

Sun Rising News

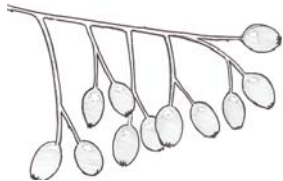
The twice yearly newsletter of
Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground and Nature Reserve

autumn 2006



Welcome to the first newsletter of Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground and Nature Reserve, near Lower Tysoe in south Warwickshire.

Nature Notes



The combination of a wet autumn last year and an absence of spring frosts earlier this year has led to an impressive crop of wild fruits this autumn. The rich harvest that can be seen in hedgerows, woodlands and gardens can be found at Sun Rising too, where fruit-bearing shrubs and trees are drooping under the weight of elder and hawthorn berries, sloes and rose hips. It is a pure delight to watch the wildlife taking full advantage.

Redwings, newly-arrived from Scandinavia for the winter, are gorging themselves on hawthorn berries and sloes, while many of our summer visitors, such as blackcaps, are extending their stay to fatten themselves on elderberries and blackberries before heading for warmer climes.

British natives like blackbirds and starlings are clearly enjoying the feast. Even wood mice, who are normally only seen on the ground, are venturing up into bushes at this time of year in search of ripe, red rose hips. Flowering plants and taller vegetation around the hedge bottoms are offering overwintering habitats for



insects, such as ladybirds, and butterfly and moth larva, as the cold begins to creep in.

It isn't just the plant kingdom that produces its fruits at this time of year though; autumn is also the time when the mysterious fruiting bodies of the fungi appear. Stimulated by the damp conditions of autumn, toadstools of all shapes, colours and sizes emerge. Some cling to the bark of trees, while others lurk in the leaf litter or in open fields. Like flowers, some fungi even have their own unique scent which, in the case of the stink horn at least, isn't always pleasant! At Sun Rising the open grassland and hedge bottoms are rich with fungi, such as shaggy inkcaps and armallaria.



As Sun Rising evolves, a variety of habitats will be created, providing food and shelter for an increasing wealth of wildlife throughout the year. Two of our boundary hedgerows contain a good variety of trees and shrubs, providing food for birds and other creatures, and while we shall be nurturing these we shall also be strengthening those that have been cut back too aggressively while the land was used for agriculture.

Once the hedging and first memorial trees have been planted (see below), apart from keeping the site tidy, there is little groundwork to do over the winter. The next jobs will come around in the spring, when we shall be seeding the graves with native wild flowers.

Development

Over the course of September and October, the first tracks have been going in across the meadow. These will inevitably create some disturbance to the serenity of the land; however, we need to put them in before the clay becomes muddy with winter's damp and cold, and we ask you to bear with us. The tracks will be of the same honey-coloured local Cotswold stone as the car park, and will quickly settle with the winter frost. The first tracks will lead from the main gate to the roundhouse, from there curving back towards the second gate. Once they are done, it will be a good few years before we need put in any more.

We are still on track for the open roundhouse to be constructed in March – April 2007. Crafted of the same Cotswold stone, with green oak beams and a turf roof, this will provide a wonderful shelter, spacious enough for a funeral or memorial service to take place, and comfortable enough to sit and reflect when visiting the burial ground at any other time. Our spring Open Day will be a celebration of its completion!

Speaking of which, our Open Day in August was a marvellous occasion. Around 200 people attended our Sunday event, taking a walk around the meadow, chatting to staff, and sitting to have a cup of tea and some biscuits. We heartily thank all who came, and especially those who helped out.

Tree Planting

The next big diary date is the weekend of **Saturday 2 – Sunday 3 December 2006**. This is allocated for our first planting of memorial trees and hedging.

Hedging will be going in around the car park fence, as well as elsewhere, such as filling in gaps in the boundary hedges around the field; all our hedging will be a rich mixture of thorn, hazel and wild rose. We are currently hoping to source fully biodegradable or recyclable tree guards; they will have to be tall enough owing the number of hares we've spotted at the site!

We shall also be planting memorial trees. Some families have already arranged to inter the cremated remains of loved ones, planting trees on these graves. Others have let us know they would like to be involved in the planting of memorial trees on graves or where their loved ones are not buried at Sun Rising. **You are welcome to join us.** Please do let us know if you are coming, whether you would like to be involved in the digging and / or planting, and at what time that might be.

Even if you are not strong enough to help with the physical work, or have no one interred or remembered at Sun Rising, you are more than welcome to join us. We are aiming for a weekend blessed by the shared activities and company of those for whom the site is important. We hope to be offering teas and coffee, and around lunchtime will even have some bread and warm soup on hand in the marquee, depending on how chilly the weekend turns out to be!

Future Newsletters

This and all subsequent newsletter are also available on our website (where it can be downloaded as a pdf file) for those who are fluent travellers of the internet. If you would prefer to receive an email letting you know when the latest is available, so saving paper, please do let us know.

If you would rather not receive this newsletter at all, please let us know.

Very many blessings!

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