

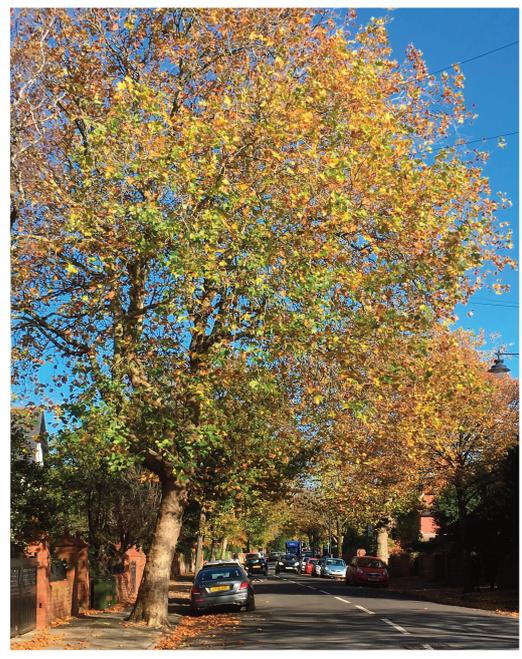
Celebration and Conservation

Trees, environment and gardens

The Penarth Society - which Maureen Kelly Owen was instrumental in forming - was started in 1987 with the aim of saving the old Penarth Baths. The emphasis of the Society was initially on the built environment; the County Treasures Project being an example of that. A considerable archive of historical material has been acquired over the years – much of this will shortly be taken to the Glamorgan Archives so that it can be stored under ideal conditions and will be accessible to all. Planning applications, particularly in the conservation area, are still scrutinised regularly. The proposed build behind The Kymin, which would involve the destruction of ancient woodland, is an application we have strongly objected to.

More recently, the emphasis of the Society has shifted to the natural environment. Many of the residents and visitors will be aware that Beach Wardens regularly patrol the Beach for litter. Probably only a few know that this scheme is run by the Society. The Railway Path Project is helping to keep that area tidy and green. The Penarth Tree Forum was set up by the Society when members said that their main concern about the town was the removal of street trees. The Forum wants to increase the tree canopy in Penarth – ideally to achieve ‘Woodland Town’ status but certainly to remain the ‘Garden by the Sea.’ Friends of Victoria Square’ has developed from the Tree Forum.

Very recently, the sadly-neglected nature of the Italian Gardens, an iconic feature of the seafront, has come to the notice of the PCS. They are Grade II listed and have a fascinating history. Some initial tidying up is planned soon but funds will need to be raised for more substantial work to progress. You will be very welcome to join us for some gardening on Sunday 1st December from 11am to 1pm. Tools and gardening gloves will be provided by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.



We have approached the Mayor of Penarth to lobby for the adoption of our Tree Strategy for the town and to ask for her support for our aim of becoming a Woodland Town within the next 20 years, this means we need to increase our tree canopy cover from the level of 17% in 2013 to a level of 20%. We hope that the town council will adopt this aspiration and work to reverse the loss of tree canopy cover in the town over recent years. We are continuing to lobby the Vale of Glamorgan Council, and the Welsh Assembly office of Vaughan Gethin to try to elevate the attitude of our Councils with regard to the essential benefits of trees in our environment.

In February next year we will be organising a Tree Takeaway event in the town centre. We have been promised 400 tree saplings from the Woodland Trust and we will be distributing them from outside the St Fagans Pub.

Lamppost Update

In June this year we were dismayed to have to apologise to our members and the wider community in Penarth for failing to save our lovely Victorian Lampposts, which were being ripped out and replaced with modern galvanised posts as part of an "upgrade" programme to LED lighting.

The programme had been announced over a year previously but we had not been aware of it.

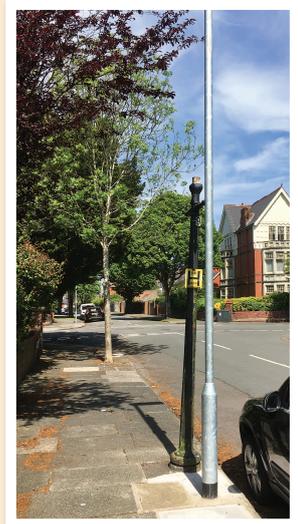
There was a huge campaign in the town to have the programme stopped, a valiant campaigner, Gemma Crutchley, launched a petition which attracted almost 1200 signatures asking the Council to reconsider, but they refused to bend and the destruction of the posts went ahead.

We had thought that the project would be completed in one phase, but fortunately this was not the case, so far we have lost 69 posts but 200 can still be saved!. We sent a Freedom of Information Request to the Council to try to understand the rationale for the project.

What we found was very worrying, the decision to replace "structurally unsound and electrically unsafe" columns was made on very dodgy and unscientific grounds. No structural surveys whatsoever have been undertaken.

Furthermore we have been in touch with Organisations and Councils in other parts of the country who have all upgraded to LED systems whilst at the same time managing to retain the original Victorian columns.

We are of the opinion that someone at the Council has taken an arbitrary decision, with expediency as the driving motive to simply destroy these iconic examples of our Victorian heritage. The fact that most of them are within the Penarth Conservation area beggars belief and we are determined to revive the local campaign to save our lampposts for future generations to enjoy.



