Ludlow Quaker Journal

March/April/May 2026

This Journal will publish anything that Friends think is of interest; so its range may be very wide. If you find it too long, select only what interests you from the Table of Contents.
Please contact Barbara Mark if you would like to have something included or wonder if you have a subject that might be of interest.
It will be published on-line only and will come out when enough articles have been gathered in. Comments and letters to the editor are also welcome.
Do remember if this copy is pdf you can listen to it via Windows 10 'read aloud' option at the top of the sheet.

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Lent Reflections

Churches around Ludlow arranged some Lent reflections about where the Christian Church is now, led by Dr Neil Richardson. They were held on Tuesday afternoons in the Zion Room at Ludlow Methodist Church from February 24th to March 24th Titled "Christian Resilience in Dark Times" the reflections was followed by discussion. Several friends took part and many representatives from different churches were there. It was good to see so many different denominations present.

Camping friends came to Ludlow Meeting

The annual Southern Marches and Mid-Wales Area Meetings Camp Walk came to Ludlow on Sunday 29th March. The Quaker camp committee join us for Meeting for Worship and told us about Quaker camp. After lunch, which they provided themselves, they were ready for a walk.

An energetic group of walkers, led by Bridget Cherry explored Ludlow, starting with the climb up Corfe Street to the Bull Ring and former site of the north gate of the walled medieval town, then via St Laurence's to the Buttercross, with a fine view of the grand houses down Broad Street , before reaching the Market Place outside the castle gate. The exhibition gallery above the castle shop provided a handy retreat from a light shower before the group wandered along a peaceful route down the Linney and through the leafy burial ground back to Lower Corve Street.

John Cherry and Ursula Freeman stayed in the Meeting house and entertained those who could not walk into town

To end the day the group returned to Ludlow Meeting where cakes and refreshments were provided.

Thank you Bridget for helping with this article.

How does a Quaker meeting work?

After the Meeting for Worship on Sunday April 13 there was an informal question and answer session over tea and coffee. Elders and Contact Friends endeavoured to answer questions about how Quaker organisation works.

There were some lively questions from about a dozen friends.

Ranging from things like how do Quakers work without clergy? Who is responsible for the Meeting House? How are decisions reached? Is there a conflict between spirituality and bureaucracy? Why do Quakers say 'Hope so'. What are the purposes of 'Elders' and 'Contact Friends'. How do Quaker finances work? How does a local meeting relate to regional, national and international Quaker organisations? How do Quakers relate to other religious groups?

'Reaching the Unreached Project' and Quaker Simmonds Grant support.

Our Meeting for Worship for Business, on 26th April, supported this charity which was brought to our attention by Cynthia Prior.

Reaching the Unreached (www.rtu.org.uk) is a children's charity that Clive and Cynthia have been actively supporting since 2014. It is based in Tamil Nadu in Southern India.

As well as its work with children, RTU is very active in the surrounding area in a variety of ways, including delivering healthcare, work training schemes and improving water facilities for the local population.

As part of this work the charity would like to apply for a Simmonds Grant of approximately £4,000 a year for two years, to deliver medical care to around 10,000 people a year in the predominantly rural area around the main RTU schools and orphanage facility. This will improve children's health and will help to reduce preventable diseases as well as aiding rehabilitation and recovery, so that people can return to work quicker, reducing the financial burden on their families. This will be delivered in the villages surrounding the project base from the recently updated state-of-the-art health centre.

This is a Quaker administered grant and in order to be able to apply for the grant the charity needs to be able to show a Minute of Support from a Quaker Meeting. This was duly done.

On-going building works

Toilet for the disabled project.

Early in 2026 James Smith drew up plans for Ludlow Meetings new building project which is to change an outside toilet into an inside one which will be large enough to be our official disable one. It will also incorporate a change in the front door arrangement and maybe the whole lobby area.

A full planning application was required by Shropshire Council and was submitted by James Smith on 16th April.

When planning permission has been received quotes will be sort from builders and dates for the start of the work.

The cost of the building work will be supported by Cymar Premises Fund and potential costs have already been shared with AM, Trustees and Cymar Treasurer.

