



Friends of **Earlham Cemetery**

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If you would like to submit an article, photo or sighting to this newsletter, please email alysia.schuetzle@gmail.com.

Please send photos at 300dpi, or the highest quality possible.

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Hello!

**Welcome to issue eighteen of the newsletter for the
Friends of Earlham Cemetery.**

My apologies for the very long absence of this newsletter!

At our AGM this summer, Jeremy and Vanna will step down from their roles as Secretary and Treasurer. They have been involved with *Friends of Earlham Cemetery* since 2012. During that time, they organised and led many walks, submitted countless grant applications, and worked tirelessly towards both recording all manner of species of animal and plant and making the cemetery a better place for wildlife. I know I won't be alone in thanking them for all they have done and continue to do. If you are

interested in taking on the role of Secretary or Treasurer, please let Jeremy know by emailing friendsofearlhamcemetery@yahoo.co.uk.

We are also seeking a new Newsletter Editor, to hopefully send these out more regularly than I have been able to manage over the last year. Please email alysia.schuetzle@gmail.com if you are interested in becoming our new Editor.

Best wishes,

Alysia



Earlham Cemetery and the Iron Hospital

Jeremy Bartlett

Jeremy presents a history of the relationship between Earlham Cemetery and the Iron Hospital, built in the 1870s as a hospital for those suffering from smallpox.

1840s

The tithe maps for Earlham and Heigham date from the 1840s and show that the area that Earlham Cemetery now occupies was agricultural land, mostly leased from the Bishop of Norwich¹.

In the section of map to the right, Dereham Road runs across the top at the top, the Watton Turnpike (now Earlham Road) runs along the bottom, and Half Mile Lane (now Bowthorpe Road) runs across the middle.

1850s

Earlham Cemetery was opened in 1856 and had an original area of 34 acres.

23 acres were used for burial straightaway, while the remaining area was let out as agricultural land until required.



A new workhouse was built on the north side of Half Mile Lane and opened in 1859². At this point, the road became known as Workhouse Lane; by the beginning of the twentieth century it had become Bowthorpe Road.

¹ Tithe maps were drawn up for almost all rural parishes in Norfolk between 1836 and 1850. They mapped woods, fields, roads, waterways and buildings. The information was used to assess the amount of tithe, a tax payable to the local church. Payment was originally made in the form of farm produce, but the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 changed this to a money payment.

² See <https://www.workhouses.org.uk/Norwich/> for more information on Norwich workhouses.

Earlham Cemetery and the Iron Hospital

Jeremy Bartlett

The 1881 Ordnance Survey map shows the workhouse and the 34 acres of Earlham Cemetery³.

I have colour-coded the map (right) to show the original 23 acres of Earlham Cemetery that were used for burial straightaway shaded in red, with the remaining area (let out as agricultural land until required) shaded in blue.

The small red area next to Workhouse Lane (now Bowthorpe Road) is the Jewish Cemetery, which also dates from 1856.

In the mid 1860s, the eastern half of the area shaded in blue was laid out with winding paths as Sections 1 – 15 (NG). 'NG' stands for 'New Ground'. The western half of the area shaded in blue was laid out for burials in the late 1870s.

The Iron Hospital

Intriguingly, the 1881 map also marks a building just to the south of the Jewish Cemetery, labelled as "Iron Hospital (Infectious Diseases)". Morant's Map from 1873 (right) also shows the building and calls it a "Small Pox and Fever Hospital".

The Iron Hospital was built in the early 1870s on land owned by the Norwich Burial Board (which ran Earlham Cemetery). It provided beds for sufferers of smallpox, a very unpleasant disease that had several outbreaks in the nineteenth century. One epidemic in Norwich was in the spring of 1872.

The Iron Hospital also saw use as emergency operating rooms for the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital during



³ The Norwich Map Explorer website allows the viewer to see different map layers, including tithe maps and First Edition Ordnance Survey maps - <http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer/>.

Earlham Cemetery and the Iron Hospital

Jeremy Bartlett

the 1870s, perhaps when it was undergoing a major refurbishment towards the end of the decade.

