

Yealmpton Woodland Burial Association Newsletter 2013

Welcome from the Chairman

We have welcomed many new members over the years. Most now find out about us from information on our website. This is often followed by a phone call, when people ask if they may visit Lower Heddon. We welcome this, and enjoy showing them round at all times of the year. Seeing the burial ground for the first time, people are usually impressed by its wild beauty and windy peacefulness. I often think we should call it a resting place rather than a burial ground, because it has that peaceful feeling about it. The next question we are usually asked is whether this is consecrated ground. Lower Heddon welcomes members of every religion or none. In concert with 99% of natural burial grounds, we encourage members to have individual graves consecrated, blessed or dedicated by a minister of the appropriate faith or by a celebrant. For some, the incomparable moor views, the wild flower filled meadow, the inquisitive hares and the soaring skylarks at Lower Heddon are a blessing in themselves. The third question we are frequently asked is 'how much does it cost'. We explain that there is a 'one off' fee of £600 for burial, as explained on our website. 'But how much is it after that?' they ask. Nothing. Nil. Zero, we reply. We suspect that we have oversimplified our literature. For almost all burial grounds, graveyards and crematorial gardens of rest it is normal practice to charge an annual fee. Since we do not, we make no mention in our literature. So people ask us in case they have missed the information, or we have withheld it. Next time we print a set of our brochures we will make this clear, and we will add a note on our website as well.

As you will see from information later in this newsletter, Roger and I are in the process of handing over the work involved in running YWBA. What began as a good idea, merged into a nightmare of paper and reports for planners, and emerged as a Yealmpton success story, has been a huge part of our lives for 10 years. We have learnt a lot, shared sadness and made friends. We believe that it is unique in the UK insofar as it is a burial ground run by the community, for the community. We are ever so slightly proud of what we have done here, and are taking time and care with a gradual handover of the baton to colleagues who know and care as much as we do. You will hear more from Mike Cosby, who has been co-opted onto the committee and is now Vice Chairman, and from Geoff Craddock, who has also been co-opted onto the committee. Both are Yealmpton residents, who bring new skills and enthusiasm and are committed to maintaining the success of the organisation. Many of you will know Sharon Folland, our Honorary Secretary. She is the one who has answered the phone when you made that first call to us. Sharon is also planning to hand her work over as she moves on to a new career in IT. We would like to thank Sharon, and committee members who are retiring at the AGM, for all their work for



Yealmpton Woodland Burial over the years. It has required a remarkable amount of voluntary labour, given with love and goodwill, which I believe has seeped into the soil and helped to create some of the peacefulness.

My only regret? The committee members are sometimes a little garrulous. I have, at times, been reduced to threatening them with a good gaveling, but alas, I never got round to buying the gavel. I hope the next chairman doesn't need one.

Tree Care Day

Please join us at Lower Heddon (the burial ground) for an afternoon of tree care on Sunday 1st December. We will be planting trees, removing some tree shelters and replacing others with spirals.

The burial ground will be open to all helpers from 11am to 2pm. Come along and help with tree care or just to enjoy the view. Bring a flask and snack if you wish. We will be grateful for any help.

Yealmpton Woodland Burial Association

Linda and Roger Durman are stepping down from running YWBA having been at the helm (Roger is a keen sailor and likes to be at the helm, but then so does Linda...) from the project's inception in 2003 to date. Starting with the idea to provide a burial ground for the deceased of Yealmpton following closure of the village's churchyard it was the Durmans' organisational ability and determination that helped to overcome the obstacles and find a route through the regulatory maze. The eventual result is what we have today, the solidly established and financially sound YWBA with a membership of almost 500, who are assured that their wish to be buried in this beautiful woodland grove is achievable.

To reach this point has involved a lot of hard work and to keep the project on track and make it fulfil its purpose requires unstinting ongoing commitment and a forensic attention to detail – just as well Linda is a retired medical doctor.

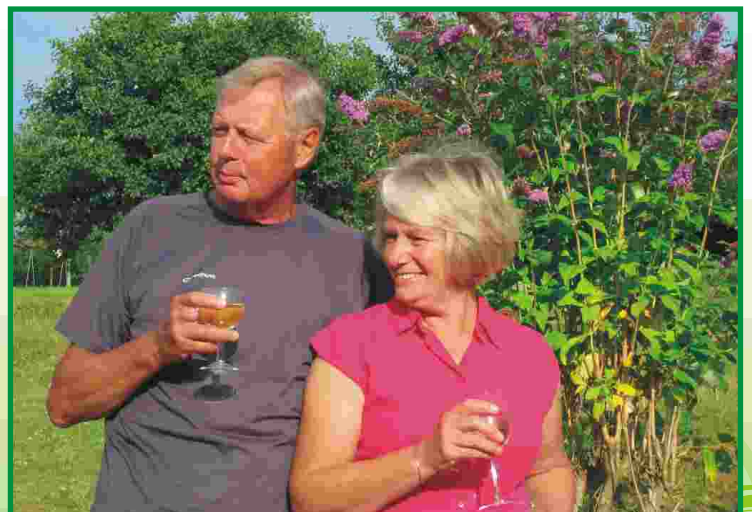
To give an idea of what has to be done day to day to keep YWBA on the road here's a little breakdown. Someone has to be available 24 hours a day 365 days a year to answer the phone, the grounds need maintenance, grass needs cutting, trees have to be planted and pruned. Then there's the allocation of plots, the record keeping both to satisfy the deceaseds' representatives as well as statutory bodies and ensuring the association's rules are adhered to. And alongside all this there's book keeping, banking and accounting for the Association's funds, producing draft accounts, running regular committee meetings, producing and disseminating newsletters and organising the AGM. Well, pretty much all of this has been done by Roger and Linda, but after the end of March, no more. And in fact for the future these jobs will be shared out to many more than just two people. And where Roger and Linda did all this largely for free, most of their successors will have to be paid.