Recently the old gas boiler has failed. This was not unexpected. Premises committee is investigating the option of changing the heating system to a more environmentally sustainable one. This has been budgeted for in the five-year development plan for the Meeting House required by Cymar.

A Notice from Quaker Outreach.

We are very excited to share our new outreach campaign with you: Questions about Quakers - answering questions enquirers frequently ask about Quakers. The campaign will be run online (through our social media, websites and newsletters) and through posters and leaflets for Meetings to use at their place of meeting and beyond. The campaign aims to demystify questions about Quakers and to help enquirers learn more about Quakerism in an accessible way.

Each poster links to the relevant question on our landing page which provides more information: info.discoveringquakers.org.uk/qaq

We anticipate collecting requests for posters and leaflets during April and at Yearly Meeting at the start of May. We hope to start dispatching printed materials in early June. We are printing posters in sets of 10 - one poster for each question

This coordinated campaign will run for the whole of the year, we will focus on answering one of the following 10 questions each month on our social media, blog posts and newsletters for enquirers.

Are Quakers Christian?
What happens in a Quaker Meeting?
Why do Quakers sit in silence?
Do Quakers believe in God?
Is Quakerism a cult?
What do Quakers believe?
What are Quaker values?
Is Quaker practice different from meditation?
Are Quakers welcoming to all?
How do I try a Quaker meeting?

We hope to start dispatching printed materials in early June. We are printing posters in sets of 10 - one poster for each question.

Request form for posters and leaflets: www.discoveringquakers.org.uk/qaqform

In Friendship,
Sam and the Discovering Quakers Team

World Quaker Day on 4th October

Friends World Council for Consultation are contact friends around the world to share the theme for the next World Quaker Day.

They say:-World Quaker Day is on 4 October 2026, and this year's theme is *Let Peace Be Among Us* with the supporting Bible passage, Hebrews 12:14, "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy."

FWCC is planning a massive Global Online Worship on the day, bringing together Friends across borders, languages and Quaker traditions with a shared focus on peace.

The worship is planned to start at 14:00 UTC and last for 8+ hours, reaching across many time zones from the Americas to Aotearoa/New Zealand. Each hour of worship will be dedicated to a part of the world where prayers for peace are particularly needed – you're welcome to join for as little or as long as you'd like.

Stay tuned for further updates about how to join online here or in our monthly e-newsletter, *Friends World News*

Find out more at www.worldquakerday.org

Joining the Methodist for a shared lunch

The Methodists had a celebration between 10th to 17th May because it was 20 years ago since they had the church refurbished and Wesley's café was opened. Prices in Wesley's was back down to 2006 price, over this period, to celebrate. There were also special services and evening performances.
On Sunday 17th May they held a shared lunch after their service. As Ludlow Quakers have shared several events together with the Methodists, and have always been on good terms, it was decided to ask if friends could join them. This was welcomed and 10 friends took a dish to share with them for 12.30 start.
It was a very pleasant and hospitable occasion.

Facing the Consequences

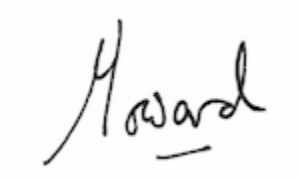
A message from Howard Grace, Newbury Meeting.

Thank you for your e-mail which was forwarded to me. I appreciate your interest in the article in 'the Friend'. You are welcome to use it in any way you would like to.

The world seems to move from one great turmoil to another. It is a challenge to know how to engage with the deeper issues. I wonder whether you are aware of the new film of which I am exec producer, 'The Hardest Bridge'. The director is my good friend Imad Karam, many of whose family have been killed in Gaza over the last couple of years. We had a wonderful occasion with the film, also Imad and the two protagonists at Oxford university three weeks ago. An overflow audience of 200!

Then three days later another event in the fine Downe House school (Mostly Sixth Form students, near Newbury where I live) which Jo Berry joined us for a review by one of the senior students. I found this very perceptive. Young people seem to really respond to the honesty and reality of engaging with our inner struggles as well as the wider world.

For your interest, the trailer of 'The Hardest Bridge' is at: <https://vimeo.com/1145306637?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci> . You are welcome to share this too.