Do you care about Penarth? - Join the Civic Society

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

Celebration and Conservation

Autumn sun and the golden colours of Victoria Square

The Autumn weather has been making its mark with plenty of wind and rain and some cooler days bringing on the leaf fall. Our ever changing and always beautiful Square has been struggling to cope with the elements of late with further tree damage and some localised flooding. The recent Tree and Biodiversity Surveys of the Square, commissioned by Friends of Victoria Square (FoVS) using National Lottery Heritage Fund grant monies, have identified a variety of issues of concern particularly relating to the health and safety of some of the trees. After further investigation by Vale of Glamorgan Council Tree Officer Neil Williams a small number of trees will receive urgent remedial work but sadly two diseased trees have had to be felled - a purple leafed Myrobalan Plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) and an Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The Plum tree had recently lost a main bough and was found to have significant fungal disease whilst the Ash was found to have both white rot and "Ash dieback". Despite these losses FoVS are pleased with the detail and opportunities provided by the survey reports. FoVS will holding an open meeting on Wednesday 27th November, 7-9pm, in The Gallery of All Saints Church - several brief presentations will provide an overview of the survey findings and local residents and users of the Square will be invited to offer their views to help develop plans for improving and enhancing this wonderful community asset. If you would like to know more please contact Peter Blackburn, FoVS Secretary, by email blackburn.peter@sky.com



Friends of Victoria Square will be getting together in the Square on December 11th at 7pm to sing some traditional Christmas Carols. Local resident Amy Brooks who will be leading this informal gathering said "This is a wonderful opportunity for friends and families to come along and join in. We'll be providing Carol sheets and have mulled wine and mince pies in the Church Gallery afterwards." Further information will be posted by Amy on our Friends of Victoria Square Facebook page.

Railway Path

Anyone walking down the railway path may notice that it has its very own litterpicker. James Burrows of Penarth wanted to do this as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award last year. He found the experience so rewarding that he has continued with the project this year too.



Maureen Kelly-Owen

It is with great sadness that we report on the death of Maureen Kelly-Owen. As a member of Penarth's original Civic Society, formed by local residents to save The Hollies, an imposing stone house in its own grounds at the top of Beach Road, from demolition, Maureen's expertise as an architect was invaluable. Unfortunately, the efforts were in vain and today we see the Albany Court flats behind the grey stone boundary walls. But that event certainly set a precedent for developers in the town. Having folded, the Society was resurrected in 1986 in an effort to save the Penarth Baths building from demolition - in this case successfully - and Maureen became Hon Secretary, bringing with her a wealth of experience, before stepping down. Within a few years the Society had flourished, expanding into a movement that encompassed the whole of the town. However, Maureen kept in touch as an adviser, later becoming a Board member of the Civic Trust for Wales and eventually Chairman, a role which was particularly fitting and which she thoroughly enjoyed. She was also an active Town Councillor and Mayor of Penarth. She had recently hoped to rejoin the Committee of the Penarth Society and had actually attended a meeting but ill health forced her to give up this idea. Throughout her life she and her architect husband Dale had shown the way in appreciation of modern trends in architecture and we will miss her.

Penarth Civic Society Events 2019/20

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| Thursday 28th November | 7.00PM | An evening with Alan Thorne |
| St Augustine's Hall With complimentary cheese and wine, after all, this event was so popular last year it makes sense to make it an annual event. This year Alan will be talking about air raids, airstrips, those darned Americans and lots more. Please pay on the door - Cost £5.00pp. | | |
| Wednesday 11th December | 7.00PM | Friends of Victoria Square Carol Concert |
| A gathering in the lovely square to sing carols followed with mulled wine and mince pies in the church gallery afterwards. | | |
| Wednesday 18th December | 7.00PM | Spectrum Singers Choral Event |
| Get into the Christmas spirit with a return booking for this marvellous choir. Tabernacle Baptist Church Plassey Street. Cost £3.00 per person, £5.00 for couples
<i>Includes a FREE cup of tea or coffee and a mince pie. Please pay on the door</i> | | |
| Thursday January 23rd | 7.00PM | Bruce Wallace |
| St Augustine's Hall - "A soldier, a sailor, a salvationist and my mum marching"
An Illustrated talk about four members of Bruce's family in Penarth over the last 100 years | | |
| Thursday February 27th | 7.00PM | Trees Open Meeting |
| St Augustine's Hall An opportunity to find out how our efforts are progressing with regards to the town's tree canopy and also to encourage new groups to come forward to create more planting in their neighbourhood. | | |
| Thursday March 26th | 7.00PM | Pete Walford |
| St Augustine's Hall A virtual tour of Penarth, an illustrated walk from the docks to the town centre. | | |
| Thursday 23rd April | 7.00PM | AGM |
| St Augustine's Hall plus Open Meeting for whole community, what concerns you about the town from 7.30PM | | |
| Thursday 28th May | 7.00PM | Hedgehog Helpline |
| St Augustine's Hall A presentation of the work of Hedgehog Helpline and advice on making your garden more hedgehog friendly. | | |
| Wednesday 24th June | 2.00PM | Llandaff Cathedral Guided Tour |
| Guided tours are only available to organised groups such as ourselves.
Suggested donation £5.00pp | | |



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