Although Linda and Roger will no longer be organising or doing whatever needs to be done at YWBA in a physical sense, they are in fact just at the beginning of their participation in the evolution of Lower Heddon into a woodland burial ground. They are members of the association and will therefore be buried there one day; they will surely continue to keep an eye on their creation. There will be trouble in store for any future members who displease them and in particular you'll know Linda's not resting peacefully when you hear the wind howl through the branches of that bitter orange tree (Linda is justly famous for her marmalade); best beat a hasty retreat.

Many people have contributed to the establishment of YWBA, but none more than Roger and Linda. However they feel that the association is now sufficiently strong for it to continue without their involvement and from here on a mainly new team will carry the project forward.

The new team as well as members of your committee past and present want to say

*thank you to Roger and Linda
for all the energy and work they've
lavished on YWBA during its
first ten years.*



The next steps

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, after many years of valued service to the YWBA, Roger and Linda will be stepping aside in April. The association has been hugely successful under their leadership and has grown significantly over the years, ensuring that today we are in a healthy financial position. As they hand over the reins we feel that this is an appropriate time to review the structure of the organisation and to ensure that we can continue to manage it in a way that best protects the interests of our members.

We are currently an unincorporated association which is an appropriate way of running a small organisation. As the YWBA continues to grow, however, we need to establish a more formal structure and we feel that becoming a company limited by guarantee is the best option. This does not in any way mean that we will start running the association as a profit-making concern. Far from it! In fact members will not notice any practical change in the way we currently do things. We will keep the name 'Yealmpton Woodland Burial Association' and you will still be members of that association. The rules will not even be affected by this move. It will, however, make it easier for us to administer the organisation, will ensure that the assets of the association are protected for future generations and will also bring us certain tax advantages.

This is also the first step towards becoming a charity. In fact most larger charities are run on this basis – well-known local examples include Dame Hannah Rogers and St Lukes Hospice.

We very much hope that our members will support this motion when we put it to the vote at the AGM in April.

Becoming a charity

The committee plans that we apply to become a charity. The main advantage of doing so would be an improvement in public perception of the organisation. This may help with recruitment of new members and give us tax and investment advantages. There is a fairly hefty amount of paperwork required in order to achieve charitable status, so the committee will consider carefully whether it is, on balance, in the best interest of the organisation to take this step.

In order to achieve charitable status we will have to prove that we have 'charitable purposes'. This means that the organisation **only** does work which the law says is charitable. We cannot engage in a mix of work, some of which is charitable and some not. We have to set out clearly what the public benefits of the organisation are (that is to everyone, not just members of the organisation). And of course none of our work can be for private profit.

The Charities Commission website lists their 12 definitions of work that is charitable, including preventing or



relieving poverty, advancing education, religion, health, citizenship, community development, the arts, culture, heritage or science, amateur sport, human rights, and environmental protection or improvement. We hope that Yealmpton Woodland Burial would qualify in the category 'advancing environmental protection or improvement' through preservation and conservation of the natural environment and the promotion of sustainable development. In our case this would be conservation of an area of natural beauty. We may need to produce independent expert evidence, that is authoritative and objective, to show that the land to be conserved is worthy of conservation.



Committee Report

We are fast approaching a total membership of 500: by the end of February 2013 we had welcomed 46 new members resulting in a total of 487 members and rising! During the same period, 34 burials took place, 12 of which were burial of ashes. We anticipate a surplus of income over expenditure of £5,000 for the year and the committee has decided not to increase subscriptions for the fourth consecutive year.

Membership records are held on the YWBA database and it is important that this is kept up to date. We rely on our members telling us of any changes to their address, email or phone numbers.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGES.

There will be several changes to your committee at the AGM this year. Four of the founder members - Rev David Arnott, Colston Swift, Linda and Roger Durman - will not be standing for re-election. Marion Mead has also decided not to stand, and Sharon Folland will have resigned her post as Hon secretary at the end of March. Each has given freely of their time and wisdom, and helped make the association the success it is today. We thank them all, wish them well for the future and wonder how they will use all that spare time! In their stead we welcome Mike Cosby and Geoff Craddock to the committee, and know that Sheila Barton, another Yealmpton resident, will be standing for election to the committee at the AGM. We have room for one or two more enthusiasts on the committee as well. If you would like to know more please make contact with us. Nominations for the committee should reach the Hon Secretary by 15th March 2013.

Agenda for the Annual General Meeting

to be held on Thursday April 25th 2013 in the Yealmpton Community Centre at 7pm

1. Minutes of the AGM 2012
2. Honorary Chairman's annual report
3. Honorary Treasurer's annual report
4. Resignation and appointment of Honorary officers
5. Restructuring YWBA (see below)

Next year's AGM will be held on 24th April 2014 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.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

The following resolution will be proposed as special resolutions on Thursday 25th April 2013 to be duly considered and if thought appropriate, to be passed by the requisite majority of 66% of those members attending the AGM and voting.

'To transfer all the activities and assets of the Association to a new bespoke limited company set up for the purpose which organisation will take over and run the burial ground and its affairs as successor to the Association with all the benefits of incorporation'.

Our Contact Information

web address: www.woodlandburial.org.uk **email address:** 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