Article in The Friend

FACING THE CONSEQUENCES

Sixty years ago my physics degree primarily focussed on nuclear power. Seeing how this might be used led me to speak at Hyde Park Corner in favour of CND. I believe that the highest moral stance on the nuclear weapons question is to disarm unilaterally. But, this needs to be done with a realistic acceptance of the possible consequences. Also, how does this relate to the overarching issue of non-violence?

Perhaps the most devoted exponent of non-violence was Mohandas Gandhi. For him a person's motives were paramount. He wrote, 'Non-violence is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but a positive state of love. It is not a cover for cowardice but it is the supreme virtue of the brave. Exercise of non-violence requires far more bravery than that of swordsmanship. But swordsmanship is any day superior to passive and helpless submission.' We may ask what the response of Ukraine (which incidentally gave up nuclear weapons in the mid 1960s) should have been to being attacked by Russia?

It is often claimed that Jesus' life and message is one of non-violence. We are also told, sometimes by the same people, that disarmament will lead to peaceful co-existence. Yet a consequence of Jesus' life was death on the cross, and since then many of his most devoted followers have been thrown to the lions. Unilateralism may be right, it may be in line with Jesus' teaching, but we are deceiving ourselves if we think it is the likely way to peace.

Jesus told Peter to put his sword away. He was prepared to face the consequences. If we are prepared to face the consequences we should disarm unilaterally. But, it would be totally wrong to do so from a misplaced trust in human nature. At root it is not the fact that we have or don't have armaments that leads to war, it is the way we live. What is needed is to take a unilateral stand for goodness, living every aspect of our lives in such a way that brings a new spirit into human affairs.

Becoming a peace maker rather than a peace lover was well summed up in 'The Silent Revolution' by Kent M Keith when he wrote: 'Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable -- be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight -- build anyway. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow--do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and you'll probably get kicked in the teeth -- give the world the best you have anyway.'

A life centred on following our deeper inner leading is often instrumental in creating peace, but sometimes it leads you into conflict. It is what is needed from us, either way.

I believe that those who stand for unilateral nuclear disarmament should do so only in conjunction with a commitment to a fundamental moral change in every aspect of our lives.

Howard Grace. Newbury Meeting. January 2026

Can I add an afterthought here. In The Friend, 15th May, is an article by Rebecca Hardy who interviewed Stuart Masters, the person who gave this year's Swarthmore lecture. It is well worth reading by the way.
The bit that resonated particularly with me, having read Howard Grace's article, was the sentence half way through Rebecca's article where Stuart says, ' Arguably what is needed is the whole transformation of humanity'. He believes Quakers can play their part in this. That is a challenge!
Barbara

A message from Amnesty :16th May 2026

This was a message sent to those on Amnesty internet links, during the huge demonstration in London on 16th May.
Right now, Holocaust survivor Stephen Kapos is at the Nakba Day demonstration in London. The 88-year-old has attended almost every demonstration in the last two year's protesting Israel's genocide in Gaza.
Stephen stands and sits with family and members of his group the 'Holocaust Survivors & Descendants Against the Genocide in Gaza'.
He told us:
"Today, we commemorate not only the 1948 violent displacement and dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs during the creation of the State of Israel. But the unlawful occupation of Palestinian land and the ongoing genocide in Gaza."
"Justice for the Palestinians must be demanded and fought for by peoples of the world to force their own governments to act to end Israel's genocide, occupation and apartheid."

“That is why these marches have been attacked so much – it is the threat we pose to injustice. And the symbol of solidarity and hope we represent.”

As I write this Journal there is news flooding social media about the flotilla of boats which was trying to take aid to Gaza. It seems they were intercepted by Israeli government forces, in international waters’ and all taken prisoners. It appears the Israelis were violent and did, and said, things to those who had been captured which the world population considered utterly horrific.
On the BBC news web site it was reported that on Thursday 21st May, Israel's top diplomat in Britain, charge d'affaires Daniela Grudsky Ekstein, was summoned over the incident. Poland also summoned its charge d’affairs and demanded an apology. Ireland, Italy, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Canada and US have all condemned the behaviour publicly.
A journalist and a politician from Italy were pictured arriving back and both spoke of their beatings when they arrived in Israel.
Adalah, an Israel-based rights group representing the detainees, earlier said there had been "severe, widespread injuries", with at least three people taken to hospital.

