

WESTMILL WOODLAND BURIAL GROUND CIC

# NEWSLETTER

*Welcome to the Summer newsletter 2016*



## OPEN DAY

Would it? wouldn't it? Well it did. Rain. But only a little and this did not deter a lovely group of people from coming up for a look around and a piece of cake and a cup of tea. As always it is very special to see old friends return from our Family and Friend's group and even more so when they turn up with delicious cake! Some of them were crucial to operations. See below Jacqui the queen of the teapot and Ian explaining to people about our Family and Friend's group. We are so grateful for their ideas, hard work and support throughout the year.



## CHRIS PARK ON HIS BEES AND HIS HONEY

*For the first time Chris had his delicious honey on sale. It sold out. Throughout the craft of beekeeping there are many fascinating bits of folklore. In days gone by, and in many different cultures, bees were revered as divine creatures, coming to us straight from otherworldly, paradisiacal realms. They do indeed bring sweetness & light... and darkness and venom. Hence, a single bee is sometimes viewed in folklore as the soul of someone recently deceased travelling from this world to the next. Other creatures share this association: bumblebees; moths; butterflies; birds. The superstition that most people know about bees, is that one must "tell them the news", especially of a death, and especially of the death of their keeper. In some customs the hives would be draped with a black cloth, in others turned around, or tapped upon with a key. It has also been used as a folk medicine since time immemorial.*

*Much we owe to honeybees, and not for just the beneficial produce of the hives, but also for pollination. Indeed flowers and nectar have evolved as a direct response to bees' ancestors feeding upon pollen.*

*Below the burial ground I work with ancient technologies, experimental archaeology, arts & crafts, folk traditions and folklore.*

## KICKING THE BUCKET

...is happening again this year. It is a festival of living and dying which Liz began in Oxford in 2012 and which happens bi-annually. It is starting in October with the main weekend on November 4-6th.

Events include talks, workshops, performances dancing, singing, comedy and films. The aim is to make the subject of death more approachable. We hope to see some of you there.



[www.kickingthebucket.co.uk](http://www.kickingthebucket.co.uk)

*The honeybees here are kept in old-fashioned ways: they are allowed to swarm, and those early swarms ensure strong healthy stock. This means I don't need to treat them with any chemicals that are widely used to combat pests and diseases. I house some bees in skeps, the traditional way, and various other styles of hives.*

*The harvest is not as bountiful as that of a beekeeper who is manipulating them for profit however the quality is very high.*

## SWINDON DYING WELL CHARTER

Prospect Hospice, NHS Swindon CCG, Great Western Hospital, SEQOL, Swindon Carers, Public Health Swindon and Healthwatch Swindon joined forces last year as part of the national Dying Matters week.

Gill May, Executive Nurse, Swindon CCG said: "The Charter is the culmination of a really important consultation with the people of Swindon, involving many of the leading organisations in the delivery of local end-of-life care. We believe that through its publication, and working in conjunction with local businesses and community groups, people in the town can feel assured that their wishes and their concerns will be considered at the end of their lives, as will those of their loved ones. While that is something everyone involved has sought to achieve in the past, the Charter sets out and formalises that commitment for the people in Swindon. We think that is something to celebrate."

The Dying Well Community Charter principles:

- Recognition and respect
- Communication
- Involvement
- Support
- Help us plan and do

For further details email:  
[info@prospect-hospice.net](mailto:info@prospect-hospice.net)



*Longserving Trustee Susan Morris and Rosie Inman-Cook, NDC Manager*

## Natural Death Centre is 25!

The Natural Death Centre charity was one of many brilliant initiatives begun by the late Nicholas Albery and his wife Josefina Speyer. Thanks to his vision all those years ago there is now somewhere people can go to get free well informed advice about all aspects of death and dying.

We have benefited from their existence hugely here at Westmill since we are members of the Association of Natural Burial Grounds. That organisation is not only a source of endless advice, support and fun when we all get together around the country but it is also a way of checking that we are doing our jobs properly since each family is asked to fill in a form which goes directly to them after a funeral has taken place. They supported us when we were getting started and tell people about us when they get enquiries in our area. They have had 28 million hits on their website since they began and handle 40,000 calls and emails each year. I have sat in their office as call after call comes in asking for help with the costs of a funeral or doing it all yourself or dealing with the many other things that can confront us when a bereavement takes place. Do visit their website if you haven't. Many happy returns Natural Death Centre and many thanks.

