

# St Albans Woodland Burial Trust



Friends Newsletter - Issue 13 - Summer 2019



# 2019

## TAKING A STAND WITH NATURE

Fighting disease, creating perfect micro environments, restoring ancient woodland - all in a day's work!



**Log Piles**  
Invertebrate heaven...



**Hedgerows**  
The wildlife highway



**Caterpillars**  
Why the silk tents?

# Conservation, Wildlife Preservation and Woodland Burials



Image courtesy of Shaun Folds Photography

We have seen another year of remarkable growth in our woodland in so many different ways. More and more people are choosing to come and be buried here or inter ashes after a cremation.

Our new Administrator Sam Ware has hit the ground running and coped with a continued and sustained increase in demand. She has been brilliant and our families really appreciate her warmth and sensitivity. Thanks also to our trustees for all the support they offer, especially Linda and Edward who are still on hand as trustees with their expertise.

As well as numerical growth, we have also seen the woodland itself maturing with some lovely specimen trees starting to develop after the care and attention given over the past years by Will Saunders who brings his decades of professional experience to manage our woodland.

This year we were delighted to ask Will to plant a Hawthorn hedgerow. Biologically diverse, hedgerows are filled with all manner of wildlife; they are home to voles and mice, roosting birds, and countless other species. It is a source of great sadness that so many hedgerows have been destroyed across our country and it is good to be able to develop this new habitat in our woodland.

With the increasing number of ashes plots required, we have also planted

a holly hedge and you may notice Hazel which has been planted amongst trees in the areas separating glades where once we just had brambles.

You can be assured that the trustees take seriously the need to care for the woodland, both now and for the future, so that it continues to be an appropriate place where loved ones can be buried and remembered in a natural environment.

However, this care and management needs to be taken in the light of evolving changes in the environment and the biological ecosystem and the challenges that these can present. Many of us are aware of the variable and changing climate, and the diseases that can impact specific species with devastating effect, such as Ash dieback which is so prevalent across much of the country, and which has already taken a major toll on our woodland.

Such changes mean that we need to evolve the manner in which we think about planting and managing the woodland, as we look to safeguard the future, diversifying species where appropriate to increase resilience and biodiversity in line with best practice, as demonstrated by the Forestry Commission's own planting developments which we monitor.

The Forestry Commission is planting more diverse woodlands and trial-

ing how different tree species fare in diverse climatic conditions. This includes sourcing seeds from two degrees south of a planting site, and experimenting with alternative species including Montpellier Maple, Red Oak, Chinese Mahogany, Western Red Cedar and species of Eucalyptus.

We continue to review what all this might mean in terms of our management and planting of the woodland, and how we can take the appropriate actions in order that we are able to be proactive in facing the challenges which might be ahead.

As always, our vision and aim is that the woodland will continue to thrive and develop as a biological ecosystem which is so valued, and be a haven of peace and tranquility for all who come.

I would like to thank all of our trustees who work so hard in a voluntary capacity to ensure that our charity continues to express our values of commitment to the environment and comfort for the bereaved.

Charles Royden,

Chair of Trustees Conservation,  
Wildlife Preservation and Woodland  
Burials





Revised Woodland Map - June 2019

## Hedgerows

Apart from acting as boundaries and keeping animals inside fields, the hedgerow is an important habitat for a wide variety of animals and plants which, in response to woodland depletion, have had to adapt to living in hedges. Almost all groups of animals may be found in a hedge, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and many invertebrates. Hedgerows provide valuable

shelter. Farmers in East Anglia have discovered to their cost that, without the protection of hedgerows, strong winds erode valuable top soil.