A message from Radnor Palestine Links News this May

In case you haven't seen it, Lowkey on Double Down News gives a devastating account of the links between Mark Rowley, the far-right marches and the Israeli lobby...
https://youtu.be/KCvVptKtGPM?si=CaQTIQIHVqlnZk-a
==========
There is also news from RPL of a visit of 14 women from The West Bank who will be visiting places in England in June. Two of them plan to visit Ludlow for tea on 4th June. We await more news about this.

Messages from Radnor Palestine Links

Follow RPL on Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/groups/231279137425339
Barbara

Book Review

I have been reading ‘Friends for Life’ by Suzanne Michal and ‘death row’ inhabitant Robert Poyson.
Suzanne came to the last Area Meeting and explained her journey to becoming a letter writer for ‘Lifelines’ and her journey with Robert who, between the two of them, wrote this book. It is moving and easy to read. Their relationship blossomed as they

discovered their spiritual connections. I did not think reading letters would grip me the way this book has. These two people share, with such honesty and bravery, their inner most beliefs and lives. Then they dare to share all this with us, the reader.
The journeys are rocky and it shows their vulnerability and their strengths.
The book will soon be in Ludlow Quaker Meeting library.
I do not need to write more because there is much about this in the AM minutes.
Barbara

Article from QUAKE 22nd May, about imprisoned friends

A report by Defend Our Juries and Queen Mary University of London reveals the scale of imprisonment of protesters, including Quakers, who take direct action on the climate crisis and Palestine.

British courts have increasingly used remand detention, contempt proceedings and lengthy custodial sentences to create political prisoners, the report says.

Researchers documented 286 cases involving climate and Palestine solidarity protestors imprisoned since 2019. In the 256 cases where sentencing and remand data could be verified, the total amount of jail time imposed amounted to 136 years.

Among them were Phil Laurie and Rajan Naidu, who were imprisoned for breaching an injunction at the Kingsbury Oil Terminal with other Quakers and climate activists.

Quakers in Britain have campaigned against successive government attempts to increase restrictions and penalties for peaceful protest, the latest being the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

In recent submissions to government and parliamentary inquiries on protest, Quakers in Britain highlighted the plight of Quakers who were deterred from protesting, denied the ability to explain their motivations in court, and given excessive penalties for peaceful protest.

Responding to this report, Grace Da Costa, Public Affairs and Media Manager at Quakers in Britain said:

“This report shows the rising scale of injustice facing peaceful protestors who are calling on our government to tackle genocide and environmental destruction. People should not be imprisoned for peaceful actions motivated by love. The government needs to listen to our concerns and take action to protect our human right to protest."

Extra Bits

I quite often add a Radio 4 'Thought for the Day' suggestion. This time may I suggest you listen to the thought on 22nd May on BBC 'sounds'. It is about truth and trust, and how much has to be done to re-gain trust after it has been lost.

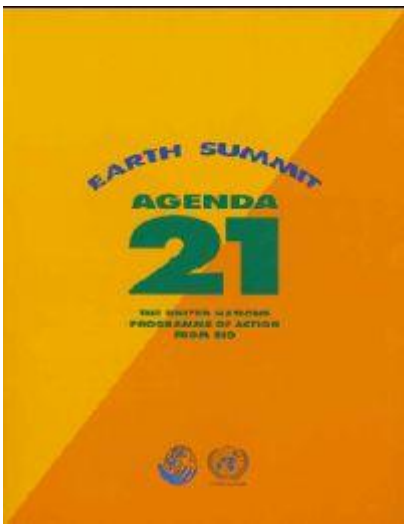
Ursula Freeman told me about this on-line course 'The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, his message and relevance for the modern world' which was run by the Gandhi Foundation.
Unfortunately, it was too late to get it into Notices.
However, she tells me it was very good. She will let us know if there are others that friends might like to sample.
Barbara

Environmental Issues

News from Ludlow 21

A bit of background ...

Ludlow 21 has been around for almost 30 years!
We were set up in 1998
in response to the challenge
given to the world
by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.