[www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)

## GREAT CLATTINGER Cathy Turbinskyj

"A gem of an evening" - when a small but perfectly formed audience gathered in and around the Roundhouse to enjoy a Midsummer concert of music and readings inspired by the ancient flower meadows of Clattinger Farm in Wiltshire.

The 5-strong Yirdbards took us through the cycle of the seasons, with songs and music traditional, contemporary and also specially written by lead vocalist, guitarist and ecologist Paul Darby. The sounds of guitars, fiddle, cello, accordion, flute and voices came together to celebrate the interconnectedness of life - animal, plant, and human - of the land.

As we'd arrived for our pre-concert picnic, after an overcast day, the clouds rolled away with perfect timing, and the sun shone on us and the glorious oxeye daisies for the whole golden evening. And when the concert came to an end, we turned and were greeted by the sight of the most fab full moon (well, one day off), that had risen above the Ridgeway and White Horse Hill to the East, while the Yirdbards had played - like a follow-on act to take us into the rest of the midsummer night!



*The Yirdbards in the Memorial Circle*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### SEPTEMBER 10TH - Memorial Gathering

*Please note we have had to move the Memorial Gathering to a different day. We hope this does not inconvenience anyone too much.*

Saturday 10th September not 17th as previously advertised.

4.30 If you wish to decorate a memorial leaf or make a memorial lantern

5.30 The memorial gathering which lasts at most an hour.

Refreshments provided raising money for Wiltshire Treehouse for bereaved children and young people. If you can't come but would like a name read out please tell us and we will include them.

### NOVEMBER 12TH - Family and Friend's Day & AGM

11.00-1.00 Work Morning. Planting trees, general repairs. Bring warm work clothes, gloves and wellies.

1.00-2.00 Light lunch served up by FFG members at Root & Branch just down the hill at SN6 8TH. Tell us if you want lunch so we can organise the catering. Donations for lunch would be welcome to help cover costs.

2.00-3.00 AGM - Find out what has happened this year, ask questions, make suggestions, meet other people connected to the burial ground.

You are welcome to attend for just part of the day or all of it as suits you.

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## OUTSIDE THE BOX

The world premiere was in May in the Swindon Literature Festival! The show has now been to the Brighton Festival and heads up to Edinburgh in August. The show is written and performed by Liz Rothschild who worked for years in the professional theatre before opening the burial ground.

One audience member said it was *"Informative, uplifting and life affirming"* and a Brighton reviewer, Zelah Senior said *"I thoroughly enjoyed this show."*

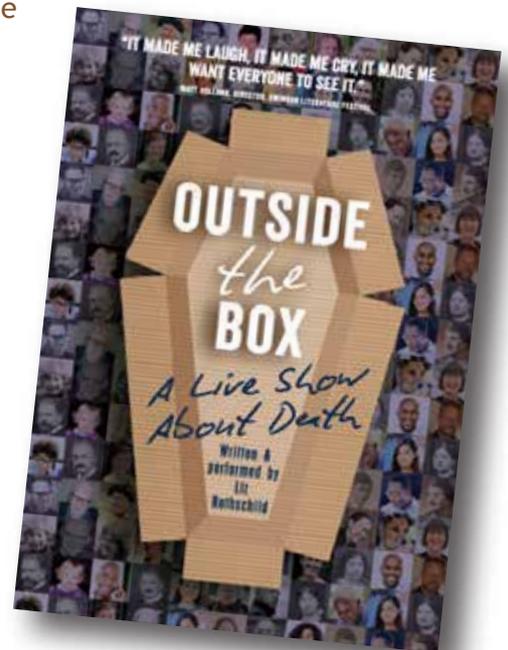
*It was both thought provoking and very funny, achieving the perfect balance between performance and education. I'd like to see it performed in every Fringe Festival and every village hall in the UK".*

Very reassuring to get this kind of response.

There will be two shows locally and it will be travelling around the country over the next year but obviously not continuously because of the day job!

**The Pumphouse** in Faringdon on Thursday July 21st at 7.45. Tickets from Hare in the Woods from July 1st or by emailing [lizrothschild@phonecoop.coop](mailto:lizrothschild@phonecoop.coop).

**The North Wall** on Monday October 24th. Tickets 01865 319450.



[twitter.com/LizRothschild](https://twitter.com/LizRothschild)



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