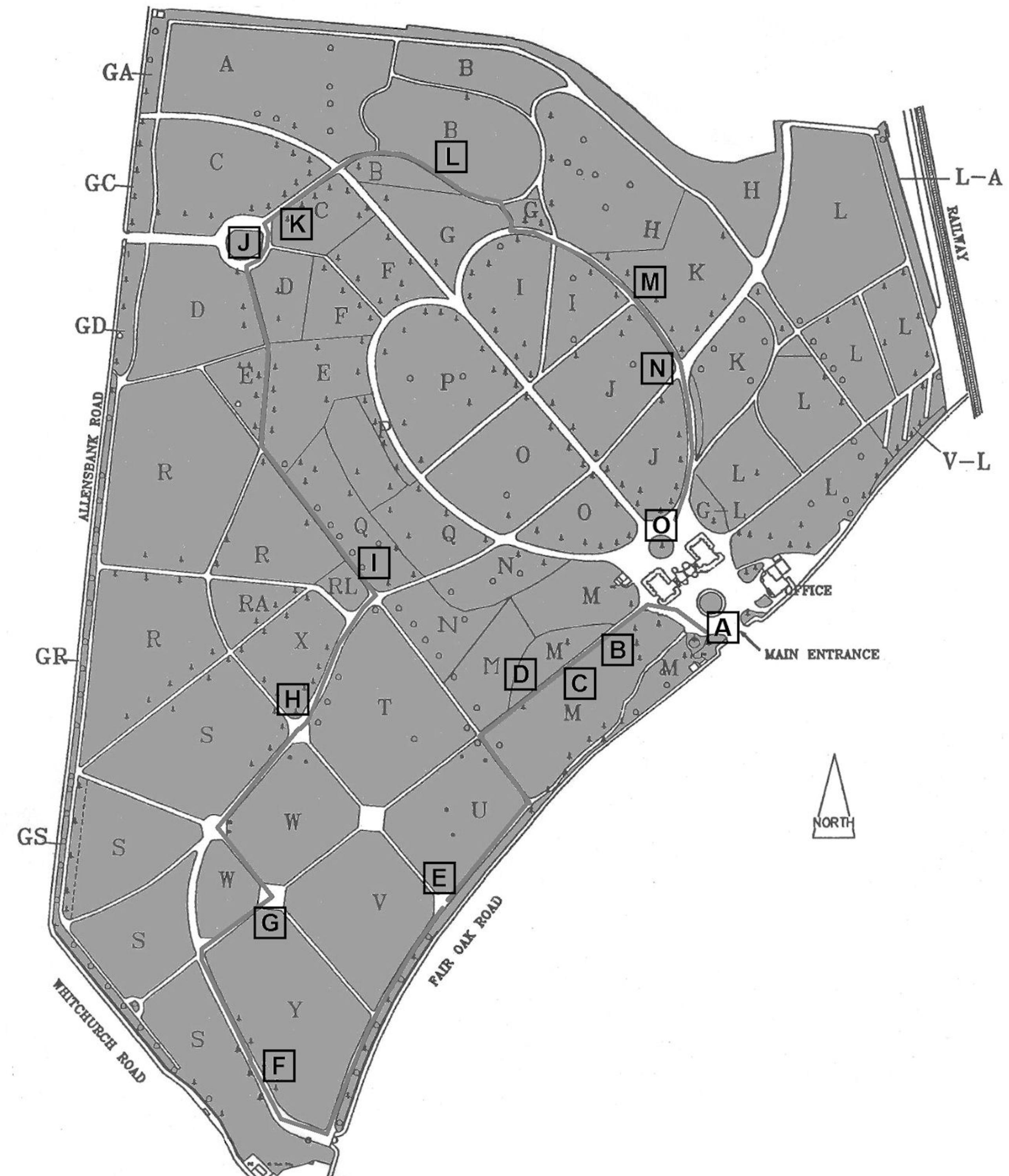


# CATHAYS CEMETERY TREE TRAIL



**The Friends of Cathays Cemetery**





## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a facsimile edition of the Cardiff Bereavement Services' original, well-received booklet produced a few years ago to complement their sign-posted trail around Cathays Cemetery.