I am unaware of any photographs or drawings of the Iron Hospital, but it was presumably prefabricated and made from corrugated iron. The building would have been designed and manufactured elsewhere and built rapidly on site.

In the 1850s, Isambard Kingdom Brunel used corrugated iron for some of the buildings he designed for a British Army hospital in Turkey and by the end of the nineteenth century isolation hospitals were commonplace in the British Isles⁴. The illustration on the top left (from the Historic Hospitals website) shows a twelve-bed corrugated iron hospital, manufactured by Humphreys, a firm based in London⁵.

The Iron Hospital in Norwich was earlier than the Humphreys buildings but also had twelve beds.

There is a plan of its interior in the Norfolk Record Office, which I sketched (very badly – shown on the bottom right) on a visit about ten years ago⁶.

On my sketch the numbers refer to:

1. Four bed ward with central stove
2. Four bed ward with central stove
3. Two bed ward
4. Two bed ward
5. Nurses' rooms
6. Caretaker and kitchens

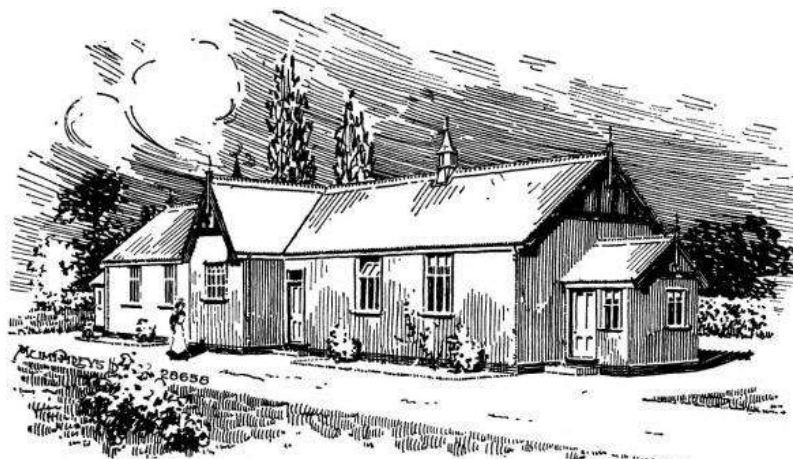
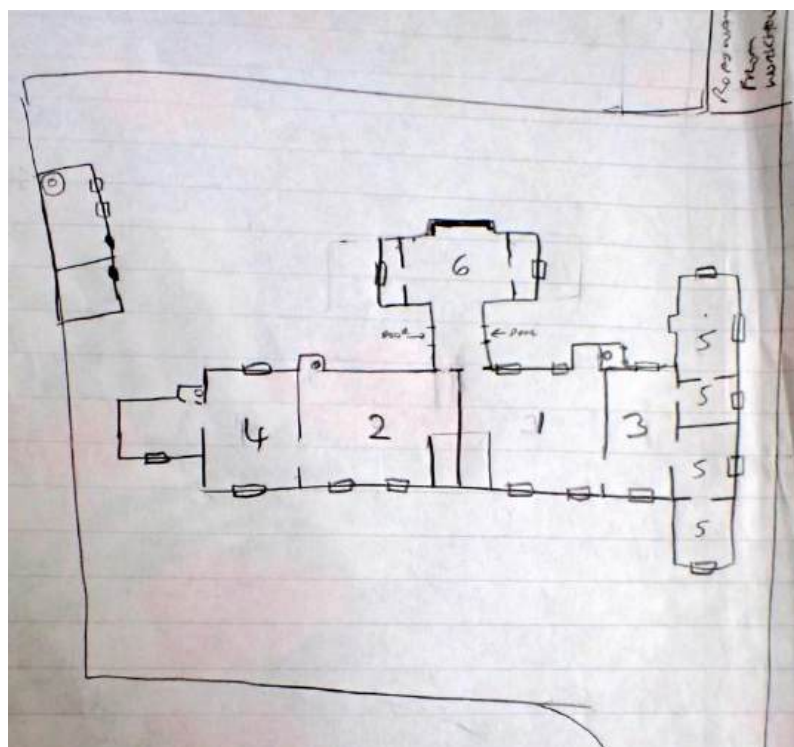


Fig. 13. A Humphreys iron hospital building for 12 beds. A plan of the interior is shown in Fig. 19.