The Rio Earth Summit was a United Nations conference held to consider sustainable development. It had 2 main outcomes:

- The establishment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – to combat *'dangerous human interference with the climate system'.* The Conference of the Parties (COP) meets every year to assess progress.
- The Agenda 21 action plan -
    - there should be local Agenda 21 groups at national, regional and local levels throughout the world;
    - we would achieve 'global sustainable development' by the 21st Century – hence '21';
    - within 10 years 6400 local governments in 113 countries were engaged in Agenda 21 activities.
    - Already, in 1998, Ludlow had joined in!

The idea of these newsletters is

- to let more people in Ludlow know about the great things we're up to and encourage you to join in;
- share news, views, information, inspiration, challenge, encouragement about sustainable living … as well as requests for help.

So please read and share.

We'd love to hear from you at - newsletter@ludlow21.org.uk

You can find out more about us on the Ludlow 21 website

- http://www.ludlow21.org.uk

And if you're not yet a member, Clare Currant is the person to be in touch with

on membership@ludlow21.org.uk

Film Showing

Earlier in May, as a member of Ludlow 21 I watched a pre-screening of the People's (National) Emergency Briefing. It was rightly shocking and I think that it is essential viewing for people who care about the survival and wellbeing of our planet - and of one another. We are no longer in the territory of loony scaremongering! The 45-minute film addresses realities that are unfolding before our eyes. The speakers are leading experts in their own fields, highlighting the risks to nature, climate, food security, health, economy if we continue with 'business as usual'.

Ludlow 21 is hosting two free screenings - at 4pm on Saturday 6th June at Ludlow Methodist Church and at 4pm on Saturday 27th June in Oscars, Ludlow Assembly Rooms. The film will be followed by refreshments and discussion facilitated by members of Ludlow 21, from which some ideas for shared action and mutual support will hopefully emerge.

Please book your free place beforehand by emailing EmergencyBriefingLudlow@yahoo.com and talk with Faith if you wish to know more.
NB It is recommended that the film is for 16 years+.
Thank you for this Faith

Earth Day is celebration

It is celebrated either on April 22 or the day the spring equinox occurs throughout the rest of the world. Environmental activism during the 1960s inspired Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson to create a national celebration uniting the environmental movement.
Look on web at World Wildlife Fund WWF

Every January people are encouraged to reinvent themselves. We make resolutions to eat better, move more, spend less, and waste less. We promise ourselves to quit plastic, go zero-waste, buy only ethical brands, and shrink our effect on climate change overnight.

But then reality hits.

We forget reusable bags for the grocery store. We can't afford the most "eco-friendly" products, so we buy what we can. We live somewhere without public trans-portation. The guilt creeps in, and suddenly sustainability feels less like hope and more like failure. It can be so discouraging that sometimes we give up altogether.

But here's the truth the environmental movement needs to say out loud (shout it from a building if you have to): sustainability was never meant to be perfect. Real environmental progress has always come from collective, imperfect action, not individual perfection.

The theme for Earth Day 2026 remains Our Power, Our Planet, but its application reflects current global economic, environmental, and civic conditions.

In 2026, Our Power. Our Planet. refers to the role of people and communities worldwide in sustaining environmental protections that affect the cost of living, public health, infrastructure reliability, and long-term stability. Environmental conditions influence food systems, water availability, energy access, disaster risk, and economic resilience across all regions. Community participation has historically shaped these outcomes across countries and political systems.

Since the first Earth Day in 1970, civic action has helped establish and strengthen environmental institutions, laws, and international norms. These measures have been associated with reductions in pollution-related illness, improved access to clean water, and long-term public health and economic benefits in many parts of the world.

Earth Day 2026 calls on communities worldwide to take action during Earth Week to support clean air, clean water, clean energy, protected natural resources, and climate stability. These factors are directly linked to human health, economic predictability, food security, and cross-border infrastructure performance.

UN Breaking news 24th May 2026

From 38degrees

At the UN, those governments, including major polluters like China, Japan, Brazil, and the EU, made a clear-cut commitment that countries must phase out fossil fuels and

protect their people from climate collapse – or face real, legal, consequences.
This is unprecedented!
And not just that. In a stirring show of solidarity, they affirmed that rising sea levels will never erase island states – that even if their land is swallowed they will retain their sovereignty.
In a moment that can feel so desperate, this is a critical win for humanity – and a massive blow to fossil fuel interests.