The trail has been laid out using what looks like stone blocks salvaged from the now-demolished Catholic Chapels with tree pictures and an identifying letter positioned on top.

Most of the trees and shrubs still exist, although some seem to have been lost over the years. But it still makes an enjoyable, informative stroll around the Cemetery.

## A. MONKEY PUZZLE TREE



The Monkey Puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) was introduced to Great Britain from South America in the late eighteenth century.

The main country of origin, Chile, gives the tree another of its names, the Chile Pine. This conifer has close set leaves which make it unique and the cones on the tree are covered with splendid pointed scales.



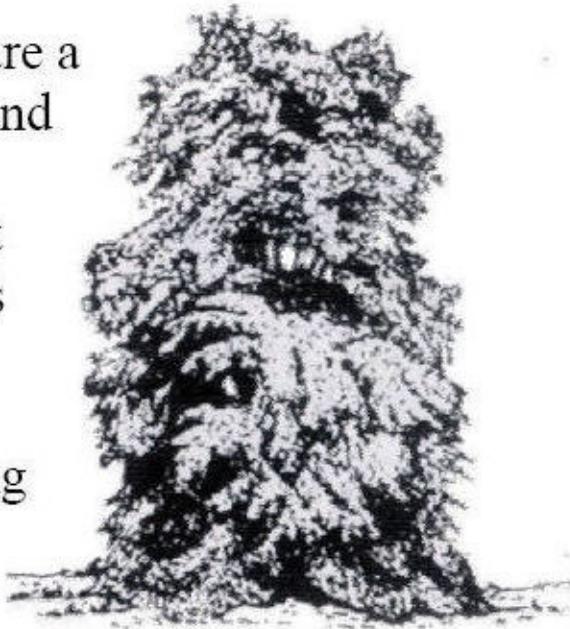
Cathays Chapels

At a tree planting ceremony in the eighteenth century, one dignitary is reputed to have said that: "*it would puzzle a monkey to climb that tree*" hence the tree's common name. Later on in the trail there is another example of this unusual tree.

*To the left of the chapel is the Lime tree, *Tilia Harold Hillier*, which was planted by Gladstone Primary School for National Tree Week in November 1994.*

## B. LIMES

Adjacent to Fair Oak Road is a line of mature Limes (*Tilia*). Limes are a deciduous tree, which means that they lose their leaves in Autumn and survive the harsh winter weather with bare branches. Limes reach approximately 80ft (24.38 metres) in height and have alternate heart shaped leaves and yellow-green delicately scented blossom which is much favoured by bees.



The whitish wood is easily worked and is often used in wood carving whilst the tougher inner bark (Bast) can be used in the making of mats and baskets. A soothing tea can also be brewed from both fresh and dried flowers which is taken with lemon and sugar. Limes are called Lindens in Germany and Basswood in America.

## C. YEWS



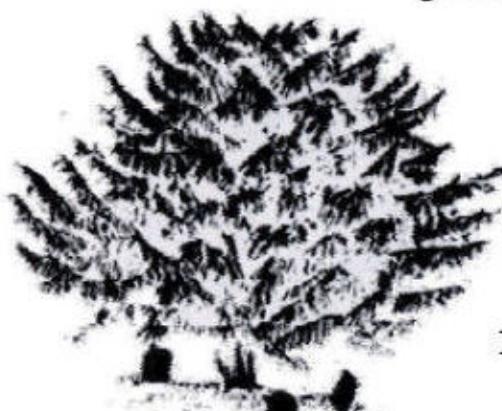
Welsh Longbows at the Battle of Crecy, 1346

On your right are some Yew trees (*Taxus baccata*) with a variety of Irish Yew to your left. Yews are evergreen trees with linear spiral arranged leaves and they grow between 20-40 ft (6-12 metres) in height with a short, thick trunk with dark red-brown flaking bark. There is little undergrowth because of the dense shade of the leaves. The leaves from the Yew are used as a treatment for cancer.

