

# Sun Rising News

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

## Autumn/Winter 2014



**Bulbs and Planting on Graves** Late September to early November is a good time to plant perennials and put in bulbs at Sun Rising: the ground is softer and damper, and the rain more likely to come. However, as a nature reserve, only plants and trees native to this area can be planted at Sun Rising. All cultivars and non-natives will be removed. Please do ask for our Acceptable Plants list before putting anything in.

**Saturday 18 October** is our annual bulb planting day, 11 am to 1 pm. If you'd like bulbs from us, whether you would like to plant them yourselves or would like us to, let us know so we have enough on the day. We ask for a donation of 50p a bulb, but let us know what you'd like and what you can afford.

**Tree Planting** This year, tree planting is on 28 – 30 November, 5 – 7 December and 12 – 14 December 2014. Those who have let us know they wish to plant a tree are notified early in October, and invited to book a slot in the schedule.

A few hundred more trees and shrubs will be planted around the site, broadening the hedges along the lane and between the site and the adjoining stables. These will be planted at the same time. If you would like to help, do let us know, giving us an idea of your availability.

Now and then, the weather is still too warm to plant at the end of November: the trees haven't reached a state of full dormancy so can't be safely uprooted and transplanted. Equally, now and then, the weather is too cold by

mid December. A good frost or a little snow is fine, as long as the ground is not frozen beneath the surface, but please bear with us if we need to rearrange.

**Christmas Cards** This year we are pleased to be able to offer greetings cards with winter photographs, all taken at Sun Rising, which can be used as Christmas or Yule Cards. These are sold in aid of The Friends of Sun Rising, at £1.50 each and in packs of six for £9, or two packs (12 cards) for just £15. The pictures can be found on the Friends website.

**Carols at Sun Rising** Following the success last December, this year we shall be holding another caroling event at Sun Rising. This year it will be at 11 am on **Sunday 14 December**. With mulled wine and mince pies, carols to sing along to and carols to listen to, the event is a lovely way to feel the beauty and wealth of the festival, to meet Sun Rising friends old and new, and to pick up Christmas cards, and those important jars of Sun Rising honey for Christmas gifts!

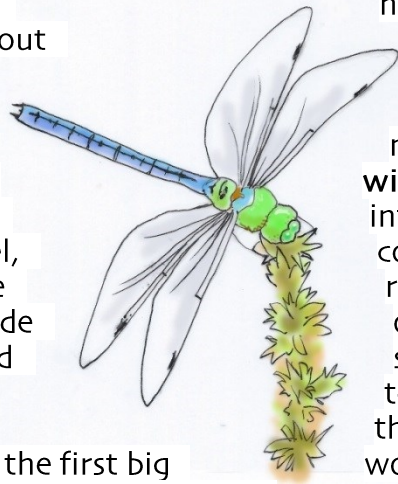
**Christmas Day** As has now become tradition, we shall be at Sun Rising on Thursday 25 December between 10 – 12. We'll have warm mince pies and warm company for those visiting graves or simply finding the day hard to face.

**First Signs of Spring** Nature has a wonderful way of lifting us. Whether our lives have been kicked out of kilter through grief, or the day to day challenge of winter is simply hard to



manage, looking out for the first signs of spring is truly worthwhile.

At Sun Rising, look out for the first snowdrops in the grass, the flower buds on the dark grey, leafless blackthorn twigs, the soft yellow catkins on the hazel, the thickening black of the ash trees' leaf buds, the wide leaves of the primroses and their first pale yellow flowers.



Have a look too for the first big bumblebees: these are the queens who have survived the winter and are now looking for early flowers and a place to nest.

As March comes, the daffodils will start to flower. The wild daffodil, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, is smaller than many modern varieties, but a beautiful little plant. As the blackthorn blooms, the hawthorn comes into leaf. By the time the hawthorn flowers, you should be able to see bluebells. Spanish bluebells are all too easy to buy, but as they aren't native and we remove them at Sun Rising! English bluebells have a richer colour, the flowers running down one side of the stem, with longer funnels before the petals open out.

### The Developing Nature Reserve

During the past year at Sun Rising, our list of flora and fauna has been growing. Four moths not recorded in this area were sighted, and a rare form of speckled wood butterfly. A pair of ravens have been seen, and the first red kites, lapwings, barn owls. Our flora is growing too, with three different orchids now plentiful through the summer months.

Instead of introducing plants to the pond, we've left it to see what nature would bring. In 2014 we saw false fox sedge, toad rush, redshank, bog pondweed, among others, for the first time. There were emperor, common darter and broad-bodied chaser dragonflies, blue damselflies, smooth newts and toads, and plenty of life in the clearing waters.

**Plans for 2015** Over the coming year, as well as extending areas of hedgerow with

planting trees and shrubs, we have a number of plans for Sun Rising.

A new section of **drainage** will be laid across the grassland and down to the pond. This is one of a number of steps needed to create new **wildflower meadow** which we are intending to create in the southwest corner of the site (between the roundhouse and the pond). Ploughing out the area, then sowing it with our special seed mix, it will take a few years to establish properly, but once it is there the biodiversity of the site will be wonderfully boosted.

Some may have seen that in 2014 we added a new car park, near the top gate, leaving a ridge of bare earth along its edge. This is to be sown as a **butterfly bank**, with kidney vetch, hoary cinquefoil, wild strawberry and other plants. Just across the Oxfordshire border, chalkhill and adonis blues have been seen: we hope horseshoe vetch on our butterfly bank will extend their potential habitat and bring them to the nature reserve.

We are also considering creating a **labyrinth**. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth is a single path that takes you from the opening down a circuit which loops back and forth, leading eventually to the centre. From there, you take the same path back, round and around, to the opening. The journey can be meditative, calming, and within the peace of Sun Rising we hope it will add to the site. Tchenka Sunderland, who created the labyrinth at Norwich Cathedral, has offered her help in its design.

**Busy Times** If you are aiming to visit Sun Rising on a particular day, do call to make sure that a large funeral or memorial service is not taking place. We know how frustrating it can be to arrive to find the car park full when you are hoping for moments of complete peace and reflection.

**Mailing List** If you'd like to receive this newsletter and other updates but are not on our mailing list, do get in touch. To save paper, we prefer to send it out by email, but will do so by post for those who are not online. You're always free to print it if you'd like to.

### Nature Reserve Burial Grounds

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