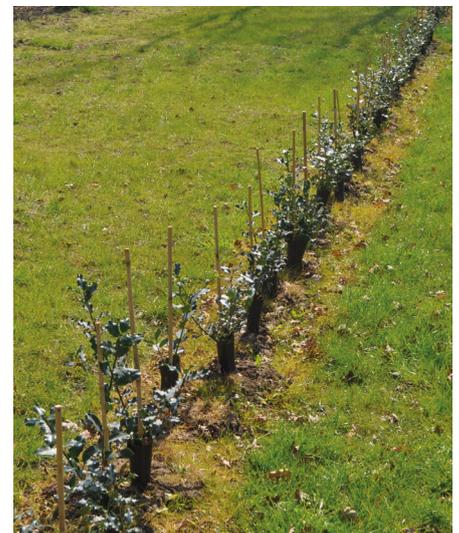
Recognising the importance of hedgerows in our woodland and having now removed the suffocating thickets that plagued much of the area, we have now been able to plant a number of different hedges.

We have used a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees to ensure there is a plentiful supply of nectar and fruit to support local wildlife at different times of the year.

From the Holly in the car park to the southernmost borders... keep an eye out for it, it will be special.



*A new Hawthorn hedge has been planted along the Southern border of the woodland*



*One of a number of Holly hedges planted throughout the woodland*



### Did you know?

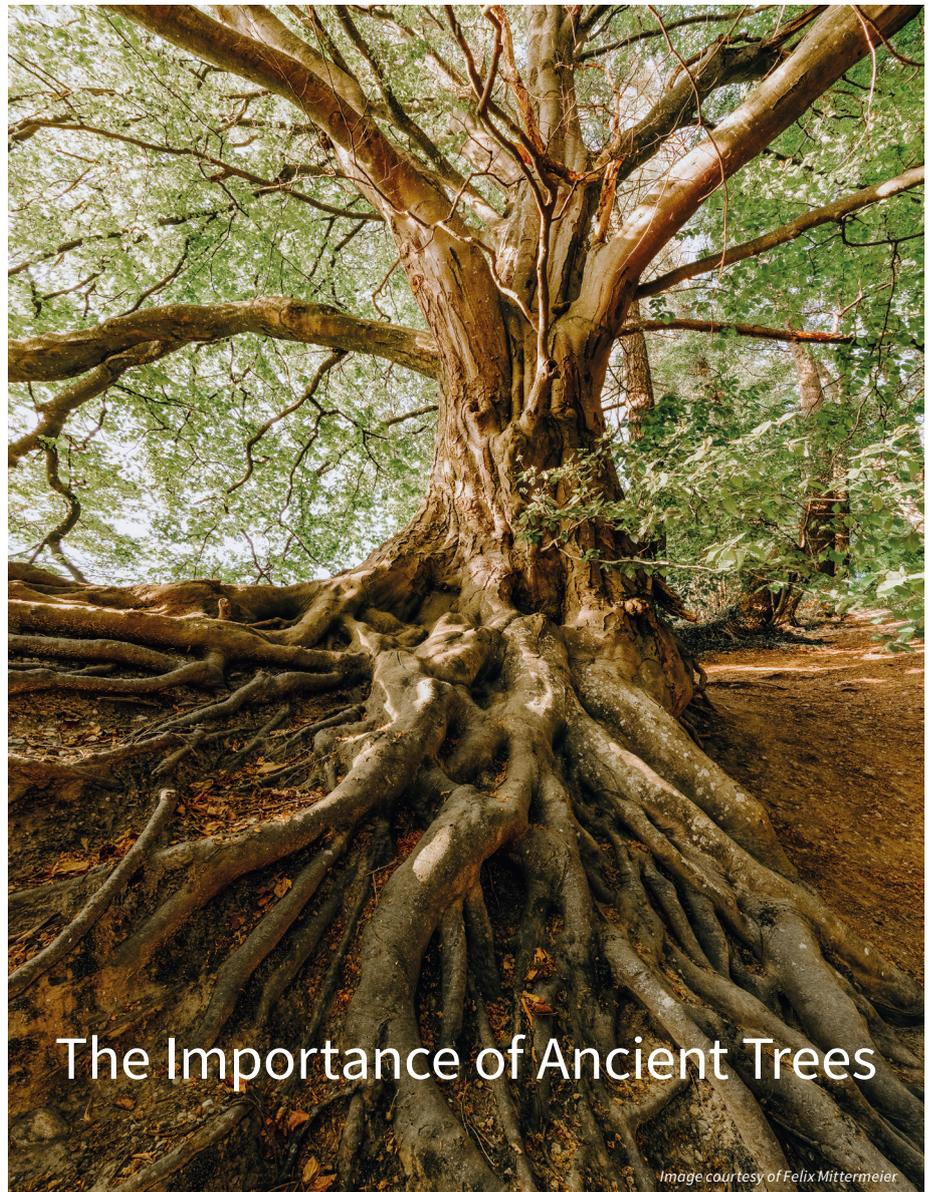
Spending time in woods and forests, or just around trees, is proven to boost your health; it can help reduce blood pressure, improve cardiac function and boost the immune system.