Shropshire Climate Actions ask:

Please support our Solomon Siren project!

Shropshire and the Solomon Islands are 9000 miles apart, but they are linked by climate change.

In 2021 Gladys Bartlett spoke to a South Shropshire Climate Action conference via Zoom about the impact of sea level rise causing entire islands to disappear beneath the waves.

Working with an artist we hope to install a 4m sculpture marking changing sea levels and to be used to focus community activism in the Solomons and beyond.

It a habitat too. It will be a perch for frigate birds (think massive cormorants) and home for octopuses and other reef animals.

The sculpture has been funded by the British High Commission, but we still need £10,000 to finally install it.

Please support this unique climate project if you can.

For more information and to donate visit our Crowdfunder page

For more information on the sculptor and examples of his work go to Shropshire Climate Action web site

CARING FOR
GOD'S ACRE

Hopefully many of you will have left an area of churchyard grass to grow long, either for No Mow May or else in preparation for some nature spotting as part of Churches Count on Nature.

One of the most showy flowers in a meadow is the Oxeye Daisy, also called Moon Daisy and Moonpenny; the large white petals drawing pollinators in to the bright yellow centre. Look out for a variety of vetches, members of the pea family. You may find Tufted Vetch – look out for 6-spot burnet moths on this one. Bush Vetch and Common Vetch are likely too and a great many churchyards contain Bird's-foot-trefoil also known as Eggs and Bacon because of the mix of yellow and orange on the flowers. Richard Mabey, in his fantastic book Flora Britannica lists many names for Bird's-foot-trefoil including Hen and Chickens, Tom Thumb, Granny's Toenails, Cuckoo's Stocking and Dutchman's Clogs.

Lady's Bedstraw is often found in churchyards. It smells sweet when dried and would be added to hay stuffed in mattresses, particularly when preparing a bed for childbirth. Look out for the froth of yellow flowers (other bedstraws have white flowers) and the scent of honey. The Lady in the name is the Virgin Mary.

Perhaps your churchyard contains orchids, the most common one flowering in June is Common Spotted Orchid. The presence of orchids indicates an old grassland which has matured over time and developed a range of species within the soil. All orchids depend on a fungal partner, feeding the plant underground via the threadlike mycorrhizae.

Your churchyard meadow areas act as pitstops or cafes for insects and can buzz with life. Try and spend a little time enjoying them and seeing which pollinators are using them.

Tufted Vetch

Bumble bee on Bird's foot Trefoil

Love your Burial Ground Week with Churches Count on Nature 2026

Registrations are open on the Caring for God's Acre website for Love Your Burial Ground Week with Churches Count on Nature, our annual initiative to celebrate and monitor the wildlife to be found in churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries across the UK. The date this year are Saturday 6th – Sunday 14th June.
It is promoted by Caring for God's Acre in partnership with the Church of England, the Church in Wales and A Rocha UK. It coincides with National Cemeteries Week, hosted by the National Federation of Cemetery Friends, as well as with the Great Big Green Week run by the Climate Coalition.

Burial Ground managers, PCCs and Friends groups are encouraged to get together with congregations and local residents to run events observing and recording wildlife, whether hosted by a local expert, as a fun activity for families, or any number of options in between.
Feedback from 2025 was overwhelmingly positive, with 97% of participating groups giving either a 4-star or 5-star rating. A fantastic 58% said that attendees included people from outside their usual community, indicating that running an event helped to bring in new people to appreciate the wildlife treasures to be found. When asked to describe the highlight, quotes sent in by participating groups included "Finding hedgehog poo in our city centre churchyard!" and "A lovely evening looking for nature at its best."

Records can be submitted to CfGA via the iNaturalist app, an enjoyable and straightforward way to document findings that also assists in species identification, enhancing wildlife encounters. Simply visit the CfGA website to find out how to join the Beautiful Burial Grounds Project within the app and start submitting your records.

In 2026 we are specifically focusing on swifts, and the first 500 to sign up can request a booklet supplied by Action on Swifts, as well as the option to request copies of our Starter Guide to Burial Ground Heritage and Wildlife, plus a Guide to the Wildlife of Burial Grounds specially produced for us by the Field Studies Council.