

Celebration and Conservation

Trees

In January 2020, The Woodland Trust published an 'Emergency Tree Plan.' Whilst historically a Charity promoting woodlands, of recent it has expanded its work to include urban trees. The report states that 'in many urban areas there is a huge potential to expand the tree canopy cover and deliver multiple benefits for both people and wildlife.' They go on to say that local authorities should take a number of steps to protect and increase tree canopy cover which includes 'avoid(ing) the removal of any tree on their land except if the tree is diseased or there are overriding health and safety needs.' When non-woodland trees are of necessity removed, three or more replacement trees should be planted 'as close to the original location and be the same type of planting (for example, street trees replaced by street trees)'



The Welsh Government published 'Woodlands for Wales' in 2018. This calls for local authorities to 'further develop their programmes of urban tree planting' and lists the benefits of street trees in particular. 'There is a need for a wider appreciation of existing street trees, to help ensure their protection, and for more planting of individual trees in Welsh towns and cities.'

The Penarth Civic Society is working closely with the Vale of Glamorgan Council to make this a reality. As a charity, the Society is able to apply for funding that the council themselves

are not able to access. Tree Forum members have between them a wide range of expertise that we are delighted to be able to share with both the Vale and Penarth Town Councils. Regular Open Meetings of this group are held to inform members of progress and to discuss ways in which we can all contribute. The next Open Meeting is on 27th February at St Augustine's Church Hall at 7.00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

The Tree Forum is also liaising with other groups with similar aims both in the town and throughout the Vale. Tree planting is happening apace in Barry and Llantwit Major.

A large number of people are now volunteering to help with projects. However we have a great need for new members of the Executive Committee - we have unfortunately lost one very hard-working Officer recently and the Chair resigned. In order to continue with all this work there is an urgent need for people to fill roles, particularly that of Secretary and Membership Secretary. Someone with Social Media skills would be extremely welcome.

500 Trees to give away.

Penarth Tree Forum, part of the Civic Society, is committed to promoting and maintaining the urban tree canopy in this town. The emphasis of the group this spring is on the planting of urban garden trees. 500 young tree seedlings will be given away on a first-come-first-served basis. There will be four types, Birch, Rowan, Bird Cherry and Wild Cherry, all of which are suitable to be planted in front or back gardens. The trees are being funded through the Woodland Trust Urban Tree Programme and the event will take place on Saturday 29th February from 9.30 to 11.30 (or when all the trees have gone) outside the St Fagan's Public House. Joe Coles, Urban Tree Programme lead for the Woodland Trust, said "Trees in Front Gardens are a fantastic way to bring Trees to streets and share the benefits of our own green space with friends and neighbours. The Trust is promoting this as a great example of how we can all contribute to addressing the climate emergency." The Penarth Tree Forum is being assisted in this project by Russell Horsey, of Woodland Dwellings.co.uk. Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters, who will be present on the day to give planting advice. Russell will also be speaking about the importance of Urban Trees at an Open Meeting of the Tree Forum to be held on Thursday 27th February at 7 pm in St Augustine's Church Hall, Albert Road. There will be an update on other local projects and an opportunity for those attending to discuss how they can contribute to the future well-being of the tree canopy in the town.

Linda Bantock-Serafini 1949-2019

It is with great sadness that we have to inform you that Linda died just after Christmas. She was taken ill very suddenly and unexpectedly. Linda joined the Civic Society soon after she moved to Penarth in 2012 to be close to her daughter and family. She became our Membership Secretary; a role she undertook extremely efficiently. When we changed to an electronic newsletter for those members with email, she took on the job of sending these, and other circulations. Linda was such a valuable member of the committee that it was decided her role should be an Officer of the Society. The PCS was well represented at Linda's funeral and I was pleased to be asked to say a few words. It was a pleasure to meet her husband, daughter Amy and family, and son Peter and family. You will have read that the Society has started a new project at the Italian Gardens. Linda herself was there helping at our first working party on 1st December. As she spent many years living in Italy, we are planning to plant a shrub there in her memory. Linda was also a very regular volunteer at Dyffryn and it was she who suggested that I volunteer in the house there. It was lovely to be at Dyffryn recently when a tree was planted in her memory. As such a hugely valued member of the committee, Linda will be very much missed.



Anne Evans
Vice Chair PCS

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www.penarthsociety.org.uk - £10 per annum individuals - £15 per annum for couples

Celebration and Conservation

Much is happening in Victoria Square!