Yews are slow growing and long lived, but their appearance often makes them seem older. The timber is an elastic fine-grained hardwood which was used in the making of longbows and can be used in cabinet making. A 4000 year old Yew has recently been found in a North Wales church.

Yews have a long association with churchyards and are shrouded in mystery and suspicion. Yews were often used at pre-Christian sites of worship since their dense shade provided good shelter and churches developed in these areas. Being evergreens, Yews are also associated with good overcoming evil and with everlasting life, and sprigs of the tree were often buried with the dead.

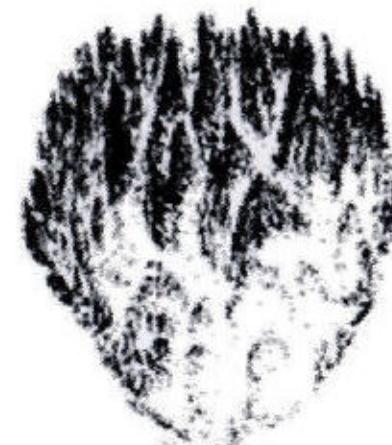
Another reason for finding so many Yews in churchyards is that their leaves are poisonous to sheep and in the days when sheep were used to keep the grass short (before the invention of lawnmowers) – the trees would not be eaten. Churchyards were also one of the few enclosed places where Yews could be grown without fear of harming people.



Common Yew

Although Yew branches were used as palms on Palm Sunday, the tree also had a gloomy and dangerous reputation. In the seventeenth century, it was thought unwise to sleep beneath a Yew tree in a churchyard as the roots sucked up death and disease from the ground and exhaled

this through its leaves.

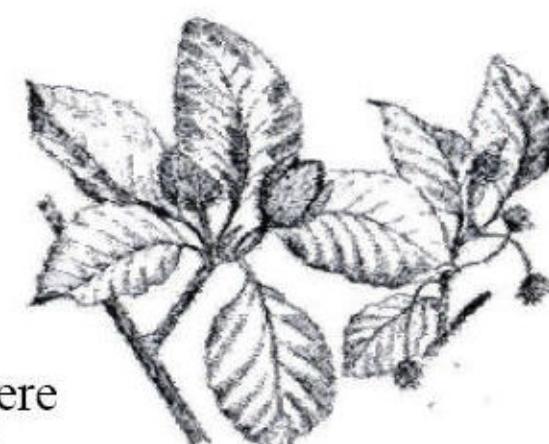


Irish Yew

*Notice how different in shape and colour the Irish Yew is to the Common Yew.*

## D. BEECH

In this section are the new plantings of forty varieties of Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). By planting these new trees, the County of Cardiff can ensure a mature tree landscape within the cemetery. Beech has a smooth silvery bark and grows into a domed branched tree between 60-100 ft (18-30 metres) in height. It is an attractive native tree with russet-brown leaves in autumn which often remain attached to the branches throughout the winter months. The young leaves of the tree were used in salads. The wood is hard and is used in the making of furniture, whilst the beech nuts were used for feeding pigs.



Beech Leaves

Many of the varieties planted here have different coloured and shaped leaves. See how many different shapes and colours you can spot, but remember do not pick the leaves from the tree.

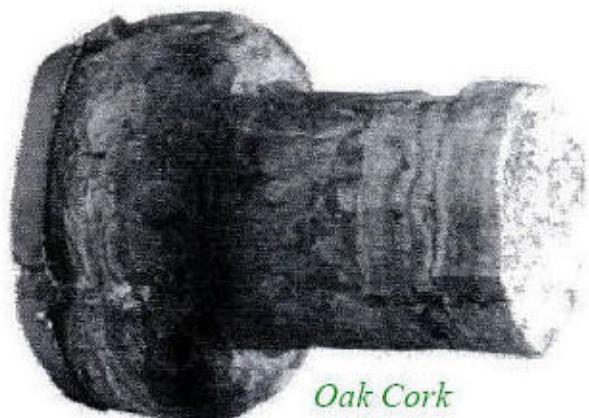
## E. OAK

The Oak tree (*Quercus*) is considered to be the king of the woods. Oaks provide shelter and food for hundreds of living things:

- Birds nest in the crown and feed on acorns
- Insects devour the leaves
- Ivy and Lichen invade the bark
- Weevils attack the roots



Oaks are not the most grand or graceful British trees but they hold a special place in people's hearts because of their longevity, shape and durability. The trees have very sturdy trunks which, when old, become rotten and hollow.

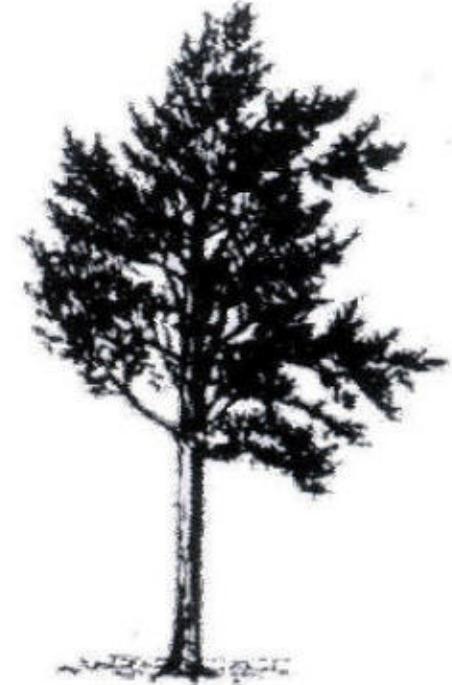


The wood is close-grained and is highly valued for building, furniture-making and panelling. Previously, Oak was used in ship building. Oak wood can be stained by a fungus which turns the wood green. This 'green oak' was used for making crafts and was sold as 'Tunbridge Ware'. The bark is rich in tannic acid which is used in the preparation of leather. The bark of Cork Oak is also stripped and used in bottle corks.

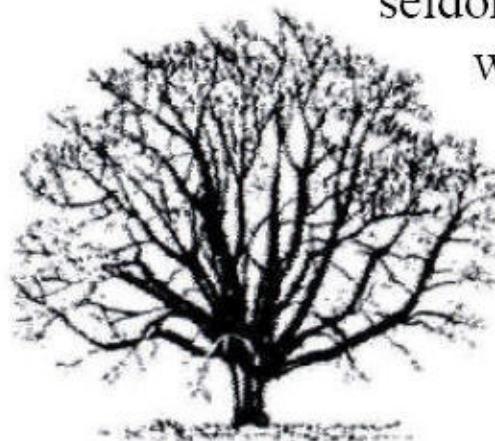
## F. PINES

Alongside the Branch Library are Cypress and newly planted Ornamental Pear and Cherry trees and Crab Apples which look splendid in blossom. As you walk away from the Branch Library you will walk through an avenue of Black Pines (*Pinus nigra*). The tall evergreens add greatly to the beauty of Cathays' winter landscape and provide much needed shelter for birds in the cold winter.

The timber is light and easily worked and was used as pit-props, telephone poles and packing cases. The pulp is used for paper and there are valuable by-products such as pitch, resin and turpentine.