Cemetery Expansion and a New Isolation Hospital

In 1892 a large triangle of forty acres of land to the west of the Cemetery was purchased by Norwich Burial Board from S. Gurney Buxton and Edward North Buxton, the trustees of the late John Gurney of Earlham Hall. It now forms the western part of Earlham Cemetery, out to the sharp point where Gipsy Lane meets Bowthorpe Road.

New land not immediately needed for burial was used as allotments. Farrow Road was built in 1911 as part of an unemployment relief scheme and widened in 1927, and cuts across this new piece of land.

⁴Nick Thompson, "Corrugated Iron Buildings", Shire Library (2011). Now out of print.

⁵Historic Hospitals website - <https://historic-hospitals.com/tag/iron-buildings/>

⁶The original plan is in the Norfolk Record Office, NRO N/HE 8/7.

Earlham Cemetery and the Iron Hospital

Jeremy Bartlett

At the same time as this land purchase a new, larger isolation hospital was being constructed on the south side of Bowthorpe Road. Nowadays, after many alterations, it has become the Julian Hospital. Meanwhile, across the road the Norwich Community Hospital occupies the site of the workhouse. With the construction of the new Isolation Hospital, the Iron Hospital was no longer needed for patient care but the building survived for at least another twenty years, probably for storage.

The last references to the Iron Hospital I could find were in Health Committee minutes in 1913, when the Norwich Burial Board complained about the “inconvenience experienced by the [Cemetery] Superintendent and others in obtaining access to the Jews’ Cemetery” because of the Iron Hospital.

To solve this problem, the Health Committee agreed “to construct an L-shaped footpath enclosed by a post and wire fence along the western boundary of the Cemetery and the southern boundary of the Jews’ Cemetery, with a gate leading into the Jews’ Cemetery”⁷.

After that, the trail goes cold and I have been unable to find out when the Iron Hospital was removed.

What Remains

Nowadays there are no traces of the Iron Hospital but the line of the footpath around it can still be seen in aerial views (in the top right part of the photograph to the right).

The site of the hospital is now a fenced compound used for storage by Norwich City Council workers.

During the twentieth century many corrugated iron hospitals were demolished.

The best surviving example, built in the early 1900s, is now in Arne, Dorset and there is a photograph of it on the Historic England website⁸.



Notes

Other information comes from the Norwich Burial Board Minutes, held in the Norfolk Record Office, N/TC 5 ... (1854 – 1929. The Burial Board’s function was taken over by Norwich City Council from 22nd November 1929.

For a general history of Earlham Cemetery, see

https://www.friendsofearlhamcemetery.co.uk/A_Short_History_of_Earlham_Cemetery.pdf. There is a link to it on the history page of our website.

⁷ Health Committee Minutes, 1912 – 1917, Norfolk Record Office, N/TC 15/10.

⁸ Historic England website (Corrugated iron hospital in Arne, Dorset) - <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/educational-images/former-isolation-hospital-arne-8045>.

Wildlife sightings in 2023

Vanna Bartlett

The Earlham Cemetery wildlife lists continue to grow! No matter how often she visits, Vanna still manages to find new species; both for the site and for her personally. Here are some of her highlights from 2023...

Euophrys frontalis male

Spiders and Harvestmen

Two very different spiders were new for me - *Parasteatoda lunata* and *Phrurolithus festinus*. The latter is a convincing ant-mimic often to be seen running about in hot weather on the ground. *Parasteatoda lunata* has a distinctive teardrop shaped abdomen. Both were spotted on gravestones. Another new species new for the Cemetery was *Euophrys frontalis*, a beautiful little Jumping Spider found by Mike Ball when he and I were having a look around for invertebrates. A female *Cheiracanthium erraticum* spotted on Canadian Goldenrod was another new species for me.

The large and unmistakable Wasp Spider, *Argiope bruennichi*, was finally found in the cemetery. This species has made a dramatic increase in its distribution in the last few years so it wasn't particularly surprising to find it; there is a thriving colony not too far away in Eaton Park. It likes areas of tall grass with plenty of grasshoppers (its principal prey) so the large areas of over-mown cemetery are no good for it. In fact, the spot where it was first found and an egg cocoon was discovered was mown down shortly afterwards so it remains to be seen whether any will appear again in future.