The UK's woods are home to half of the world's Bluebell population.

Did you know we are the second least wooded country in Europe? On average, 44% of European countries are covered in woodland compared to just 13% in the UK.

Did you know that rainforests are also found in the UK? The UK is home to a few small pockets of rainforest. They are temperate deciduous forests with a constantly moist environment that encourages growth of mosses and ferns.

Trees in forests communicate with each other through a fungal network. Called mycelium, the trees use them to warn each other of dangers and the older trees even pass nutrients to their offspring that are growing nearby.



## The Importance of Ancient Trees

Image courtesy of Felix Mittermeier

Our woodland has some way to go before it can claim any ancient trees, but the day will come, and future populations will hopefully look back and be proud of what we achieved and did for them. To replace the lost ancient woodlands that once stood here is no easy feat!

But why are ancient trees so important?

Once trees reach a certain age they are considered ancient. This means they have passed maturity and entered the third and final stage of their lifespan. The age a tree needs to reach to be considered ancient varies from species to species. For example, a yew is not considered ancient until around 800 to 900 years old, while a shorter-lived species, like beech, is ancient from 225 years onwards.

**Ancient trees are a vital part of the UK environment. Over their long lifespans, they develop into important habitats for thousands of different species, many**

**of which depend on ancient trees to survive. Fungi grow in tree trunks and roots, invertebrates feed on decaying wood and a whole host of animals including bats, owls and pine martens, make their homes in cavities that open as a tree ages.**

**These habitats can take centuries to form, meaning they are irreplaceable if lost.**

The UK is home to more ancient trees than many Northern European countries.

The Fortingall yew is recognised as the UK's oldest tree, but there are numerous other trees that have reached a grand old age.

Several yews are well over 1,000 years old, including the Ankerwycke Yew in Berkshire, which is thought to have borne witness to the sealing of the Magna Carta in 1215 and served as a meeting place for Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn in the 1530s.



*Our log piles are a rich source of food and nutrients for a wide variety of plant and animal species. Create your own at home or build your own insect homes. Every little helps.*

There are at least 117 oak trees in England that are around 800 to 1,000 years old. It's thought that the Bowthorpe Oak near Manthorpe in Lincolnshire may be one of the oldest and widest oaks in the country, with a girth of more than 13 meters and an estimated age of more than 1,000 years. The tree is so vast that tea parties are said to have been held inside its hollow trunk.

Another famed tree is the Major Oak in Nottinghamshire's Sherwood Forest. Said to have provided shelter for the legendary outlaw Robin Hood, the tree is thought to be between 800 and 1,000 years old.

## Protecting Ancient Trees

Despite this immense ecological value, ancient trees have no automatic right of protection and there is no equivalent to Scheduled Ancient Monument status, which important archaeological sites have.

While some individual trees are safeguarded, many are completely unprotected from damage and destruction.