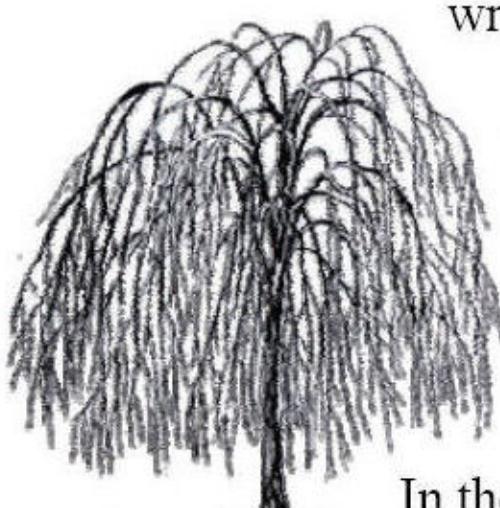


## G. MAPLE



Here you can see examples of the Field Maple (*Acer*) and Almond. The Field Maple is the only native Acer. It is much smaller than the Sycamore tree, seldom growing to more than 50-60 ft (15-18 metres) in height. The wood is hard and finely grained and is much prized by cabinet-makers. The leaves of the Maple are lobed and shaped like a hand and so are called 'palmate' whilst the fruit is winged and often likened to a propeller.

## H. COPPICED WILLOW STOOLS



As you walk through this area notice the Holly Bushes and Ivy. Holly is symbolically linked with Christmas. No-one is sure of this association but in the pre-Christian era this evergreen plant provided good colour in the dormant season. It is prevalent due to birds dropping the seeds and people bringing in wreaths to the cemetery.

On this section there are two coppiced Willow Stools. The wood is used for gate posts and wattle and daub. Coppicing is an on-going process and involved the cutting down of branches so that new shoots grow up from the cut stumps. Wood can be taken from the same tree over and over again for many years and these trees will be coppiced again in the near future.

In the distance you can also see the glorious newly planted Golden Scots Pine which are a beautiful colour and 'glow' in the sunlight.

## I. LOG PILE

It is important to create a natural ecological environment in the cemetery and this has been achieved by selective planting, the adoption of different grass cutting schemes and by encouraging features such as this log pile.

Healthy and rotting wood provides habitats for a variety of 'mini beasts' and fungi which in turn attract birds to the cemetery. Some of the species to look out for are shown on the accompanying check sheet. Please feel free to turn the logs over to look for insects but remember to carefully return them to their original position.

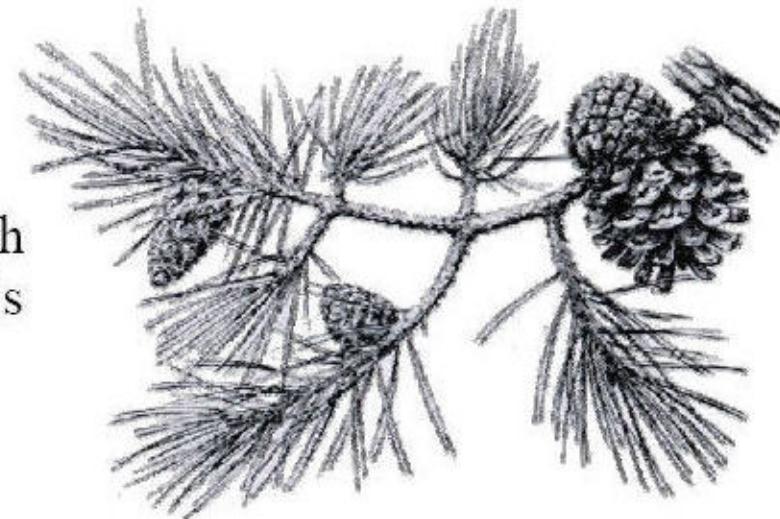


## J. SCOTS PINE



As you proceed towards the Bishop's Memorial, which is one of the most elaborate memorials in Cathays Cemetery, you will pass a line of Pines (*Pinus sylvestris*). The bark is very rough and this is an ideal place to take good bark rubbings. There is a space to take your bark rubbing on the activity sheet.

Near the Bishop's Memorial is a 'roundabout' with a Scots Pine on it with needles which are soft to the touch. You can easily calculate the age of the tree as each whorl or ring of branches indicates one year's growth.



## K. EVERGREEN OAK

The Evergreen Oak or Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) on this section is of Mediterranean origin and has been cultivated in the British Isles since the sixteenth century. The leaves are like those of the Holly and the tree is planted extensively throughout Cardiff. This tree is ideal for planting here since Cardiff is by the coast and the Evergreen Oak can withstand the salt laden winds.