Above: *Cheiracanthium erraticum* female



Above: *Parasteatoda lunata* (this one has a parasitic wasp larva attached)

Below: The stunning Wasp Spider, *Argiope bruennichi*, guarding her egg cocoon.



Phrurolithus festinus



Wildlife sightings in 2023

Vanna Bartlett

My diligent searching for harvestmen finally paid off when I found *Opilio saxatilis*. This attractive species is found in rough grassland with records scattered around Norfolk and it was only the second time I had encountered it.

Dicranopalpus ramosus is a very distinctive harvestmen, or rather it was until research discovered that there are two species practically identical to one another. Having seen it in the cemetery in previous years, I set about hunting for it in order to ascertain which species was present. Typically, when you search for something you can't find it! I eventually found a couple of individuals which both turned out to be the 'other' species, *Dicranopalpus caudatus*. My search continues to see if both species are present.



Above: *Opilio saxatilis*

Left: *Dicranopalpus caudatus* male



Beetles

By far the most important find for me was *Rhizophagus parallellocollis*, the aptly named Graveyard Beetle. This is a scarce species with only a couple of previous records in Norfolk, one of which was actually from Earlham Cemetery from around 1900. It was particularly pleasing to 're-find' it after such a long absence. It is a rather enigmatic species; the larvae are thought to feed on other invertebrate larvae associated with corpses but it isn't known for certain, only that they turn up regularly in graveyards.

Forestier's Ladybird (*Rhyzobius forestieri*) is a native of Australia which has been introduced to various countries around the world including Europe as a biological control of scale insects. It has been found in various parts of southern England but even so I was quite taken aback to spot one when I was doing one of my regular searches of Ivy. It was the first reported record for Norfolk.

Another ladybird that I spotted for the first time in the Cemetery was the 24-spot Ladybird (*Subcoccinella vigintiquatuorpunctata*), with three sightings. This one is a grassland specialist that I have encountered before at various different sites.



Left: Two Graveyard Beetles, *Rhizophagus parallellocollis*

Wildlife sightings in 2023

Vanna Bartlett



From left to right:
7-Spot Ladybird with
Forestier's Ladybird,
close-up of
Forestier's Ladybird
on Ivy, 24-Spot
Ladybird

Hoverflies

I finally caught up with the hoverfly *Brachyopa insensilis* which Will Nash had previously found in the cemetery. It is found around sap runs on trees where the females lay their eggs; males can be found hovering in front of sap runs or above nearby vegetation as they search for females. It used to be found mostly on Elm trees and declined after the advent of Dutch Elm Disease and the loss of so many mature trees. Happily, it will use sap runs on a variety of trees and seems to be increasing in numbers again. The ones I saw were on a sap run on a large Beech tree. These are not your archetypal hoverflies and are most likely to be mistaken for just some 'fly'.

A large and spectacular hoverfly that I look for each spring is the bumblebee mimic *Criorhina ranunculi*. They aren't especially common in the cemetery so it is always a delight to see one. They have a liking for Pussy Willow catkins and also the flowers of Cherry Laurel. I spotted a couple on the boundary hedge on Gypsy Lane.



Left: *Brachyopa insensilis*
Right: *Criorhina ranunculi*

Wildlife sightings in 2023

Vanna Bartlett

Bees and Wasps

As usual in the spring, I spent a fair amount of time looking for solitary bees and managed to find yet another new species to add to the cemetery list. This was the mining bee *Andrena thoracica* with a male seen on 15th February 2023, a particularly early record and the only one I made.

The wonderfully named *Oxybelus uniglumis* (or Common Spiny Digger Wasp) was seen on Yarrow flowers while I was searching for solitary bees in the area of the cemetery beyond the ring road. I have occasionally recorded one in our garden and on our allotment. The female wasp impales her prey (usually a fly) on the end of her sting to carry into her nest burrow.

Bugs

The capsid bug *Pithanus maerkelii* is apparently fairly common and widespread but I had never seen one before finding it in the cemetery. It is rather ant-like and usually has short wings.

