

Sun Rising News

The twice yearly newsletter of
Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground and Nature Reserve

Autumn/Winter 2011 - 2012



Welcome to the natural burial ground's autumn/winter newsletter.

Stories of Sun Rising

Every individual life is so precious, and so often I am aware of the extraordinary stories that families tell of the loved one they are laying to rest at Sun Rising. Whether that person dies at a good old age, or had but a few courageous days or months, there are stories that can be told about that life, about the spirit that strived, making a difference in others' lives.

At Sun Rising, we would like to create a collection of life stories, as a record for future generations who may wish to know something of those who are buried in the nature reserve. Whether we publish this as a printed book in aid of The Friends of Sun Rising, or keep it as a digital record, we are not yet sure. We have an idea of a small group of you coming together to discuss possibilities. If you'd like to join such a group, let me know.

We shall begin simply by collecting stories. If you have buried a loved one at Sun Rising, would you be interested in contributing to the collection? Stories should be between 300 and 3000 words, no more. If you would like to add one or two photographs, no more, we would accept good digital *jpgs*, or we can scan and return the photograph to you.

Nature Notes

All of a tree's life processes need water, including the transport of dissolved nutrients and chemical messages from the root system to the leaves. These flow up

columns of cells called xylem just below the bark, the water being drawn up by evaporation through stomata, tiny holes in the leaves. The amount of water is vast: in an ash tree, water can move at a rate of 85 feet per hour, a mature ash getting through 50 gallons a day! In drought conditions, when a tree can't get sufficient water, it slows down the rate of water loss by closing the stomata, but that stops photosynthesis, meaning the tree grows very slowly or not at all.

The long term effects on trees from the long dry summer of 2011 is likely to be minimal, but trees have grown very slowly, using up valuable stores of energy, making them more susceptible to pests and disease. At Sun Rising we'll keep a careful eye on memorial trees to see how they fare.

A dry spring has some benefits. Most fruits and berries are insect pollinated, and during a wet spring insects spend much of their time sheltering from the rain. In a dry spring insects are on the wing visiting flowers, providing our wildlife with a well-stocked winter larder.

At Sun Rising the first signs of spring are all important: snowdrops in the grass. The honeysuckle and elder are usually the first trees to come into leaf, then shrubs and smaller trees like hawthorn, cherry, field maple, blackthorn and hazel.

Producing leaves before their taller neighbours they get a chance to photosynthesise before the canopy greens above, blocking out the light.

Grassland Management

The annual cut of our wildflower meadows and tidying of burial areas took place in



September 2011, once grasses and flowering plants had had an opportunity to seed.

Some areas of the wider grassland, grown for hay and cut in June, are still dominated by dandelion. Although it does have some value for wildlife, a monoculture of dandelion is detrimental to biodiversity and we'll try to resolve this by reseeding a small area of the site over the autumn. If this is successful we hope to do the same across the site, enriching the grassland and introducing more wildlife friendly vegetation.

New Tracks

In the spring of 2012, immediately the earth is dry enough, we shall be extending the track that runs the Roundhouse, towards the war memorial and up to our top gate. We'll also put in the spur north of the Roundhouse, just half a dozen yards or so. If you've any queries, let us know.

Newsletters

We now offer the option of receiving this newsletter by email: if you'd like to *go digital*, let us know. If you are not yet on our mailing list, tell us if you'd like to be, and whether you'd prefer email or post.

Memorial Plaques

Families will have been aware that over the summer of 2011 many of the memorial posts at Sun Rising were replaced. All are now of the slightly larger size, allowing the plaques to fit more comfortably on four sides.

Families can upgrade plaques from the pale slate to the new slate, which we believe will keep its colour. If you have not yet replaced a plaque and would like to, get in touch. The cost of replacement is just £15 until March 2012. In 2012, we shall be looking at tree plaques.

Events in 2011/2012

Bulb Planting 2011

If you are interested in planting bulbs on and around a loved one's grave this autumn, get in touch. Our Bulb Planting day is Sunday 9 October, 11 am – 1 pm, but you can plant bulbs any time before frost sets in. Our recommended suppliers for native

bulbs are BTCV online and the National Herb Centre at Warmington. Bulbs acceptable at Sun Rising are:

English Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)
Field Garlic (*Allium oleraceum*)
Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*)
Snakeshead Fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*)
Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*)
Wild Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*)
Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*)

Tree Planting 2011

Memorial trees will be planted over the last weekend of November and the first two weekends of December 2011, if the weather allows. If you have ordered a tree, or we are expecting you to do so, you will receive a note from us in the autumn.

This year, we are offering the option of memorial trees around the pond. These would be the same price as trees elsewhere around the burial ground, but also include goat willow, dogwood and alder. Let us know if you are interested. Tree plaques could be bought to be installed by the tree.

Remembrance Day 2011

On Friday 11 November, at 11 am, there will be a gathering at our war memorial. This will be a quiet affair, with two minutes silence and the laying of wreaths. All are welcome.

Nature Watch and Open Days 2012

There are three Nature Watch dates in the diary for 2012, when we shall be continuing to record the flora and fauna at the site. All are very welcome to come along, expert or amateur. Our Open Weekend will coincide with the Summer Nature Watch as usual.

Spring : **Saturday 7 April**

Summer : **Saturday 2 – Sunday 3 June**

Late Summer : **Saturday 11 August**

If you would like be more involved with the care of Sun Rising, we have both regular and irregular **Volunteers** who help in different ways according to their particular availability and skills. Let us know!

And if you've ever any queries, do get in touch. We're here to help.

Nature Reserve Burial Grounds

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