

Sun Rising News

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

Autumn/Winter 2012-2013



Welcome to our autumn/winter newsletter, published in September 2012.

Bulb Planting

It is always a joy at Sun Rising to see the spring bulbs breaking through. As with all our plants and trees, the bulbs we allow at the nature reserve are all native :

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

If you are interested in planting bulbs on and around a loved one's grave, please keep to those listed above. The suppliers we recommend are TCV online or the National Herb Centre at Warmington. You can plant bulbs any time before the frost sets in.

Alternatively you can buy bulbs through us. Bulbs cost 50p each and when considering the amount, remember that native bulbs do have a lower success rate than modern cultivars. The deadline for orders is Sunday 7 October; send us a cheque payable to Nature Reserve Burial Grounds. If you would like to join us, our bulb planting day is **Saturday 20 October**, 11 am until 1 pm.

11 November

Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday coincide this year, and as usual we shall be paying our respects at the War Memorial at 11 am, with the Last Call and 2 minutes of silence.

We encourage families to attend their village, town or regimental memorials rather than come to us, if that is what they normally do. For any who wish to

come on to Sun Rising afterwards, however, at 12 noon we shall be planting a tree in honour of those who have died in conflicts in the Middle East. All are welcome.

Tree Planting

Weather-permitting, this winter's planting of memorial trees will take place on Friday 30 November to Sunday 2 December, and Friday 7 to Sunday 9 December. Families due to plant a tree are notified in October. If you would like to plant a tree, do get in touch: we welcome memorial trees for those buried at Sun Rising, and those buried or scattered elsewhere. Each native tree adds to the nature reserve, building this precious legacy for generations to come.

Honey

Although 2012 was a wet summer, the bees at Sun Rising managed to produce a hefty 12 buckets of honey. We are now selling jars of Sun Rising honey in aid of The Friends of Sun Rising, at £5 for a 340g jar. Let us know if you'd like some. *It is delicious!*

Office Move

In case you missed the news, in April the office moved from Whichford.

We are now at 8 Welchman Place, Middle Tysoe, just a few minutes from Sun Rising. Our new phone number is 01295 688488. All calls and letters will be redirected for a long while though. As before, meetings at the office are by appointment only.



Volunteers

Our Sun Rising volunteers help in all kinds of ways - filling bird feeders,

raking hay at harvest, serving tea at Open Days, even acting as parking attendants for large funerals. If you'd like become one of our regular or irregular volunteers caring for Sun Rising and its families, let us know.

Nature Watch Days

An exciting part of creating a nature reserve is recording the increasing diversity of flora and fauna at the site. We welcome all who have expertise or just plain enthusiasm to come to our nature watch days. The next is Saturday 6 April 2013. Let us know if you are interested.

Nature Notes

Through the wet summer of 2012, the trees at Sun Rising put on plenty of new growth. When first transplanted, it takes time for trees to re-establish their root systems, but the older trees are now doing wonderfully and will soon form a closed canopy creating the conditions needed for the woodland ecosystem to evolve.

With the wet summer the meadows grew well too! Our annual hay cuts took place later than in previous years – both in the grasslands and the wildflower meadows of the site. Through the winter, sheep may graze this rich grass, kept off the burial areas with electric fencing. Such 'aftermath grazing' is a grassland management technique that has been used for centuries.

As the meadows have become more established, many more flowering plants have been seen at Sun Rising. The ground disturbance that occurs when graves are excavated can also result in the germination of seeds that have lain dormant in the soil. Last year a bee orchid appeared, a plant we had not seen at the burial ground before.

Even after autumn's leaf-fall, during the dormant season, there is plenty of opportunity for spotting wildlife at Sun Rising. The birdfeeders are much in demand again, and watch out for flocks of gold finches feeding on the teasels before flying to Spain for the winter. And although we may complain about cold English winters, many visiting birds come because it is warmer here than where they spend their summers. Winter visitors you may see at Sun Rising include redwings and fieldfares.

Winter is also a good time to spot mammals at the burial ground, such as the visiting roe deer. The resident hares and weasels are also easier to see when the grass is short and trees and shrubs are bare.

Looking out for early signs of spring can warm the heart. Snowdrops are usually the first flowers, followed by primroses and cowslips. Nettle is also early: our nettle habitat runs along the southern boundary of the site. The first colour in the hedgerow is usually the blackthorn, producing creamy white flowers before it comes into leaf. The hawthorn usually blossoms after the leaves have appeared, in late April – the time to look for the first of the bluebells.

Visiting Sun Rising you may have noticed the blanket of algae on the pond. The pond is fed by water running off Sun Rising Hill, much of which passes through fertilized agricultural fields. This nutrient-rich water encourages the algal bloom. Treating the water with barley straw helps: as the straw breaks down it produces a chemical toxic to algae but harmless to other aquatic life. Although this will help control the problem, reducing the nutrient levels in the pond is the long-term solution. As other vegetation becomes established, we will harvest it on a 3 year cycle (a third per year), allowing these excess nutrients to enrich our compost heap instead.

Although a brown hawk dragonfly has been seen laying eggs in the pond, colonisation of the wetland area has been slower than we had hoped. Over the winter, we aim to 'seed' the pond by introducing water from a local wildlife pond that is already healthily established.

We hope that you enjoy your visits to Sun Rising, whatever the time of year. Remember to let us know if you spot any interesting wildlife.

Gifts and Offerings

Do remember that we keep a box of items removed from graves. If you would like to reclaim something, let us know

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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