



St Albans Woodland
Burial Trust

Registered Charity No. 1118216

Woodland Burial *The natural choice*



News from St Albans Woodland Burial Trust

This is our sixth newsletter and we hope that you will find it interesting to read about what is happening at the woodland in Keysoe. We are particularly pleased about the expansion of the woodland which is currently taking place. The woodland will grow from 2 acres to 12 acres, which will allow us to plan for many years ahead. Please do contact us if you wish to know more.

St Albans Woodland Burial Trust (Registered Charity No. 1118216)

Located via The College Equestrian Centre Church Road, Keysoe, Bedford. MK44 2JP. Administrator: Mrs Linda Parry, c/o St Mark's Church Community Centre Tel/Fax +44 1234 342613 Email: office@woodlandburialtrust.com. Outside office hours contact 07922 053740 or 07973 113861. For information visit our website www.woodlandburialtrust.com



Report for 2012 by John Day - Trustee

A Place of Surprises, Peace and Nature by John Day

Imagine if you will a perfect, early-spring morning in the Bedfordshire countryside with hardly a breath of wind or a cloud in the sky. A man and his dog are out for a walk when the peace is suddenly shattered by an explosion of beating wings right next to them on the path. It is heart-stopping moment as a large bird breaks cover and beats its way furiously straight up in the air. Although it initially startles the dog he is made up to have flushed such a large bird but the man takes a few more seconds to appreciate the beauty of the

moment.

March 27th was a warm and balmy day, ideal conditions in fact in which to visit the St Albans Woodland Burial site in the heart of the countryside at Keysoe. My wife, Janet, was on duty to officially record for the Trust a burial in Goldcrest Glade, a ceremony witnessed by around nearly more than two hundred friends and family. The trustees thought this was perhaps something of a record in the five years that the site has been open. My role was to ensure that Janet had everything she needed at the burial and then I was free to set off across the fields surrounding our burial site to exercise Max, our spaniel. He was content to do what spaniels do best and was running around the wooded area away from the burial glades, nose to the ground, picking up the scent of the local fauna.

Our walk took us to the lower end of the wooded area where a public footpath cuts across some open fields. The views across the rolling Bedfordshire countryside from this high point in the county means you can see all the way to the hills at Sandy on such a clear day. We were completely alone once away from the burial party and it had been very peaceful until Max flushed his large bird. What type of bird was it I wondered? It had an unusually wide wing span, as much as 3 feet with mottled brown feathers. My first thought was, "Could it have been an owl?" This seemed unlikely as owls are usually nocturnal and this was the middle of the day. As I was pondering the puzzle my eyes strayed skywards and I then noticed two buzzards circling high above. Was my mystery bird another buzzard I wondered?

As I was gazing up at the azure blue sky my ears picked up the unmistakable sound of several skylarks singing on the wing. With a little effort I spotted them high above where I was standing, their wings beating frantically in time with their characteristic random song. I was about to move on when I noticed a pair of corn buntings sitting on a spindly shrub at the edge of the path. They made a handsome flash of gold in the warm sunshine and were quite unconcerned about the presence of Max, me or the buzzards.

As I listened for other sounds in this peaceful setting my ears picked up that harbinger of spring, a bumble bee on the wing moving amongst wild violets next to the path. A medium-sized, brown butterfly swept into view at this moment completing the picture of a perfect spring day. Max in the meanwhile was very interested in something else going on in the cultivated field next to the track. What on earth was he looking at? Two dog-sized animals were racing about at high speed in the field of young brassica plants but it was the way they stopped periodically to face each other that caught my attention. I was just thinking, "I have seen this

behaviour before” when the two animals came near enough for me to see that they were hares. Mad March hares in fact, displaying their mating rituals by chasing each other and then boxing whilst standing on their rear legs. As I returned to the glade to meet Janet I also spotted a Green Woodpecker with its exotic red and green plumage which would not look out of place in a tropical setting. All of this and I have not even mentioned all the more common birds one expects to see in the countryside, but they were all there.

