

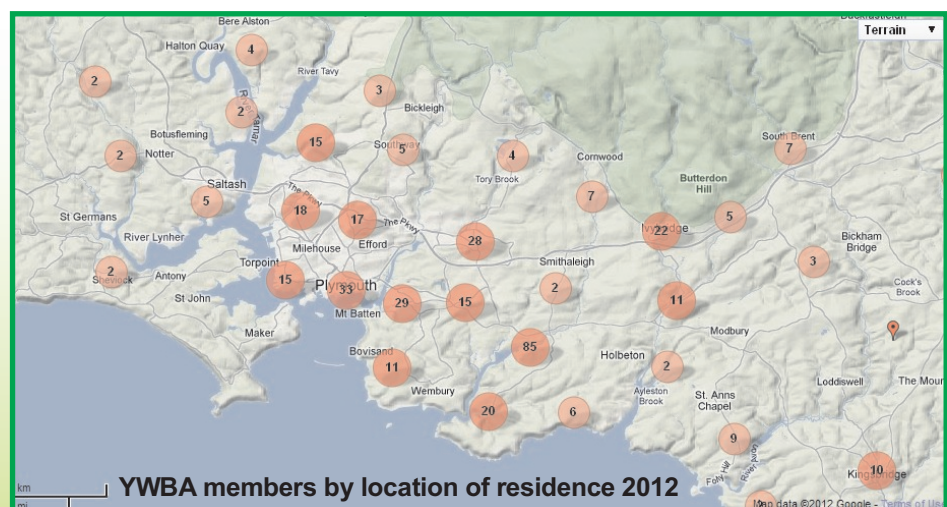
# Yealmpton Woodland Burial Association Newsletter 2012

## Looking back to where it all began in 2002

After the churchyard in Yealmpton closed, there was demand for a new burial ground. The first meeting of the Steering Group set up to arrange this was 14th May 2002. The idea for a woodland burial ground was fairly new to local people, so we did another local survey in November 2002. 68% said that they would consider using a woodland burial ground for their own funeral and 78% said that they would consider using it for someone else's funeral if they were organising it. Only 31% had left any instructions about the sort of funeral they would like for themselves. Few of the people we asked had thought about the environmental impact of burial and cremation.

We also asked local funeral directors their views. Only 30% of their customers requested burial, and only one funeral director said that their company had a policy on sustainability. They all said that they were open to change when requested by customers and would offer all their clients a choice of woodland burial if it were available. They did say that requests for burials were rising and that more people request burial in rural areas.

Encouraged by these results, we began the process of application for Planning Approval and drafted management documents we would need to set up and run the burial ground. The aims of the organization would be 'To secure and manage an environmentally benign burial ground and associated services for local people and others with a local association.' A lot more paperwork was required before we could make the new burial ground available for use in autumn 2003. Ten years on, we have 450 members from the South Hams and beyond. Was it worth it? A very definite YES!