Friends of Victoria Square (FoVS) have been busy in the winter months with a variety of events including their first "Carols in the Square" when more than 120 sang loudly and later enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies. How time flies! ... and further back in late November FoVS held an Open Meeting to present findings of the Tree and Biodiversity Surveys of the Square, commissioned using National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) grant monies. Attendees were asked to give their thoughts and preferences for a variety of interventions that will promote both biodiversity and wellbeing in the Square. These were ranked and are being taken forward with the assistance of a professional ecologist and landscape architect - the aim being to create a plan to guide our sensitive changes to the Square over the next few years. Meanwhile, on a blue sky frosty Saturday morning in January over 20 friends and volunteers turned out for the first "Bramble Scramble" - clearing a large mass of brambles from one of the many Yews on the south of the Square. Sadly, "Storm Dennis" caused a postponement of the February scramble but volunteers remain active installing nesting boxes throughout the Square and in planning future events.



Sunny Saturday in the Square
volunteers at the January
"Bramble Scramble"

With the financial support gained from the NHLF the FoVS team have commissioned two notice boards to provide visitors to the Square with information including the history, trees and ecology of the Square together with future FoVS plans and events. FoVS are keen to hear your views on how we can continue to care for this wonderful community asset so please do get in touch with your thoughts either by email to our FoVS secretary Peter Blackburn (blackburn.peter1@sky.com) or visit our Facebook page ... and this Spring look out for details of our new website.

Forthcoming dates for your diary include Wednesday 29th April for the FoVS Annual General Meeting to be held in the Gallery of All Saints Church and Saturday 6th June for the 2nd FoVS "Big Lunch" - fingers crossed for another warm and sunny day for our annual picnic in the Square!

If you look closely, you may see plaques on a number of buildings in the town. The Pier Pavilion, the former Albert Road Church and several houses. Why? About ten years ago, the Society decided that good architecture and restorations should be rewarded. These plaques have not been awarded annually, but only when a building is considered merit worthy. It could apply to a building of any age. New builds could be equally as praiseworthy as older architecture. More recently, however, the Society has not awarded any plaques. Member Mrs Daphne Kibble, a previous Chair, whose idea this scheme was, is keen that we do. And the committee is in agreement. But we don't just want our thoughts. Therefore we are asking for your help. Please let us know what buildings you think deserve such an accolade. Please email enquiries@penarthsociety.co.uk or ring 07818 280 336. We look forward to hearing your ideas. The final decision on awarding plaques will be taken by the Committee.



ITALIAN GARDEN

On 1st December last year PCS volunteered to assist the council in a working party at the Italian Gardens to carry out early winter maintenance and to clear leaves and dead plant material. Local publicity bought some 25 volunteers to the gardens on a bright chilly morning and in two hours filled the back of a council pick up lorry. It was agreed that a follow up session would be held in the spring and in the winter months PCS would do some background research on the gardens history and original planting layout. We are now in discussion with the council on a follow-up spring maintenance session and hopefully carrying out some local planting.

There are thoughts about re-establishing some rockery features, and clearing some of the Cordylines (palms) as their size and height rather dominate. Pruning back the two large yews either side of the central steps will be undertaken by the Council.

Research in the Society's Archives had turned up seven post cards dating from the 1930s. These will prove useful in trying to establish what was planted in the early years of the gardens. Two of the cards are in colour albeit that the practice at that time was to hand colour the back and white images. We are hoping further research will.

Some of you will be aware that the recent heavy rains caused a local land-slide of material from the bank above the rear garden wall. The Council's engineer inspected the fall and the bank was cleared of loose material which will be cleared away. This apparently was somewhat expected sooner or later. The good news is that the wall was undamaged.

Civic Society Events 2020 Please note new date for AGM!

Thursday 27th February	7.00PM	St Augustine's Hall
Trees Open Meeting		
Thursday 26th March	7.00PM	St Augustine's Hall Pete Walford
A virtual tour of Penarth, an illustrated walk from the docks to the town centre.		
Wednesday 29th April	7.00PM	All Saint's Church Gallery
Friends of Victoria Square AGM		
Thursday 30th April	7.00PM	St Augustine's Hall
AGM - plus Open Meeting for whole community, what concerns you about the town from 7.30PM		
Thursday 28th May	7.00PM	St Augustine's Hall
Hedgehog Helpline		
Saturday 6th June		Victoria Square
Friends of Victoria Square BIG PICNIC		
Wednesday 24th June	2.00PM	Llandaff Cathedral
Guided Tour ***Pre booking essential****		
Sunday 19th July	2.00PM	
Penarth Town walk with Alan Thorne		
Thursday 25th September	7.00PM	St Augustine's Hall
Erica Dixon, Vale of Glam. Ecology Officer		
Thursday 22nd October	7.00PM	St Augustine's Hall
Cosmeston Park Rangers		
Thursday 26th November	7.00PM	St Augustine's Hall
An Evening with Alan Thorne		



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