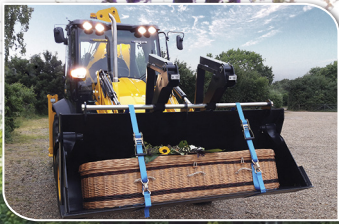


SPECIAL - 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION !

St Albans Woodland Burial Trust



Friends Newsletter - Issue 11 - Summer 2017



Going out in Style!

Funerals don't have to be sombre occasions any more. If you need a little inspiration, there's plenty here!

2017

FUNERAL COSTS

What you should be paying...

10th ANNIVERSARY! THE JOURNEY SO FAR

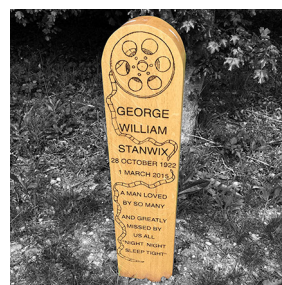
Our 10th Anniversary and an opportunity to look back.
The ups and downs of woodland burials...



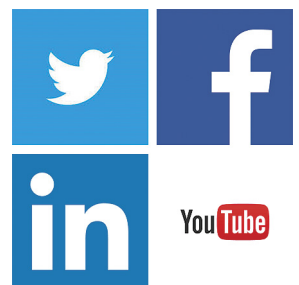
7 NEW GLADES CREATED
Help us name them!



WOODLAND FAUNA RETURNS
Orchids, Bluebells and more...



WOODLAND MEMORIALS
Without compromise



EMBRACING SOCIAL MEDIA
Spreading the word!

Our 10th Anniversary

A remarkable journey...



This work incorporates historical material provided by the Great Britain Historical GIS Project and the University of Portsmouth through their web site - A Vision of Britain through Time (<http://www.VisionofBritain.org.uk>)

Conservation and Woodland Burials

No one ever said it would be easy and the obstacles in the early stages seemed insurmountable, but the passion and support from so many sectors and Friends made the impossible, possible.

Back in 1999 the search started for land that could offer conservation in conjunction with eco-friendly burials. A way for people to give something back to nature whilst offering them a serene and tranquil alternative to the overcrowded municipal cemeteries.

Sadly our fight for nature wasn't shared by everybody and to cut a long story short, it took 8 years just to find suitable land.

In 2007 our not-for-profit Charity was born and, nestled within 60 acres of young woodland, two acres of land were designated for woodland burials.

Our plans would involve a lot of work and we did not want someone in the future undermining it. The decision was made to seek protected status

and the best way to achieve this was by Consecration. We are now one of only two consecrated sites in the country. Consecration acknowledges the special spiritual nature of our woodland and it also adds an incredibly complex layer of red tape to ensure its purpose never changes.

The response from the public has been amazing and in 2014 a further 10 acres was allocated to woodland burials.

Native woodland species have been planted and nurtured and together with good husbandry from our groundsman, Mr Will Saunders and the Friends of the St Albans Woodland Burial Trust, the area has been transformed.

Native species of fauna and wildlife



can be found thriving amongst the trees, a vindication of our work if ever there was one.

We have a long way to go before we have restored the original 350 acre ancient oak woodland that once stood here, but we firmly believe nature can benefit more by us re-establishing lost forests than simply offering people burials in established woodland.

Visit the woodland and see it for yourself, experience the tranquility and the ever-changing scenery as the trees mature and the seasons march on.

Who knows, you might even end up reserving a spot... view our Timeline on the website for a detailed history and walk-through.

Do funeral costs have to be so much?!



Beautiful picture by Scott Walsh

Funeral costs should not be more than £3,000 unless you have opted for a number of non-essential extras. Be careful, think everything through and don't allow yourself to be exploited.

We have all seen the alarming advertisements on television about the cost of funerals.

This is a bit of a minefield; for example commercial cemeteries will charge about the same as our woodland for a grave but there are hidden costs which need to be taken into account.

For example, the price, usually, more than doubles if you want to buy the right to erect a headstone - which most people expect and yet it's not included!

The good news is that the costs for woodland burial are modest and nobody needs to pay out the many thousands of pounds which some funerals involve.

The St Albans Woodland Burial Trust is a charity and our costs are kept low because we have volunteers like our Administrator, Linda Parry, who give of their time to support the work of the Trust.

The cost of a grave space including digging and preparation is £1,100 - which we have to cover.

You can provide your own coffin and transport to keep the costs to an absolute minimum but even if you engaged a local funeral director to provide their professional services and a solid wood coffin they would still only charge about £2,000. This

means that any costs over about £3,000 are extras which are not essential.

If you would like to have additional things like limousines and floral arrangements then that is your choice.

Some companies may charge you a lot more than this so ask for a breakdown of the costs and make sure that you are not spending out on services which you do not require.

Our final piece of advice is to shop around, do not think that you have to use the first funeral director you speak to. Ask them how much they charge and if you discover that a basic funeral costs much more than £3,000 you should consider going elsewhere.