Here, at the Woodland Burial Trust, we have taken additional steps to protect the trees and environment by Consecrating the land. It doesn't make the land more Holy, but it does afford it the greatest legal protection possible under our current laws.

But for trees elsewhere, there is little that can be done. However, the Woodland Trust is taking steps to try and change that.

They are collating a record of every ancient tree in the country and need your help by letting them know where ancient trees are located by recording them on the Ancient Tree Inventory.

Around 170,000 ancient, veteran and notable trees are listed already, but there are thousands more to add. By knowing where our ancient trees are located, the Trust is better placed to protect them.

Visit the Ancient Tree Inventory. You will be amazed at some of the amazing specimens recorded there! This is the website address you will need:-

<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

## Decaying Wood

*- A Truly Valuable Wildlife Habitat -*

Ancient timber is a little hard to come by in our young woodland, but we have the next best thing, decaying log piles!

At first sight, decaying timber may be mistaken for a sign of neglect or poor management but it contributes to one of our most important habitats for biodiversity and is home to almost 1,800 different invertebrate species alone!

Decaying wood is not a single habitat but consists of a complex series of changing microhabitats. Its value to different species does not only depend on the length of time that it has been decaying but also on other factors such as the time and cause of death, tree species, age range, aspect and the climate.

Stacked in piles, timber provides food and shelter for birds, small mammals, insects and fungi.

Managing deadwood involves an understanding of many types of habitat and species, and even requires the additional planting of nectar and berry bearing shrubs, and perennials provide a valuable source of food for the many animals inhabiting the decaying wood.

So next time you see one of our log piles just remember they are serving a purpose and it's not us being lazy!



### Did you know?

A single log pile can support up to 1,800 different invertebrate species let alone a wide range of flora and fauna such as fungi, lichens, hoverflies, beetles, birds and bats!



## Restoring Ancient Woodland - Together...

**There have been significant transformations over the last 12 months including new glades, pond restoration and road resurfacing.**



sits on Bedford Clay and the water takes an incredibly long time to drain - most simply running off into the pond over the course of a few days later!

The road leading to the woodland has also been upgraded - courtesy of Simon Bates, owner of the Keysoe Equestrian Centre.

Journeys to the woodland have been so much easier as a result and we have received a lot of positive feedback from Funeral Directors, friends and families.

A number of new glades and rills have now been opened to meet the growing demand from people that share our passion. This is one of those rare examples where greater demand is actually better for everyone.

We now have 26 glades and rills - some are not quite ready to be opened. Each offers its own individual characteristics, from quaint, quiet areas in dappled shade off the beaten track, to bright expansive areas with larger occupancy and easier visitor access.

The large pond at the entrance to the Woodland and Equestrian Centre has been transformed over the last few months and restored to its former glory. Fed by an extensive network of drainage canals from the surrounding land, it provides a crucial role for local wildlife and biodiversity.

You will see pools of surface water in the woodland during periods of wet weather. This is normal because the woodland



*The new Skylark Rill for Ashes Interments - when the wind blows through the leaves of the young poplar trees, it sound slike running water...*



The new Lapwing Glade for eco-friendly burials - offers easy access despite being set back from the access road and car parking area. A wonderful selection of native trees will ensure this is a remarkable glade in years to come.

## Woodland Management, Disease Control and what the future has in store for us!

Woodland maintenance is no easy task and we certainly have our work cut out for us.

Disease is always at the forefront of our minds especially since we have already had to remove over 300 Ash trees suffering from Ash Dieback - a chronic fungal infection that is believed to have originated in Poland and is now widespread across Europe.

Other diseases are spreading across the nation and we will no doubt experience other issues in the future.

But it is not all doom and gloom. Isolated trees across the nation are showing signs of resistance - as you would expect from nature.

Together with the Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission and other organisations, we will be doing our bit to re-establish affected populations.