Arocatus longiceps/roeselii is a scarce species in Norfolk and a relative newcomer to Britain, first found in 2007 in London. There seem to be two forms each with a different food plant. One is found on London Plane and the other on Alder trees. Confusingly, on the continent both are considered to be the same species.

Other 'true bugs' to look out for are the Psyllids or 'Jumping Plant Lice', a name that doesn't make them sound particularly appealing. Some are rather similar looking but they are usually restricted to a particular host plant so they can be relatively easy to track down. *Spanioneura fonscolombii* is one of two species found on Box. Luckily there is still a bit of Box left after the depredations of Box Moth caterpillars and I managed to find one. Of the three species of *Psyllopsi*s that feed on Ash, *Psyllopsi*s *fraxini* causes distinctive galls on the leaves which are easy to spot.



Above: *Andrena thoracica* male
Right: *Oxybelus uniglumis*



Left: *Psyllopsi*s *fraxini*
gall on Ash leaf



Above left:
Arocatus
longiceps/roeselii

Above right:
Pithanus maerkelii

Left:
Spanioneura
fonscolombii



Wildlife sightings in 2023

Vanna Bartlett



Moths

The Tree-lichen Beauty (*Cryphia algae*) was formerly a rare migrant to southern England. In recent years it has become much more frequent and has established as a breeding species. The moth has previously been recorded in light traps in neighbouring gardens; in March I was fortunate to find a caterpillar on a gravestone. As the name suggests, the caterpillar feeds on lichens on trees.

And finally...

A surprising (and potentially unwelcome) find was made on a visit with James Emerson when we were searching for various invertebrates. On turning over an old roof tile, we discovered a couple of Australian Flatworms. These will have been accidentally imported via the horticultural trade and most probably come from a nearby garden. Non-native Flatworms (especially the New Zealand ones) are notorious for eating our Earthworms. The species we found, *Caenoplana variegata*, doesn't eat Earthworms but feeds instead on a whole variety of invertebrates. They reproduce by fusion, a small piece breaking off and forming a new individual, giving them the potential to increase and spread. It also makes them rather difficult to destroy if they do become a problem.

Although it is great to add new species to the list, it is just as satisfying to re-find ones that have been absent for a number of years (or perhaps just overlooked or unobserved). Finding the Graveyard Beetles was an undoubted highlight.



Top: Tree-lichen Beauty caterpillar

Bottom: Australian Flatworm, *Caenoplana variegata*

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

Gary White

Gary reports on the species spotted during the Friends of Earlham Cemetery 2025 Big Garden Birdwatch walk.

Great Spotted Woodpecker

We were lucky to have glorious, if very cold, weather for this year's Big Garden Birdwatch walk. This meant that several of the birds we saw were out enjoying the winter sun and we were able to watch a lovely Great Spotted Woodpecker (above) at the start of the walk, calling away from the top of her tree. Although we counted less species than last year and didn't get the best views of all the birds (lots flew off the minute I identified them to the group), we did have a close encounter with a friendly robin who seemed to relish singing for an audience. A highlight was a Buzzard flying into the cemetery (possibly looking for some peace and quiet), mobbed by a crowd of Carrion Crows, before being chased out by the same antisocial crowd of corvids. As with previous years, we saw **lots** of Woodpigeons!

It is always challenging to point out mobile birds to a group, but I think most people were able to enjoy watching many of the birds we saw. The table below shows the number of species and number of individual birds counted over the last three walks (this doesn't include birds flying over). An unusual omission from the list this year was Long-tailed Tit, which we did see just before the count started, but eluded us for the rest of the walk!

	2025	2024	2023
Number of species	19	24	17
Number of birds counted	205	172	190



Birds Counted in 2025

- Blackbird
- Blue Tit
- Buzzard
- Carrion Crow
- Coal Tit
- Common Gull
- Goldcrest
- Goldfinch
- Great Spotted Woodpecker
- Great Tit
- Herring Gull
- Jackdaw
- Jay
- Magpie
- Nuthatch
- Robin
- Stock Dove
- Woodpigeon
- Wren

Top: Robin
Bottom: Woodpigeon