Of course this is all good reason to think well ahead and plan what you want for your funeral. We will be pleased to help you think this through so that your loved ones are not faced with the challenge of coming to terms with bereavement as well as trying to make decisions about your funeral.

Our Open Days are a great opportunity to meet us and are well advertised each year. Please contact Linda Parry our administrator if you would like to know more and she will be pleased to help.



Did you know?

A single tree produces approximately 260 pounds of oxygen per year. That means a single, mature tree can supply enough oxygen each year for two people!

Social-Media? Yep, we have it!



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 like minded 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.

The Latest Woodland Statistics

Interest has been considerable of late and the trend is certainly upward!

Ashes **162**

Burials **233**

Reservations **446**

Actual burial, interments and reservations as at August 2017



New Website Launched

The website has undergone a major overhaul to bring it into the mobile, responsive era.

A lot of information can be found on the website including all our brochures, booklets, pricing etc but obviously we remain available at the end of the phone if you prefer.

More features and updates will appear on a regular basis, so please, do take a look and remember to bookmark it too:-

<http://woodlandburialtrust.com>

Going out in style!

When someone's passion is working, repairing, living and breathing JCBs, then what better way to arrive for your own funeral but cradled in the arms of a JCB... just one of many journeys, each telling its own special story.

There is no denying that when someone you love passes away it will be a very difficult time. Grief will be taking a toll on family and friends and there will appear to be an endless list of things to arrange and do, the most daunting of which may well be the funeral.

However, times have changed and the formal approach of yesteryear has, for many, evolved into a celebration of life, a service that is a reflection of the individual, their character, passions and so much more.



Part of our English heritage, the London Bus



It is clear that such a personal tribute reaches out to people in so many different ways. I have watched grief-stricken faces transformed into looks of astonishment with smiles and laughter often filling the air.

There is no doubt that the grieving process is lightened for those attending, but there is one other person who often benefits too, the deceased.

In most cases, such funerals have been planned a long time in advance; from choosing their final resting spot here in the woodland to the mode of transport for their final journey.



The VW Campervan an icon for so many...



The American Legend

I have witnessed the profound effect such discussions have on individuals with many suddenly coming to terms with their own mortality for the first time - literally allowing them to embrace life going forward!

Some people are special, like the loving mother that used to meet her children from the bus each day and pass sweets around to all the other children, or the amazing daughter in the Metropolitan Police that loved Harley Davidsons, or the mother that wanted one final trip in a VW campervan for nostalgia's sake. But remember, we are **all special** with a story to tell...

NATIVE TREES & FAUNA



Dactylorhiza fuchsii
(The Common Spotted Orchid)

Restoring native trees and fauna has been top of our conservation list from the outset.

There used to be a substantial woodland (350 acres) in Keysoe but much has been lost over the centuries to arable farming and the provision of building materials including ships.

Over the last 10 years we have worked to re-establish the woodland which has seen a revival in Ash, Poplar, Hazel, Oak, Field Maple and Hawthorn.

We are planning to introduce a robust Elm variant to help compensate for those lost during the Dutch Disease that caused such widespread destruction in the 70s/80s.

Creation of the ideal micro climate that will allow woodland plants to re-establish themselves too is already paying dividends, but does require more active management until such time as the canopy naturally suppresses weed growth.

Already we are seeing Common Spotted orchids, Adders Tongue Fern, native Bluebells, wild roses, Lesser Celendine and Rose Bay Willow Herb.



A Funeral to Remember

Personalising a service

Bringing that personal touch to a woodland burial service often inspires and helps many people...



Meet Mr Will Saunders, our Woodland Manager

If you ever wondered how on earth we managed such a large area then meet Will, our Woodland Manager. He and his team have transformed the landscape here and as it continues to grow and evolve, you can be sure he will be there at the forefront.

Will is married and lives with his wife in Pertenhall from where he runs his own landscape business - WT Saunders Ground Care. With over 25 years of experience in the business, what he doesn't know isn't worth knowing!

Will also offers his services as a grave digger too should the need arise. An art form in itself that he and Tom O'Brien undertake with immaculate precision, care and understanding.

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/>



New Glades to meet demand

In a world of finite resources it is good to see that so many are now embracing our passion to support and work in conjunction with nature - not against it.

Will Saunders has been undertaking the biggest task we have set him so far, namely the clearance and commissioning of 7 new Glades and another Rill.

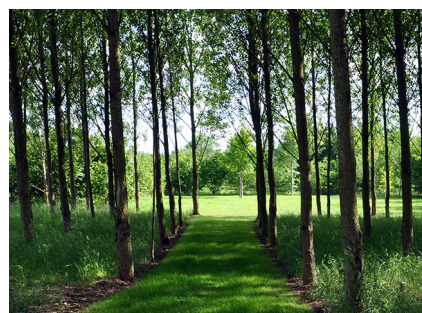
The glades nestle within a large area of native trees that were planted a few years back and which, although still young, have matured to a level that already exudes that woodland energy.



