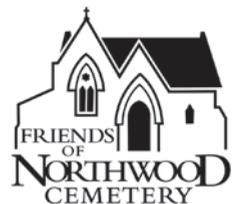


# NORTHWOOD CEMETERY

NATURAL HISTORY



# GUIDE MAP



# NATURAL HISTORY

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On entering Northwood Cemetery through the main gates, you will find yourself in **Area 1** as detailed on the map. You are greeted by a view of the magnificent twin chapels. Built as a pair in 1856, the East Chapel (with bell tower) was initially designated for Church of England use, whilst the West Chapel was for dissenters (all other denominations).

A wander around this area will reveal many trees, including four large Cedar of Lebanon, just south of the chapels. It is believed that all of the cemetery's larger trees were planted during phase one and two of the cemetery's development (1856 to 1877). It is thought that many of the noble trees may have been donated by Queen Victoria as, coincidentally, the building of Osborne House had recently been completed and its surrounding grounds were in the process of being landscaped. Consequently, many tree species seen in this cemetery can also to be found at Osborne.

Trees with poignant names relating to sadness were often planted in cemeteries and the Weeping Beech close to the East Chapel and a Weeping Ash in Plot 18 are examples of this. The tree in front of the East Chapel main door is a Morinda Spruce, one of five within the cemetery boundary. Interestingly, it is believed that Northwood Park has just one tree of this species in its grounds. The large tree to the north east corner of the East Chapel is a Holm Oak, one of seven here. Equally spread across the chapel's frontage are four variegated Holly trees. Near the centre of Plot One is a magnificent English Yew, one of several in the grounds. There are also many Irish Yew, planted as was customary in churchyards of the time and others are self-seeded. Much folklore surrounds the reason why they were planted, one being for the making of longbows. Churchyards were usually walled so that the trees could not be reached by grazing animals. As all parts of a yew tree excepting the flesh of the berries are poisonous, probably good thinking.

You may be lucky enough to hear the high-pitched twitter of a Goldcrest, Britain's smallest bird, weighing in at six grams (comparable to a 10 pence coin). They have a preference for conifers and are more often than not, high up in the treetops. **Area 1** is Red Squirrel territory and as many as four have

*Red Squirrel*





*Honey Waxcap*

been spotted together. They can be seen at any time of the year and prefer the northern (wooded) end of the cemetery. Keep an eye out for one as it scampers across the grass or through the trees. If you do spot one, stay very still as they are more likely to disappear on detecting movement, rather than seeing you as a stationary object.

The cemetery is well known for its many species of seasonal flora, and in this area in particular, spring flowers include Wood Anemone, Primroses and Violets. During the closing months of the year there is an abundance of fungi, with some scarce species showing up at times, including the unusual Purple Coral.

Moving into **Area 2**, you are now in the cemetery's nature 'hot spot', particularly on the Shamblers Copse (Eastern) side. Four plots within this area (14,15,19,20) have for many years been set aside for nature, being cut just once per annum, usually around September time.



*Common-spotted orchid*

*Small Copper*



The conditions that prevail here are ideal for all manner of seasonal flora, which in turn, attracts many types of insects including a variety of butterflies.

Early Spring is a good time to see Wood Anemone, naturalised Crocus, wild Daffodils, Primroses and Bluebells. June will usually yield a mass of Common-Spotted Orchids in plot 15 and some years a magnificent spread of the less common Green-Winged Orchids in Plot 24. A wide variety of butterfly species can be observed here, with some scarcities, including Silver-Washed Fritillary, White Admiral and Brown Argus. With patience and a pair of binoculars, on a sunny day you could even be lucky enough to spot a Purple Hairstreak flitting around the top of one of the Oak trees. In 1878 one hundred Rhododendrons were planted in this area, a sight to behold when in flower during springtime.

The only Horse Chestnut in the cemetery is in Plot 20. Well worth a visit during May to see it at its finest, covered in rose-red flowers.

One prominent feature is an enormous Monterey Pine in Plot 22. For many years, a rope swing adorned one of its huge branches, although seemingly relieved of this 'feature' in recent times, due probably to the technological requirement of today's youth.



*Monterey Pine*



*Strawberry Tree*

No fewer than five Strawberry Trees are established within the grounds. A native of South West Ireland and Southern Europe, they display beautiful flowers and a strawberry-like fruit in late autumn. They are quite unusual by the fact that they display flower and fruit simultaneously, the fruit of one year being from the flower of the previous.

On entering **Area 3** you will notice the change of habitat to an area of open grassland. Fewer trees feature here, although there are still some fine specimens. Keep a lookout for Green Woodpeckers. You may see one foraging for insects in an anthill, although it is more likely that you become alerted by its alarm call as it flies away after being disturbed. Rabbits have taken up residence here and are not popular with visiting relatives as they eat the flowers that they leave for their loved ones.

Reaching what is locally known as the ‘top roundabout’ at the southern end of the cemetery you will immediately notice the gazebo to the south, just down the hill. It is sited on one corner of Plot 42, which has been designated for Muslim burials. This area has been planted with shrubs and trees, in keeping with middle-eastern gardens.



*Green Woodpecker*

Plots 40 and 41 are designated a natural burial site, which was laid out during 2017. Plots 43, 44 and 45 have been cut back just once a year, creating a ‘meadow’ environment that has existed here for many years. It features ancient ‘meadow indicator’ plants, such as Grass Vetchling. This area attracts many butterflies and other insects. Whilst at the southern end of the 17 acre cemetery, you may be lucky enough to hear a Greater Spotted Woodpecker, drumming on a tree in the adjacent woods, searching for insects, or see a Buzzard soaring overhead.

The Friends of Northwood Cemetery do hope you have enjoyed your stroll around this beautiful area and you are encouraged to visit again.

*Picture of Red Squirrel: Adam Pearson.*

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**LOTTERY FUNDED**