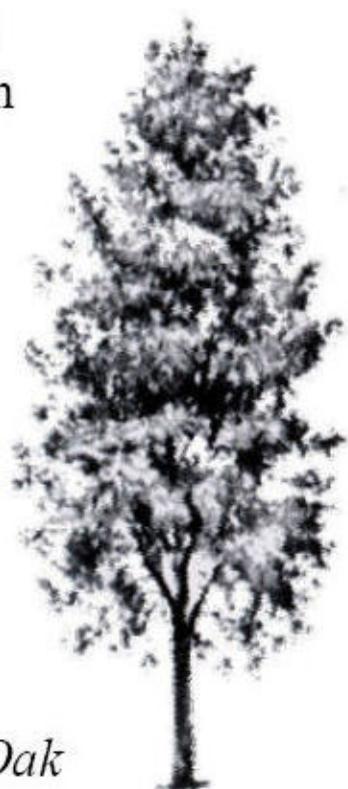
## L. NEW CONIFERS AND ASH

As you walk down this grassy path there are a number of newly planted conifers. In the future these will replace the tall, more mature trees and so maintain the landscape of the cemetery. A wildflower collection has been planted in this section to enhance the existing wildflowers such as primrose and bluebells already growing throughout the cemetery.



*Conifer*

Close to these conifers are several mature Ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The Ash is a very elegant tree and unusual in that it produces flowers before it produces any leaves. There is little shade under the tree so under-shrubs can grow. The wood is used in the making of agricultural tools and tool handles whilst the bark's bitter properties were used as a quinine substitute.



*Ash*

There is a lot of folklore attached to the Ash, involving the weather, '*Oak before Ash then we're in for a splash, Ash before Oak then we're in for a soak*'. It is believed that the Ash attracts lightning '*avoid the Ash it courts the flash*', although this has never been proven.

## M. NEW NATIVE PLANTINGS

This section contains five areas of new plantings of native trees. These new plantings will encourage wildlife within the cemetery, as they will provide new opportunities for food and shelter. Trees included within this plantings scheme are the Whitebeam, Birch, Pine, the Wayfaring Tree and Sweet Briar.

Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) is a small tree which grows about 40 ft (12 metres) in height with beautiful brown bark. Its felted leaves and red fruits are very attractive, especially in autumn. It is a native tree and is often seen in gardens and along streets.

Sweet Briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*) is a much branched shrub which grows to about 4ft (1 metre) in height. The shrub has sharp hooked prickles and pretty bright pink flowers, which has a fragrance closely resembling apples. This smell is more evident during warm and showery weather.

The Wayfaring Tree (*Viburnum lantana*) is a deciduous bush growing to between 6 –12 ft (1-3 metres) in height. This shrub is commonly seen among thickets and along roadsides and its fruits turn a glorious purplish-black colour. The oval leaves are impressive in autumn with their beautiful crimson display. The tree was given this unusual name by Gerard, a herbalist in the sixteenth century but the name is considered an anomaly as it does not provide anything to aid the traveller on his journey.

## N. BIRCH

The Birch tree (*Betula*) is often called the '*Lady of the Woods*' due to its graceful shape and silvery-white bark. Oil from the bark can be used in the preparation of leather as a preservative and the wood can be used for canoes. The twigs may be bundled together to make witches' brooms (besoms) and can be used to fill out steeple chase jumps seen in horse racing. The sap of the Birch tree is very sugary and when fermented can be made into Birch wine.



There are also good examples of Copper Beech, Magnolia, Rowan and Tulip trees, as well as two Trees of Heaven.

## O. CEDAR OF LEBANON

The Cedar of Lebanon provides a stunning finish to the trail. The tree originates from Mount Lebanon and South East Turkey, and its bark is dark grey and becomes networked with small cracks. The shape of the tree is very distinctive with the branches being layered flat into a 'table top' shape.







**Cardiff  
Bereavement  
Services**



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