Well over 300 tons of recycled compost arrives in preparation for the new glades.

Names still need to be allocated to each one (see opposite) and they are not expected to come into use until Autumn or more likely, Spring 2018.

However, we are able to start taking reservations, so pop along to our Open Day and take a look around, experience that amazing woodland feeling and imagine how majestic it will all appear in years to come.



Just one of the finished Glades in all its glory - and already wild orchids are appearing!

Vases & Memorials

As Mick and Ed assume the mantle, we extend a massive thank you to Peter and Neil for all their support.

Sadly Peter Aspinall and Neil Kinselly are moving on and will no longer be making the wooden memorials and vases. They have supported us incredibly over the years and Peter's work in particular will remain an inspiration to many. Thank you gentleman from the bottom of our hearts!

That leads me on to their replacements. Ed Burnett is already well

known to many of us as he has been making those amazing benches and memorial signs for us since the very beginning. He will now be taking on full responsibility for the wooden Memorial Posts, Plaques and Crosses too.

Mick Ovenden in the meantime will take over and manufacture the Bamboo Vases for us.

Available to purchase on request:-



Bamboo Vases

Memorial Benches

Wooden Plaques

Memorial Posts

Wooden Crosses

<http://woodlandburialtrust.com>

Please help us name the new Glades



Sandpiper

Another 8 glades are nearing completion and we need to decide what to call them. In order to maintain continuity, we need to stick with our ornithological theme and in that respect 20 names have been shortlisted. We would be really grateful if you could **circle the 8** you prefer and **return the results to us before the end of October**. The results will be published on the website and our social media channels shortly thereafter. Photocopies will be accepted or alternatively complete the online survey here:- <https://goo.gl/VRhbyq> All entries are anonymous.

Circle your 8 favourite names and return the slip before the end of October 2017. Thank You!

Lapwing	Nuthatch	Swallow	Plover
Bunting	Pheasant	Brambling	Woodcock
Pipit	Starling	Waxwing	Tern
Harrier	Wagtail	Fieldfare	Cuckoo
Jay	Siskin	Sandpiper	Merlin

Return by hand or post to:-

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

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)

Email Address

Telephone Number

Please Gift Aid my donation (Yes / No)

(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)

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

website: <http://woodlandburialtrust.com>

Tel. Number (01234) 342613

News Snippets!

Woodland Lodge Update

Donations continue to pour in and we are already up to £9,000. We really cannot thank you enough for your kind generosity and sharing the passion for nature.

A number of designs are being considered but it is early days and we have a long way to go. Rest assured the final result will be sympathetic to its surroundings and meet stringent environmental standards.



Example of a self-build timber lodge.

Ash Dieback

Sadly we have to report that the woodland has lost 40 trees as a result of *Hymenoscyphus Fraxineus*: a fungus that is causing ash trees across Europe to lose their leaves and the crown to dieback.

The Millenium Seed Bank inform us that robust specimens have been discovered in the wild and research is underway to establish a breeding program to reintroduce them.



Thanks for the photo Hermann Falkner (more online here <https://goo.gl/MRZ77q>)

Owl Boxes?

Things do not always go to plan and our Owl Boxes currently fall into that category - ie no owls yet... they have, however, been a favourite with the Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers and several families of pigeons!

The RSPB advises against further boxes stating that the natural woodland setting now provides idyllic solutions for all bird species, especially owls. So watch this space!



Owl or pigeon boxes? Either way they have successfully housed numerous families!



Linda Parry, Administrator.

Another busy year at the Woodland has seen much change, expansion and improvement. Can we believe it is 10 years since we started with a small area of rather unruly undergrowth and great ideas!

There has been a great deal of active Woodland management over the late winter months. Thanks to Will Saunders and qualified tree surgeons, the trees are more healthy and the scourging of the undergrowth has again

Linda's Highlights

brought more wild flowers and enriched the natural growth. Thank you to all our friends for keeping the area natural and tranquil.

We are in the process of establishing 7 new glades but these will not be available until mid 2018. Any suggestions of bird names would be welcome,

Our new web site is now up and running thanks to Simon Edgar, we have had numerous positive comments, particularly regarding the ease of use and the professional standard achieved. We hope to enrich the site with more on-line information in the near future.

The Bedfordshire Family History Society has taken an interest in our site and wish to publish lists of burials for reference.

Peter Aspinall and Neil Kinselly have both decided to retire but we are fortunate to have found other craftsmen to fill their shoes. We are

so grateful for all the time and effort both Peter and Neil have put in over the past 10 years; they have been a great help to us.

This year has seen some novel methods of transportation; we had a London bus bringing friends and family, a VW campervan bringing Mum in a beautiful wicker coffin and a JCB for a gentleman whose life had been spent working and restoring them. Previously we had a Harley Davidson to bring a young woman who had always wanted to ride one and recently a young girl's pony came to be in attendance.

What fitting ways to make the last journey so special.

Once again thank you for all your 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

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