Open days
At present the Cemetery gates are only open when volunteers are working in the grounds. This is usually on the second weekend of the month between 10.00am and 4.00pm — weather permitting! (Please ring 01749 674678 or 675321 if in doubt.)

You are warmly invited to visit - look in on the little chapel, stroll around the grounds, admire the seven tree sculptures, check bee activity around the hives (but take care you don’t get in their way) or just sit under the trees, look at the view and absorb the peace of this ancient place.

Please ensure that you supervise children near the bees and the pond, take care on the uneven ground, and if you have a dog please keep it on a short lead and clean up after it.

Dates for your Diary
The next open days are as follows:

- Saturday and Sunday 12th & 13th October
- Saturday and Sunday 9th and 10th November
  (all open days are from 10.00am to 4.00pm)

On Sunday 3rd November (the closest Sunday to All Souls Day, November 1st) there will be an All Souls service in the Chapel at 3.00pm. All are welcome.

Advance notice for next spring!

On Friday 22nd February 2014 we are holding our annual Table Top Sale in St Thomas Church Hall. As well as our usual stalls we are hoping to have some products from the Cemetery bees for sale. Make a note of the date so you don’t miss out!

Wells Heritage Open Days
We were pleased to be included in the 2013 plans for Wells Heritage Open Days this September. Over the four days we welcomed more than forty visitors, some of whom had fascinating stories to tell of their own or their relative’s work in the old Mendip Hospital.

Windfall from Tesco Ltd
Earlier this summer Tesco announced they were making available £2000 for local charities around Wells. The timescale was short and the application form brief. We put in a hasty application and very soon after were delighted to hear we had been awarded £500!

We are meeting shortly to decide how to spend the money but there is no shortage of work to be done and equipment needed to do it so the unexpected contribution is most welcome.

Friends on-line
Contacting you by e-mail really does help to save money on paper and postage which in turn enables us to spend more on plants and bulbs to feed the bees. If this newsletter has come through your letter box and you are online, please send an e-mail to logborne@btinternet.com. Thank you.

Membership by standing order.
Earlier this year we suggested you might consider paying your subscription by setting up a standing order with your bank. A standing order can be easily stopped for any reason but it will help us to plan our expenditure from year to year.

If you feel able to set up a standing order the information you need to give your bank is as follows: Our Charity banks with:

The Charities Aid Foundation Bank Ltd (CAFB)
25 Kingshill Avenue, Kingshill
West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ
The Bank’s sort code is 40 – 52 - 40
Our account no. is 00009332
Thank you!

Milestone
Next year, 2014, will be 140 years since the first burial took place in the Cemetery. We would welcome ideas for ways to mark this milestone in the Cemetery’s history.
Progress with ‘Plan B’

The grant for ‘Plan B’ from the Co-operative Community Fund is proving very useful. We have purchased a modest printer, inks and paper for the exclusive use of the charity. We can now produce posters, newsletters and information leaflets flexibly, economically and to a reasonable standard. We have also been able to bring up to date the display of historical information about the old Mendip Hospital and its cemetery on the boards in the Cemetery Chapel. Call in to see it on our next open day!

Notice boards have been installed on the gates to the Cemetery and to the lane in Hooper Avenue. We will keep these updated with information about cemetery opening times and future events. Plan B has also enabled us to purchase equipment to make our grass cutting schedule easier, safer and more selective.

Both Western Power Distribution and Mendip District Council have helped to improve access to Cemetery Lane for buggies and wheelchairs. WPD laid tarmac at the top of the lane and MDC have scheduled regularly cutting of the path surface to keep it clear of grass and nettles. We have now solved the final access issue by having two ramps made locally to enable wheelchairs to navigate the three steps into the porch and the chapel itself.

All this has been as a result of ‘Plan B’ - and there is a lot more to do!

Grass cutting

By the time you receive this newsletter a tractor will have cut the grass, the whole Cemetery will be visible from the top of the site and some of the Cemetery features usually hidden from view will have been revealed.

Why not pay us a visit and see for yourself?

Life in the hives.

We now have four active honeybee colonies in the Cemetery that managed to survive the long, cold winter and very late spring. We are fortunate—The British Beekeepers Association reported that a third of all honeybee colonies in England did not survive the prolonged cold weather.

This autumn Master Beekeeper, Meg, has managed to harvest a total of 70lbs of honey from the four hives. This may sound a lot but in a reasonable year you might expect 70lbs from just one hive.

At this time of year the bees are busy defending against wasps and other bee colonies who are trying to steal their honey.

Watching the hive entrances from a safe distance on a sunny October day I saw a wasp fighting bees to get into the hive. Bee and wasp tumbled together to the ground, locked in mortal combat. Unequally matched the bee will die after releasing its sting but the stinging wasp might live to sting again.

As the days shorten into autumn the queen bee lays fewer eggs. Fewer male drones are now needed for fertilisation so many of them are booted out of the hive, their life’s work done. Life in the hive can be cruel but the colony must shrink to survive the winter.

A few weeks ago we planted 1000 crocus bulbs at the top of the site. The bees will enjoy the early crocus pollen and we can all look forward to a colourful display next spring.

Other activity in the Cemetery

The articles in the Wells Journal featuring the ‘Forgotten Lives’ of people working and living in the old Mendip Hospital have resulted in six new volunteers coming forward to help maintain the grounds.

The volunteers have been busy cutting paths through the tall vegetation and tidying the flower beds. But there is so much more to do. The beds are quite overgrown—old shrubs need to be dug out and bee-friendly plants put in their place. We have a small budget for this but more than anything we would welcome your practical help digging and planting! Please get in touch with Lynda on 01749 675312 if you can spare an hour or two once a month to help to look after this ‘Cemetery garden.’

Visitors Book

This summer we have been trying to encourage more visitors. Apart from our usual open weekends we arranged to be open on three additional Sundays (28th July, 11th August and 29th Sept.) Our new Visitors Book has been open to record your visits and so far we have welcomed 158 visitors—many of whom did not know of the Cemetery’s existence!

Please spread the word that this is not the sort of ‘heritage’ place you might visit just once. This is a place to stroll around through the changing seasons or just to sit under the trees for peaceful contemplation. We are working hard to make this a place you will want to visit again and again. We look forward to welcoming you.