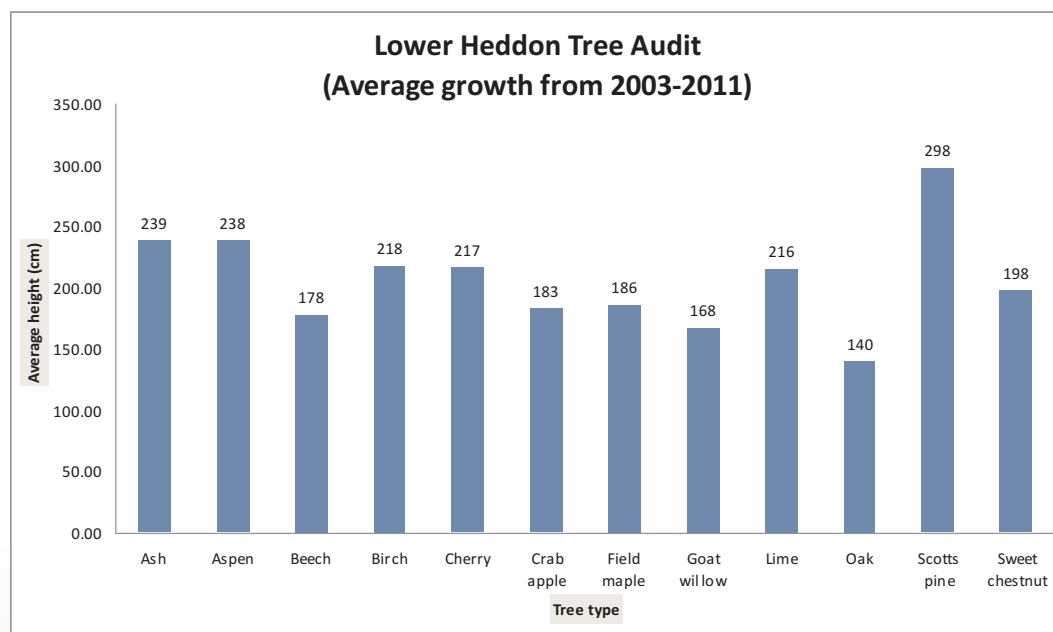


# Tree Audit 2012

One of the conditions of planning consent for the burial ground was to create a small woodland area at the beginning of the project. Nearly an acre of the field around the entrance was planted with 2 foot whips (small saplings) in November 2003. The species to be used were 30% Oak, 25% Ash, 20% Birch, cherry, aspen, field maple and 25% other species. The early planting helped to make the burial ground welcoming to visitors and served as the area for ashes burials.

Each year we planted up to 50 more trees. Many new woodlands are planted all in one go, resulting in a mature wood where all trees are of a similar age unless action is taken to encourage regeneration of younger trees. By phasing the planting, the final woodland becomes a mosaic of different aged and sized trees. Wildlife benefits from this diversity – the habitats for flora and fauna will eventually range from dense woodland right down to young trees, shrubby edges, and open grassland. The hedgerows also provide a corridor for wildlife linking the wood with other habitats in the area.

By 2011 it had become clear that the oaks planted in 2003 were not thriving. Several memorial oak trees had died, causing distress to relatives. Other trees (aspen and goat willow) were doing too well. The aspens were throwing out as many as 50 suckers per tree and strangling off surrounding growth. Willow can grow rampantly and cause restriction of growth of surrounding planting. We decided to remove these species from the list of trees for planting as memorial trees, and to undertake an audit so that we could quantify the rate of growth of the various species. In the autumn of 2011 we assessed the growth of 410 trees, which was about half the total number planted in 2003. The results are presented here.



The Scots Pines are the clear winners in terms of speed of growth. They are not only taller than surrounding trees, they are also more bushy and vigorous. However, one had to be removed and burnt in 2011 because it became infected with red band needle blight. The remaining Scots Pines seem healthy so far. The trees doing well tended to be those that were more sheltered – it can be very windy at Lower Heddon. Trees in the vicinity of vigorous growths of aspen, also fared less well. The graph bears out our impression that oaks are struggling.

Overall the audit supports the committee's decision to withdraw aspen, goat willow and oak from the list of trees to be planted at the moment. As the woodland matures, and provides more shelter we will review the situation and may reintroduce planting of oaks.

*Linda Durman, Hon. Chairman, February 2012*





## **Tree location and memorial plaques**

On several occasions, members have called us to say that they cannot locate their memorial tree. We do what we can to assist. We do keep records that tell us who has a memorial tree, and the type of tree, but we do not record the exact location of each tree, nor would this be practicable. We will be making it clear to all new members on joining the Association that we do not maintain records of, or have responsibility for, tree location.

In our guideline on memorial plaques we explain that whilst we keep a record of each grave position, graves have become difficult to locate over time and we have an increasing number of calls from relatives asking for assistance to locate a grave for them. We therefore encourage you to place an engraved slate plaque at the head of the grave to commemorate the deceased. Our guideline on memorial plaques is sent to all new members, and is also available via our website [www.woodlandburial.org.uk](http://www.woodlandburial.org.uk)

We have arranged preferential prices for engraved slate plaques for members of YWBA with the Co-operative Monumental Services, 111 Efford Road, Plymouth PL3 6NG, Telephone number: 01752 771393. They understand our specifications and members get a very competitive deal from them. Their usual lead time is a maximum of 4 weeks from confirmed order, but a problem with supply of slate in late 2011 meant that some members were having to wait longer. There is now a plentiful supply of slate again but if you have any problems in the future, please let us know. The Co-op if requested, will deliver your plaque to YWBA who will place it at the head of the grave adjacent to your plot.

*YWBA has no financial interest in any suppliers.*

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## **Committee Report**

During the eleven months to 29th February 2012 year our Community Association has welcomed 35 new members bringing the total membership of YWBA to 450.

