

# Fevin Nature Reserve Burial Ground Westcombe

## The Site

The Fevin Nature Reserve and Burial Ground once formed part of a hilltop smallholding managed for around forty years by Arthur and Olive Fevin. Arthur and Olive had always adopted a 'green' approach to life and in 1998 donated around twelve acres of species rich land to the Butler Memorial Trust. The site has provision for up to 300 burials. We also accept ashes for burial or scattering.

The site consists of a small field reserved for burials and two larger ones currently maintained as pasture. The field margins are managed with a view to enhancing the habitat for native plants. There are two areas of established copse and the trustees have overseen the planting of a new copse and the renovation of a small pond. In the long term the site will be managed as a nature reserve.

## The Trust

The Butler Memorial Trust was set up in memory of Dorothy and Leslie Illingworth Butler of Bickleigh, Devon to provide sites for 'green' burial. It is administered by a small group of volunteer trustees committed to running the site in such a way as to provide a more natural, tranquil and environmentally harmonious alternative to conventional burial grounds. The Fevin site at Westcombe is, at present, the trust's only site.

## Burials

Because we want to minimise impact on the natural environment, including the visual environment, certain 'rules' must be adhered to when using the site for burial.

Coffins must be quickly biodegradable – wicker, bamboo, cardboard and softwood are acceptable. Hardwoods, metals and plastics cannot be used. Shrouds or clothing should be of natural fibre. Bodies may be buried without the use of coffins.

Only indigenous wild flowers should be planted on graves; if you are uncertain whether the flowers you wish to plant are native, please contact the Trust. The ground over burial sites gradually subsides during the months after a burial and the Trust has to add further soil at times to keep the site level. This can affect plantings.

Small memorial plaques (maximum dimension 30cm) of wood or natural stone may be placed on the graves but these should be laid flat - management of the site may require cutting or grazing over graves.

## Ceremonies

The Fevin burial ground is unconsecrated. Clients may, within reason, arrange whatever type of graveside ceremony they deem appropriate. Please note, however, that this is a natural burial ground. There are no solid paths. It can become very muddy and access may be difficult for the infirm. There is also limited parking at the site.

The Trust has planted three areas of the Reserve with suitable native trees in recent years. These trees are available for adoption in memory of a loved one. Details are available from the Trust. The adoption fee covers the cost of a memorial plaque and a small charge for tree maintenance

## Some Interesting History

Visitors often feel that there is a special atmosphere at the Fevin Nature Reserve. The area is steeped in history and, although not evident on the ground, a geophysical survey undertaken in 1993 showed the ramparts, ditches and round houses of an Iron-Age hill fort. In the neighbouring field a Roman burial was excavated in 1945 and contained a skeleton, grave goods and pottery, much of which is now in the County museum.

More recently, in 1942, Hurricane BE-566 flown by Robin McNair crashed on the site. The pilot bailed out and landed in Paradise – a few miles down the road! He went on to have an illustrious career becoming squadron leader. Pieces of wreckage were recovered in the late 1990s by enthusiast Tim Hake who was able to contact the pilot's son and bring him to visit the site of his father's brush with fate.

The trust operates on a minimal budget and donations towards upkeep and management of the site are always welcome. Donations can be made as a memorial, and a brass plaque bearing the name of the deceased (who need not be buried at the site) can be placed at the site by the trust.

**For more information, to arrange a burial or make a donation please contact  
The Butler Memorial Trust on 01458272848, 01458251856  
Email: [suetoomer@hotmail.com](mailto:suetoomer@hotmail.com), [admin@woodlandburials.org](mailto:admin@woodlandburials.org)  
or visit [www.woodlandburials.org](http://www.woodlandburials.org)**

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