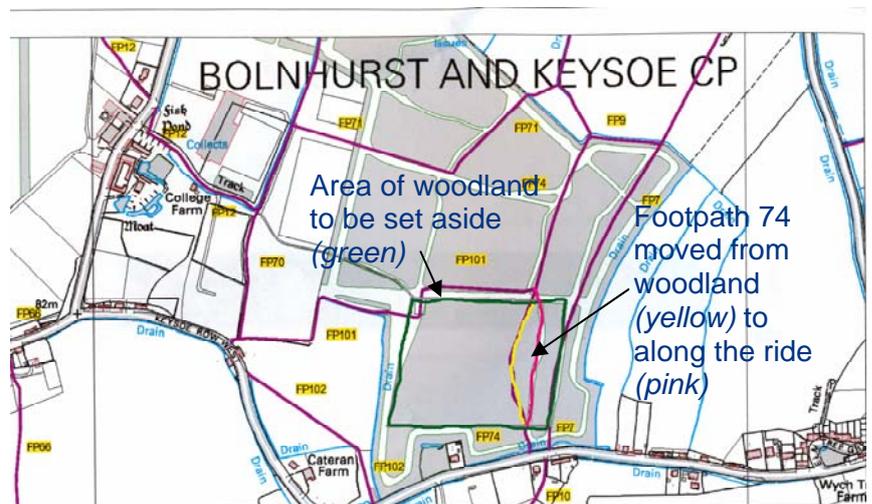
It occurred to me that in a thirty minute walk I had been privileged to witness a good sample of what the Bedfordshire countryside has to offer, all in and around the Woodland Burial Trust site. If you have not yet visited yet I hope my observations will encourage you to go for a walk in the area to see what you can spot. The one thing I can promise you is that you will experience peace and quiet and time for reflection, something we all need in our busy lives. If you are lucky, you might also be startled by a large bird.

John Day

Planning permission granted for Woodland

After a lengthy process our planning application for a change of use of farmland to a woodland burial ground was finally granted permission on 3 January 2012. This gives us the opportunity to consecrate a further 10 acres of land to extend our woodland. The delay in the application process was caused when Bedford Borough Council discovered that public footpath 74 ran straight through the woodland burial ground and not in the location of the existing footpath on the ride. This footpath had to be moved and the process of moving the footpath took some time to complete before the planning permission could proceed.

Now that planning permission has been granted we are in the process of arranging for consecration of the land. We are working with the Diocese of St Albans to ensure that this is now completed as quickly as possible. Consecration will enable us to put the greatest protection in English law on this land which will now be protected for generations to come.



I would like to become a Friend of the St Albans Woodland Burial Trust £25 (5yrs)

If enclosing a cheque please pay to St Albans Woodland Burial Trust

Name

Address

These details will not be passed to any third party

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Please Gift Aid my donations (Yes / No)

Please return to: St Albans Woodland Burial Trust. The Administrator: Mrs Linda Parry
 St. Mark's Church Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford. MK41 7UY. Tel/Fax 01234 342613
 Email: office@woodlandburialtrust.com www.woodlandburialtrust.com



From the Administrators Desk

The work of the Trust has grown year by year and 2011 was no exception. We have been very busy and hopefully have worked hard to satisfy the needs of all those who visit the woodland. Over the past five years I have been fortunate to meet with some fascinating people during my work with the St Albans Woodland Burial Trust and have had so many positive comments and suggestions which we have listened to and implemented wherever possible.

The Trust is grateful to Linda Parry who has been our Administrator for five years. she gives her time freely to the Trust as a volunteer.

Thank you to all those people who share our vision for the woodland and help keep the site as natural as possible. This year the Bamboo Vases have made a great difference, enabling cut flowers to be kept fresh for longer and helping to keep the area tidy. We realise that it can be difficult to let all who visit know our regulations regarding planting and containers and I am sorry if you only hear from me when I am asking that you

remove pots or planted flowers. I tidy the area when I visit and remove anything past its best or not allowed. The birds and animals are also responsible for removal and eating of succulent flowers, and they do not tidy up after themselves!

Earlier this year we had a visit from Marie-Ange Comerford Raillion and Kevin Hand of Faith Woodlands Communities, who gave us some excellent advice. I am pleased that as we take on responsibility for more land we have some great friends who are on hand to offer help and support. Kevin is a wildlife expert and he made many helpful suggestions concerning matters such as biodiversity and how we can create different habitats to encourage insects and fungi. Kevin has a remarkable knowledge of the variety of birds in the woodland and he



encouraged us to start introducing a variety of nesting boxes. We will be doing this over the coming year. One particularly interesting suggestion was that we should consider a couple of owl boxes. Apart from being much larger than the usual bird boxes, these will need to be placed on substantial poles which will be erected on the fringe of the woodland looking out over the fields. A considerable amount of work is involved and we are seeking to raise £300 for each box. If nesting boxes are something which interests you and you would like to contribute then please contact me.

The past year has continued to be busy for the woodland and the table below shows the activity which has taken place. Thank you to the team of volunteers who support me and enable us to offer a compassionate service to all of those who choose to come to our lovely woodland. I look forward to meeting you over the coming year, please feel able to contact me if you require any information and I will be pleased to help.

Linda Parry

The table shows the figures of use for St Albans Woodland Burial Trust in each financial year since it was opened in 2007

	Burials	Interment of ashes	Reservation for burials	Reservation for ashes
June2007– March2008	12	6	13	9
April 2008-March 2009	13	9	15	9
April 2009-March 2010	20	13	37	7
April2010-March2011	19	15	34	10
April 2011-March 2012	13	13	36	23
Total	77	56	135	58