To find out more about tree health, take a look at Observatree online here:- <https://www.observatree.org.uk>



A typical view of the stunning paths and curves that criss cross the woodland. This view is of Nightingale on the right and a path on the left leading to Lapwing and Siskin glades

## Will Saunders Woodland Manager



We are always praising Will, our Woodland Manager, and rightly so, because he and his team continue to transform the landscape on our behalf.

Whether it be eradicating disease or nurturing new glades, you can be sure he will be there.

He has been running his business in Pertenhall - WT Saunders Ground Care - for over 25 years and has a wealth of knowledge at his fingertips that we can call on whenever we need it.

If you would like to find out more about Will's business, then take a look online at his website:-

<http://www.lawn-care-specialist.co.uk/>

## The Latest Woodland Statistics

There is no doubt that an increasing number of people do care for the planet and our environment.

Ashes **52**

Burials **61**

Reservations **112**

Actual burial, interments and reservations between 1st April 2018 - 1st June 2019

# Butterfly & Moth - Conservation -



**British butterflies conjure up images of summer, warm days and flower strewn meadows teeming with life. Sadly, three-quarters of our British butterflies are in decline and four have already become extinct!**

Britain has 56 different species of butterfly and over 2,500 moth species. But one thing they all have in common is that their numbers are significantly down - a staggering 40% compared to the 1968 numbers.

The destruction and deterioration of habitats as a result of changing land use such as the intensification of agriculture, extensive building development and changes in woodland management, are still considered the prime causes of long-term decline.

Their fragility makes them early indicators to environmental change, but is anyone listening?

As if habitat destruction wasn't enough, they are also having to contend with climate and changing weather patterns across the globe

## **The role butterflies and moths play**

There are many reasons why butterflies and moths are important. They join bees and other insects as crucial pollinators, but more importantly, they are a rich food source for so many species, especially in the larval form.

Conserving butterflies will improve our whole environment for wildlife and enrich the lives of people now and in the future.

## **Together we can make a difference!**

We need to ensure our environment is restored to its former glory and we can all do our bit.

In the woodland we are planting a wide range of different trees and hedges to provide essential food and protection

for the developing caterpillars. But it need not stop there. Adopt the same principles at home and together we can have a big impact in population numbers.

## **Tree-planting suggestions that provide food and nectar throughout the life cycle of butterflies & moths**

- Alder buckthorn - *Frangula alnus*
- Apple - *Malus domestica*
- Barberry - *Berberis*
- Beech - *Fagus sylvatica*



*Birch Trees - Image courtesy of John Price*

Birch - Betula  
 Blackthorn - Prunus spinosa  
 Bramble - Rubus Fruticosus  
 Buckthorn - Rhamnus cathartica  
 Buddleja  
 Cherry - Prunus  
 Cotoneaster  
 Hawthorn - Crataegus monogyna



Hazel, Corylus avellana - Image courtesy of Wikimedia

Hazel - Corylus avellana  
 Lime - Tilia  
 Holly - Ilex aquifolium



Oak Tree - Image courtesy of Denny Muller

Pear - Pyrus  
 Plum - Prunus Domestica  
 Goat Willow - Salix Caprea  
 Oak - Quercus  
 Privet - Ligustrum vulgare  
 Willow - Salix

Trees, whilst an incredible food source need to be complemented by plants too.

We now allow you to plant native British wild flowers at the woodland and have provided a list overleaf.

Please also refer to the links at the end of this article for other ideas at home.



### Eriogaster lanestris Caterpillars

This image was taken at our woodland just a couple of weeks ago and shows a silk web belonging to **Eriogaster lanestris**, commonly known as the **small eggar** moth of the family Lasiocampidae.

Normally found on Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Birch, these webs are surprisingly tough and strong enough to deter most birds and parasitic wasps.

The small eggar population has been in decline since the 1970s due to landscaping practices such as hedgerow cutting which destroys their normal



Small Eggar Moth (E.lanestris)

Picture courtesy of Didier Descouens Wikipedia

habitats and damages cocoons during pupation, leading to scattered populations and increased rarity. Research has shown that E. lanestris demonstrates advanced social behaviours and Larvae spend nearly their entire development in colonies of about 200 individuals.