Twenty people have been buried at Lower Heddon during the year and there have been two occasions of burial of ashes. We have maintained a steady income and are financially strong. Unusually we had one quarter in which the accounts showed a small loss, owing to very few new members joining in that quarter. Over the whole financial year our accounts show a healthy surplus and we have continued to keep our costs at a minimum. Currently your committee has decided not to increase membership subscriptions which will remain unchanged for a third year.

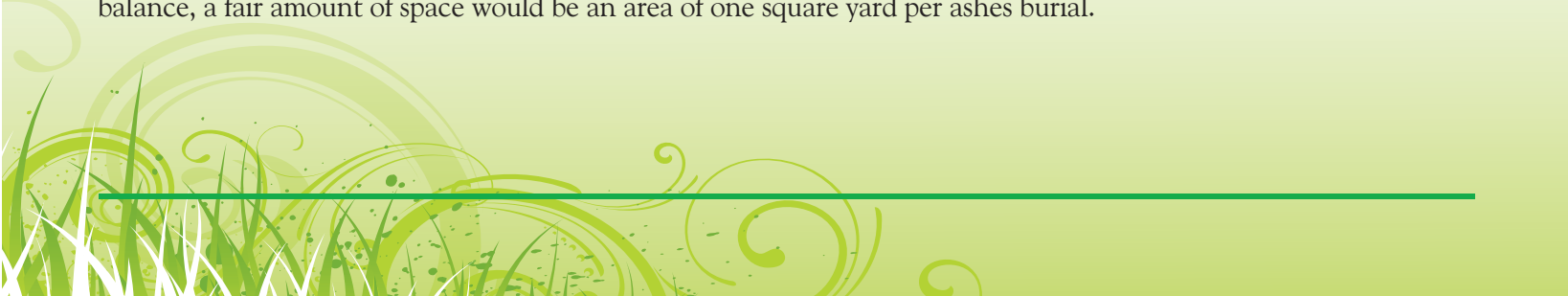
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## **Practical Considerations**

Last year we were asked whether we would allow burial of artificial hips and knees at Lower Heddon. Strictly, the burial of metals is inconsistent with our aims, but your committee came to the conclusion that refusal would be impractical. We are therefore allowing burial of all implants.

It has also been brought to our attention that we have not been limiting the amount of space each member can use around a burial of ashes. Some members have spread mementoes over a considerable area. We have decided that on balance, a fair amount of space would be an area of one square yard per ashes burial.

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## YWBA Grants

We are a 'not for profit' organisation. We have kept prices at a level that guarantees sufficient income to cover annual expenses and build up a healthy sinking fund for the future. At this stage (February 2012) the committee considers that £50,000 will be sufficient for our sinking fund, to cover the long term costs of maintenance of Lower Heddon and management of YWBA after all rights to burial have been sold. So far, income has exceeded expenditure mainly because of the amount of voluntary work done for the organisation.

When the Association has considerably more than £50,000 in the sinking fund, the committee may consider allocating the excess in the form of a grant for a project that will benefit the community. The definition of 'community' will be determined by the response to our ballot (a ballot sheet is enclosed with the 2012 newsletter that is sent to all members).

The committee has agreed the following criteria that will be used to select a project that would benefit from a grant:

- Benefit to the local community
- Value for money
- Projects that foster care for the environment
- Projects that are designed to improve care for the elderly, sick and dying
- Projects that make provision for young people

## Yealmpton Woodland Burial Association

Notice for the Annual General Meeting to be held on Thursday, April 26th 2012 in the Yealmpton Community Centre at 7pm

### Agenda

1. Minutes of the AGM 2011
2. Honorary Chairman's annual report
3. Honorary Treasurer's annual report
4. Resignation and appointment of Honorary officers
5. Result of ballot of use surplus funds; definition of 'local community'.
6. Next year's AGM will be held on 25th April 2013 at the Yealmpton Community Centre, Stray Park, Yealmpton at 7 pm

After the formal matters of the AGM, the meeting will be open to all for a 'question and answer' session. If you are unable to attend and would like a copy of the minutes, please email us at: [enquiries@woodlandburial.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@woodlandburial.org.uk) or call to ask for a postal copy on: 07739 806 898

## Our Contact Information

web address: [www.woodlandburial.org.uk](http://www.woodlandburial.org.uk)

email address: [enquiries@woodlandburial.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@woodlandburial.org.uk)

postal address: YWBA at Yealmpton Community Centre, Stray Park, Yealmpton, Plymouth PL8 2HF

**Note: this is not the address for the burial ground**

You can find directions to the burial ground on our website or by phoning our secretary on 07739 806898

