

Sun Rising News

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

Spring/Summer 2012



Welcome to the natural burial ground's spring/summer newsletter.

Nature Watch Days

Continuing to record the development of the nature reserve, we have three Nature Watch days in 2012. Whether you have a particular skill or expertise in grasses, birds, butterflies, bats or some other aspect of wildlife, or you are simply interested and keen to have a go, all are very welcome.

Spring : **Saturday 7 April**

Summer : **Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 June**

Late Summer : **Saturday 11 August**

Lifeways Talk

Emma is giving a talk on natural burial and ethical funerals at Lifeways Therapy Centre in Stratford upon Avon on **Friday 20 April**, at 7.30 pm. Get in touch with Lifeways on 01789 292052 for further information.

Emma gives talks to WI and other women's groups, environmental groups and other interested gatherings: get in touch if you'd like to arrange one.

Open Weekend 2012

This year our Open Weekend will be held on **9 – 10 June**, 11 am - 4 pm. As usual, there will be staff and volunteers on hand to talk about the burial ground and your 'ideal' funeral. All are welcome. Refreshments will be available.

Violin Recital

Our next recital is on **Sunday 10 June** to coincide with our Open Weekend. The internationally acclaimed violinist **Steve Bingham** (www.stevebingham.co.uk) will

give an afternoon recital from 3 pm, held in the Roundhouse, with music from Bach to Bartok, folk tunes from Norway to Scotland, and arrangements of The Beatles and Coldplay. The perfect mix for a gentle summer's afternoon ...

You are welcome to bring chairs or rugs to sit on the grass, a picnic, a bottle of wine. There will be tea and coffee in the marquee. Attendance is by donation, with funds in aid of The Friends of Sun Rising.

Creativity Day : Floral Tributes

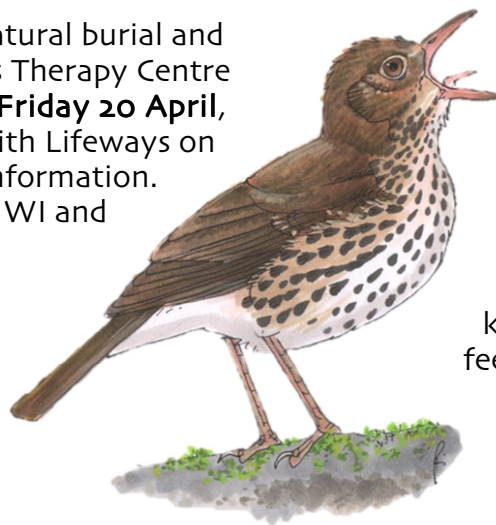
In July or August we shall be holding a day for both adults and children on creating beautiful natural floral tributes that can be placed on graves or elsewhere, from sprays to corn dollies. Let us know if you are interested and we'll send you the date as soon as it is confirmed.

Volunteers

Sun Rising volunteers help in all kinds of ways - filling the bird feeders, raking hay at harvest, serving tea at Open Days and more. If you'd like become one of our regular or irregular volunteers caring for Sun Rising, let us know.

Gifts and Offerings

To ensure Sun Rising remains tidy and natural, our regulations don't allow anything but flowers on graves. Everything else is removed. Anything broken is disposed of, but pretty jars, ornaments, bears and the like, are kept for a short while at the office: if you want to reclaim something, just give us a call.



New Tracks

It has been our aim to extend the track that runs east from the Roundhouse, past the war memorial and up to our top gate, but finding the right stone is proving hard! When we do, the work will be done, together with the first metres of the north spur off the Roundhouse. If you've any queries, let us know.

Compost Heap

Visitors will see our new compost bin. This allows families to recycle floral tributes themselves should they wish. Not only will the compost be used for tree planting, but compost heaps themselves provide valuable habitats. Badgers and foxes root around them looking for worms, hedgehogs eat the slugs, and reptiles, amphibians and other fauna make use of the warmth generated. Compost heaps are also particularly attractive to snakes and slow worms.

Nature Notes

Spring arrived early this year. By mid March the blackthorn was flowering, snowdrops replaced by cowslips and daffodils. Such lovely spring days are heart-warming, but we could do with more rain. Following last summer's drought, the hoped-for winter rains failed to materialise, and water is likely to be in short supply this summer.

The pond is already proving to be crucial to local wildlife, retaining enough water to be an essential resource. Animal tracks left in the soft earth around it show signs of nocturnal visits by deer, foxes and badgers. Another regular visitor is the heron, which will hopefully bring with it, stuck to its legs, plant material and fish and insect eggs that will colonise the pond. If left alone, a countryside pond will colonise naturally, whereas plants introduced from elsewhere may bring with them potentially invasive, non-native species. We look forward to seeing what will happen this year.

Trees also need a plentiful supply of water, and unlike animals they can't travel to find it. A tree's root system is made up of large perennial roots that give anchorage, storing and transporting water and nutrients, and fine feeder roots which absorb water. These feeder roots are

temporary structures, dying and being replaced on a regular basis specifically to exploit water where it occurs. In times of drought the small, hair-like feeder roots will grow downwards in search of water. If trees are watered, the feeder roots form nearer the soil's surface. For this reason it is inadvisable to start to water trees during dry weather, unless you can continue watering regularly for the whole growing season. In most situations it is better to allow trees to seek water themselves.

In drought situations some losses amongst newly planted trees are sadly inevitable, but it is environmentally more responsible to accept these losses and replant than to use large quantities of water on which the roots systems will become reliant. Any memorial trees that don't make it through periods of drought will, of course, be replaced in the early winter. Do get in touch if you have concerns.

Grassland Management

With increasing human development, flower-rich meadows and lowland grasslands are amongst our most threatened habitats. Many once common meadow flowers like oxeye daisy and yellow rattle are becoming rarities, and this has an impact on the many species of nectar gathering insects that rely on them.

Over the past five years, we have been developing meadow areas at Sun Rising, sowing wildflowers and planting bulbs. These look beautiful in May to July, then going to seed in August when they can look rather tatty. Only once they have shed their precious seed do we cut the hay. The rye grass beyond the current burial areas is cut for hay earlier, but our careful management provides habitat for skylarks, lapwings and other ground nesting birds as well as cover for hares, voles and other mammals. As the burial ground develops, all the grassland will be gradually re-seeded using a mix of wildflowers and grasses.

Mailing List

If you'd like to receive this newsletter and other updates but are not on our mailing list, do get in touch, telling us if you'd like to hear by email or post.

Nature Reserve Burial Grounds

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