This grouped social structure offers benefits, from thermoregulation to increased foraging success.



Peacock Butterfly - Image courtesy of William Warby

➡ Further Details can be found on the Butterfly Conservation website here :-

Butterflies - <https://butterfly-conservation.org/butterflies>

Moths - <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths>



# Keeping our Woodland Natural and Beautiful



When choosing St Albans Woodland Burial, people know that the trustees carefully ensure that the woodland is looked after. We ensure that certain rules are in place to keep the glades looking natural and not like a graveyard.

The planting of trees and other plants in the burial ground is not permitted and is strictly controlled by the Trust.

There is no gardening or cultivation whatsoever and no grave marking or ornamentation unless specifically authorised by the Trust.

Any labels, ornaments, ribbons, messages, cards, toys and pebbles will be removed as will any plant that is not a native wild flower. This helps keep the woodland looking good and it is also in keeping with our environmental commitment. We do understand that occasionally visitors do not appreciate these conditions and so we do operate a policy of removing items from graves.

We allow fresh flowers to be placed in or on the graves, or in the bamboo vases supplied by the trust. However we ask that you remove cellophane, ribbon or other non-biodegradable wrappings. Of

course, artificial flowers are not permitted and no vases or containers should be left.

You may plant native British wild flowers, but remember that if these are planted on the grave, then they will be destroyed when the grave is mown or strimming takes place. Many flowers are also eaten by deer and rabbits! We ask for British flowers because they not only have natural colours but they are more beneficial for bio-diversity and support local insects. Please do not create a border around a grave; manicured graves are not acceptable and all graves are mown.

The following are some wild flowers which would be appropriate:-

1. Ajuga reptans (bugle)
2. Alchemilla filicaulis (lady's mantle)
3. Allium (ornamental onions)
4. Aquilegia vulgaris (columbine)
5. Colchicum autumnale (autumn crocus)



6. Convallaria majalis (lily of the valley)

7. Cyclamen hederifolium  
(Hardy cyclamen)



8. Digitalis purpurea (foxgloves)

9. Echium vulgare (vipers bugloss)

10. Eranthis hyemalis (winter aconite)

11. Erythronium dens-canis (dog's tooth violet)

12. Fritillaria (snakeshead fritillaries)

13. Galanthus nivalis (snowdrop)

14. Helleborus foetidus (hellebore)

15. Hyacinthoides non-scripta  
(bluebell)



16. Lamium (dead nettles), mint family

17. Leucojum (snowflakes)

18. Lychnis flos cuculis (ragged robin)

19. Malva moschata (musk mallow)

- 20. *Myosotis arvensis* (forget-me-not)
- 21. *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*  
(wild daffodil)
- 22. *Nepeta × faassenii* (catmint)



- 23. *Origanum vulgare* (wild marjoram)
- 24. *Polemonium caeruleum*  
(Jacob's ladder)



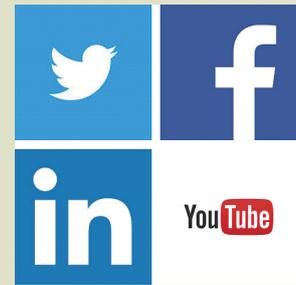
- 25. *Polygonatum multiflorum*  
(Solomon's seal)
- 26. *Primula veris* (cowslip)



- 27. *Primula vulgaris* (primrose)
- 28. *Pulmonaria augustifolium* (lungwort)
- 29. *Pulsatilla vulgaris* (pasqueflower)



- 30. *Tulipa sylvestris* (Wild Tulip)
- 31. *Verbascum thapsus* (mullein)



If you have access to the Internet, please consider following us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Facebook is genuinely an amazing tool to keep people well informed about the woodland.

