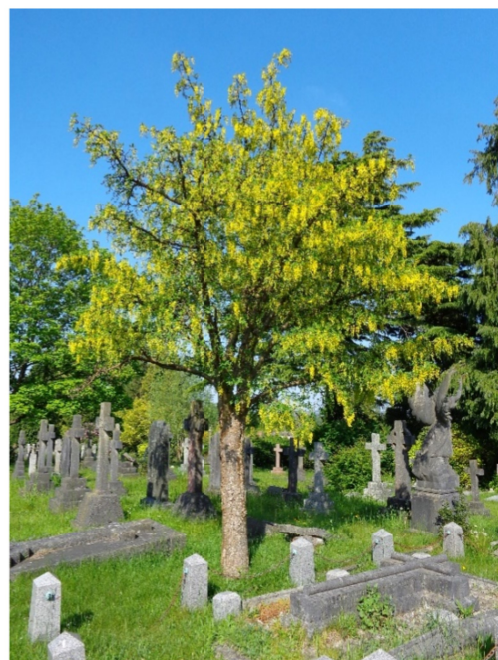
## May Launch of Tree Walks Booklet

Despite her busy life as a nurse, Noreen O'Meara researched, wrote, photographed and labelled all the trees – and produced an exhibition of posters to highlight 40 of the wonderful and varied trees in our cemetery.

This booklet provides a guide to two different walks – **TRAIL ONE** and **TRAIL TWO** with the tree positions marked on a map of the cemetery. On the day of the launch, Noreen was relieved when a tree expert found all 40 trees and confirmed the lot were accurately identified!

We plan to hold regular repeats of this exhibition so that as many as possible can get to know our cemetery's wonderful variety of trees.

**\*\*\*As newsletter editor, I selected the photo of that tree as it was planted in the cemetery the year I was born!**



## Gardening Challenges

Jo Hunt and her team – now with welcome new members – have struggled with the very dry spring which makes weeding difficult and watering essential. An additional problem is the increasing deer population whose appetite for herbaceous plants is voracious. Their well-known taste for roses extends far beyond to many of the plants that provide colour to the various beds. RHS advice on plants that deer usually avoid: hellebores, skimmia, peonies and jasmine isn't much help. However, they are undaunted and prepare for the annual **Tunbridge Wells in Bloom** competition. This congenial group welcomes new members with some spare time. As seen below their efforts produce impressive results.



## A Touching Ceremony to Honour a Forgotten Young Man

In the early evening of 24<sup>th</sup> May, a gathering took place by the grave of a 15-year-old Sea Cadet, who was killed in a tragic accident in 1943. The event was organised by the **Tunbridge Wells Sea Cadet Corps** after the story of this former member was brought to light by the research carried out by Sea Cadet Lieutenant Commander John Vanns and Peter Blackwell.

The Sea Cadets with their band – proudly playing on their splendid new drums – plus friends and families gathered at the cemetery Chapel, then - as the persistent rain finally stopped – marched down to the newly cleared and restored graveside, where a fitting tribute to Peter Fry was followed by a service and Act of Remembrance.

The group then proceeded to reassemble outside the chapels for the dedication of their new chaplain followed by their annual presentation of Sea Cadet awards before adjourning to gather inside the chapel for refreshments to end a memorable occasion.

### *The Band marched from the Chapel to the grave*



*The grave restored to its initial state*



**Graveside ceremony**



**Presentation of Sea Cadet awards**

*Photographs courtesy of David Walter and Noreen O'Meara.*

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We hope this insight into how the ***Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery*** contribute to the wider appreciation of this major asset that Tunbridge Wells has to offer as more than just a cemetery but a beautiful venue to visit – and to encourage friends to join us.

We have recently updated our online presence, as indicated below:

1 Our new website ***friends-tw-cemetery.org*** is fully up and running and provides all the necessary information about events, how to join, etc.

2 Our **Facebook** page, **Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery at Hawkenbury** is a source of recent photos and offers space for comments, suggestions, etc.

*[Our initial website **friends of tunbridge wells cemetery** is no longer in use but, confusingly, cannot be deleted for obscure technical reasons. It will, however, redirect you to the current website.]*