

Sun Rising News

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

Spring/Summer 2013



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

Nature Watch Days 2013

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 flowers, grasses, birds, butterflies, bats or some other aspect of wildlife, or you are simply interested and keen to have a go, you're very welcome. As times may vary with the weather, do let us know if you are coming.

Spring : **Sat 6 April**, 6 am - 12 noon
Summer : **Sat 25 - Sun 26 May**, 10 - 4
Late Summer : **Sat 3 August**, 2 - 8 pm

Open Weekend 2013

This year our Open Weekend will be held on **25 - 26 May**, 11 am - 4 pm. As usual, there will be staff and volunteers on hand to talk about the nature reserve, the burial ground, and your 'ideal' or green funeral. All are welcome. Refreshments will be available.

Roll of Remembrance

On Saturday 25 May, at 4 pm, we shall be reading out the names of all those who have been laid to rest at Sun Rising. There will be a table for flowers, lanterns, and other tributes and memories. All are welcome.

History Talk and Walk

On Saturday 6 July we are very pleased to have Kevin Wyles from the local history society coming to give a talk on the history of the landscape surrounding Sun Rising. It isn't just the Civil War: there are considerable Roman and Saxon

sites of interest as well. After the talk, for those who would wish, there will be a walk along footpaths taking in areas mentioned in the talk. Dogs are welcome on the walk.

*As well as events at the burial ground, you will also be able to find us this year at the **Leamington Peace Festival** on 15 - 16 June and the **Tysoe Flower Show** on 17 August.*

Honey from Sun Rising Bees

Honey made by the happy healthy bees at Sun Rising is extraordinarily delicious. We shall be selling jars in aid of the burial ground charity, ***The Friends of Sun Rising***, at all our events throughout the year, but let us know if you'd like to buy some at another time. £5 for a 340g jar.

Greetings Cards

A collection of 12 photographs taken at Sun Rising have been made into beautiful greetings cards for sale in aid of The Friends of Sun Rising. The photographs can be seen on the Friends' web page, or get in touch. Cards are £1.50 each or a set of 12 for £15.

Volunteers

For those who would like to get more involved, there are plenty of tasks for volunteers at Sun Rising: filling bird feeders, mowing paths, raking after the wildflower meadow cut, bulb planting, even serving tea at Open Days. If you'd like to give a few hours, regularly or just now and then, do get in touch.

Music Recital

Currently we are not looking at holding a music recital this year, but if you know of



anyone who may be willing to play for us on some warm summer's afternoon in 2014, in aid of The Friends, please do let us know.

The Wood Cabin

This year we are putting into action an idea that has been with us a while: building a small wooden cabin at Sun Rising. Subject to planning permission, this will be situated just inside the gate that runs from the car park to the pond, on the left, opposite the top of the woodland area. It will have a small room where we can meet families, or warm up on cold funeral and tree planting days. There will also be a toilet, available when a member of staff is onsite. This is a composting toilet, using no water or electricity: everything left behind will add to the richness of the compost heap!

If you have any queries or concerns about the building, please do let us know.

Gifts and Offerings

Please remember we don't allow anything but flowers on graves – no jars, pots, spinners, balloons. Everything else is removed. Anything broken is disposed of, but other items are kept for a short while in the office: if you'd like to reclaim an item, do call. Remember too that all non-native plants and bulbs are removed. If you'd like to plant something on a grave, ask for our list of acceptable native species.

Nature Notes

Ash Dieback (caused by the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus) was in the news last winter, but the extent to which it will affect our trees is still unknown. Ash is a key landscape tree in Warwickshire, particularly in hedgerows, and its loss would have a dramatic impact. In some parts of Europe large numbers of ash trees have been killed as a result of Ash Dieback, but English trees may have more resilience. We will continue to monitor all our ash trees at Sun Rising.

On a more positive note, last year's wet weather has provided good conditions for tree growth through this spring and summer. Increasing the screening effect of the hedgerow between Sun Rising and the neighbouring stables, we have planted a row of willow. As these trees mature they will also improve the habitat for wildlife.

Willow trees support a diverse range of invertebrates, especially moths and bees, and are second only to the oak in terms of their overall importance for wildlife.

Dandelions are very attractive plants and can be valuable for wildlife, but they can become dominant. In order to ensure a good balance of plants, providing food for a range of different animals and insects, we will be actively controlling the dandelions in small areas of the burial ground. We hope this will result in a more aesthetically pleasing, wildlife-friendly grassland, that will be more sustainable in the long run.

The hedgerow around the car park was trimmed during the winter for the first time to improve its overall form and shape. Over the next few years we will continue to manage the hedge in this way until it is mature enough to lay. Hedge laying is an ancient countryside craft: the trunks of the hedging plants are cut part way through, laid horizontally and pegged in position in order to create a strong thick hedge. This regenerates the hedge and creates a better structure with improved wildlife value.

Because the fertilisers used on the arable fields to the east of Sun Rising leach into the water course which tops up our pond, the nutrient levels in the water are high, producing algal blooms. We have added barley straw to the water to control them (decomposing barley straw produces toxins which kill algae), and hope this will resolve the problem. In the long term, we aim to control nutrient levels in the pond by removing some pond vegetation each year.

The English climate continues to be unpredictable: records for the hottest, driest, wettest, coldest season are regularly being broken. This has consequences. In stable conditions, plants and animals can adapt. When the weather is erratic though, wildlife doesn't have time to adapt, and those species that are on the edge of their range may not survive. For this reason it is especially important to provide wildlife sanctuaries like Sun Rising where we can.

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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