Twitter on the other hand is fast paced and allows us to interact with likeminded people that share our passion for conservation and topics related to woodland burials.

YouTube is where we store our videos, so keep an eye on that one because we do have plans for the future!

Instagram is simply a collection of interesting and related imagery whilst LinkedIn gives us a voice in the business community.

Visit our website and just follow the links! Thank you.



**I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A FRIEND OF THE ST ALBANS WOODLAND BURIAL TRUST £25 (5 YEARS)**  
*(If enclosing a cheque, please make payable to St Albans Woodland Burial Trust)*

Name

Address

*(These details will NOT be passed onto third parties)*

Date

Email Address

*(I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid on all my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference)*

Telephone Number

Please Gift Aid my donation ( Yes / No )

**Please return to:**

**The Administrator, St Albans Woodland Burial Trust, St Mark's Church Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY**

Email: [office@woodlandburialtrust.com](mailto:office@woodlandburialtrust.com)

website: <http://woodlandburialtrust.com>

Tel. Number (01234) 342 613

## Sam's Highlights



Samantha Ware , Administrator.

As Linda Parry steps down from her post as the administrator, the Trustees and I would like to thank Linda for all her hard work, and for the significant contribution she has made to the setting up and maintaining of the Woodland Burial Ground over the past 13 years. Not only has she helped to evolve the development and growth of the Woodland and its administration, she has been a great comfort to so many of the people she has met. When I started working for the

Woodland in November 2018, I had no idea how active the Burial Ground could be, but given how peaceful and beautiful a place it is, it's no wonder that its tranquility feels so appropriate to so many people. Linda's work and the procedures she has put in place made it much easier for me to 'hit the ground running' when I stepped into the role, and thankfully, Linda remains a trustee and so will continue to be on hand to help and advise.

Since last year's newsletter, five new glades have been opened, including Lapwing, Nuthatch, Siskin, Skylark Rill and Wagtail, the latter two dedicated to ashes plots. All of them are proving popular in their own unique way.

Nuthatch because it's ideal for watching the horses from when they're taking part in their cross-country events, as well as the birds of prey which often soar along that edge of the Woodland. Lapwing and Skylark Rill have an open and sun-drenched feel whilst

Wagtail has a much more intimate atmosphere.

Many of you have noticed that Will Saunders has worked hard this year planting a new walkway defined by hawthorn bushes. In time these will provide a good source of food for birds and other wildlife, as well as cover for nests. We have used holly to define the Wagtail ashes glade, and the new glade yet to be opened opposite Skylark Rill. Simon from the Equestrian college has upgraded the road for us, for which we are grateful. It has made quite a difference during the winter months and the hearse drivers and visitors have certainly benefitted.

Finally, I would just like to thank everybody for having been so welcoming and for all the help and support I've been given as I learn all that the Woodland Administrator role entails.

Sam Ware,  
Administrator

## and a few words from Linda



Linda Parry, Trustee

Dear friends

I am sorry to say that I have had to relinquish my post as administrator. In 2006 we made the first tentative steps into acquiring the site, I couldn't really 'see the wood for the trees' then.

During the thirteen years, I have met so many interesting people. We've had tears and laughter but most of all we all shared a love of

the Woodland. I have handed the ropes to Sam Ware and we couldn't ask for a better person to take care of our vision, our clients and our friends.

I remain a trustee so shall continue to offer support.

Kind regards

Linda

### St Albans Woodland Burial Trust

A not for profit charity restoring native woodland, fauna and wildlife in conjunction with woodland burials. Registered Charity No 1118216

Telephone (between 9am to 5pm):

Outside office hours:

E-mail contact:

Address:

Office

Mobiles

(01234) 342 613

(07436) 787 409 or (07973) 113 861

office@woodlandburialtrust.com

St Mark's Church Community Centre, Calder Rise, Brickhill, Bedford, MK41 7UY