

# Living Legacies

A study of Britain's natural burial parks



*“Traveller, there is no road. The road is made by travelling.”*

*Spanish proverb*

# Contents

Context

Introduction

Options:

1. Private small businesses
2. Local Councils
3. Funeral directors
4. Large commercial enterprises
5. Charities and churches

Ireland

Consecrated Ground

The Natural Death Centre, London

Survey

Map of sites visited

Conclusion

Participants and websites

Thanks

## Context

Disposal of the dead, while it hopefully affects each of us individually only a few times in our lives, is cumulatively a huge environmental problem. Cemeteries take up valuable space and are expensive and pollutive to maintain. Cremation uses large amounts of fossil fuels and pollutes the atmosphere with dioxins, mercury and other toxins. A compostorium is a realistic possibility much advocated by some, but is not yet available, and a researcher in Sweden is working on a system for freeze drying bodies to produce organic biodegradable powder, but it has apparently not been tested on human cadavers yet. ([www.promessa.se/index\\_en.asp](http://www.promessa.se/index_en.asp))

Natural burial parks provide a long-term solution which, rather than wasting resources, utilises them in a sustainable, meaningful and beautiful way. My project was to find out the details of how it's done to enable the establishment of natural burial parks all over Aotearoa and avoid repeating mistakes others have made.

Wikipedia has this to say about natural burial:

*“With a natural burial, the body is returned to nature in a biodegradable coffin or shroud. Native vegetation (often a memorial tree) is planted over or near the grave in place of a conventional cemetery monument. The resulting green space establishes a living memorial and forms a protected wildlife preserve.”*

# Introduction

On June 6th 2007 I set off for Britain to research natural burial parks and the green funeral movement in the UK funded by a Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship..

To do this I covered 2500 miles in two months and visited 30 burial grounds, with varying names like “Woodland burial place”, “Memorial Park”, and “Green burial ground”. In the USA they are sometimes called “Memorial Preserves” or “Eco-Cemeteries”. I surveyed as many people as would participate, some of whom I met and some of whom responded to the questionnaire, covering 40 questions, which was kindly sent out on my behalf by the Natural Death Centre. I also video recorded some interviews and sites, and took photographs, whenever the rain would safely let me! I met several green funeral pioneers, 2 weavers of willow coffins and the instigator of the first ever natural burial ground, Ken West.

The journey took me from Cornwall to Norfolk to Cumbria to West Wales. On the way I contacted, visited and interviewed many green funeral directors, farmers and operators of green burial sites, in rural and urban areas.

The burial sites I visited fall roughly into 5 categories:

1. Private small businesses, mostly farmers diversifying their income streams.
2. Local council owned and operated
3. Funeral directors expanding their business.
4. Large scale commercial business enterprises.
5. Charities and churches

# 1. Private small businesses

This is now the largest group. The owners/operators of these sites were firmly part of their local communities. They provided a personal service for their clients, many of whom were neighbours. The sites are usually on working farms, often organic, and tend to be 1 to 5 acres (1 acre = approx. 0.4 hectare) in size, with room to expand when necessary. Most of these farmers told me that the main factors with regards to planning regulations that impacted their ability to open a natural burial ground were the water table and access, usually off road parking availability. Where these two circumstances were suitable there was generally little difficulty in establishing a burial ground.

Neighbours were consulted and sometimes objected until they realised that the project would do them more good than harm. Often fear of death is the main underlying reason why people object. But Britain is dotted with churchyards, ancient burial mounds, and small and large cemeteries with no harm coming to the neighbours, so there would be little point in objecting to one on a neighbouring farm; in fact its existence would serve to protect the natural environment which is usually why people choose to live there.

These burial grounds serve multiple purposes:

- ~ They provide a form of protection for the rural environment
- ~ They increase the natural habitats available to wildlife
- ~ They offer a more pleasant burial alternative to the locals than existing cemeteries
- ~ They create another form of income for local farmers
- ~ They increase the sense of community and “belonging” for residents of neighbouring towns and villages.

These graves tend to cost less than most in the other categories. They often have the option of a tree planted on every grave if families wish, and largely unmown grass, apart from a few paths. They provide natural habitats for wildlife, such as rare plants, butterflies, voles, owls and bats, and often have

nesting boxes around the site. Some of them are grazed by stock, some completely abandoned to nature, some more closely maintained.

Grave sites are usually identified by GPS, triangulation, buried microchips, and/or trees, with or without identifying tags or plaques. At one site I visited the graves were simply marked by small stones with the names of the occupants. It would have been easy for a mischievous youth to swap all the names around for fun. I asked the owner about this and she said that, along with vandalism, it had never happened, and even if it did she could easily put them all back in the right places because she knew all the names and families!

A few of these sites also offer pet burials, sometimes even with humans. Some people may consider this unethical but it's an option that is appreciated by a minority and does no harm to the rest. Personal choice matters a great deal to the dying and the bereaved. The owner of one of these sites, Penny Lally, proudly showed me around the Woodland Burial Place and Pet Cemetery she established with her husband John, including the grave where he was buried only 2 months prior to my visit. It was next to her horse's grave, and her cat's, with a space in the middle for her.



*John Lally's grave, Penwith Woodland Burial Place, Cornwall*

## 2. Local Councils

The very first natural burial park in Britain was established in 1992 in Carlisle City Council Cemetery by Ken West who was the cemetery manager there at the time, and has since retired. He had been approached by 2 elderly women who wanted to be buried in their own garden because they didn't like the glossy, impersonal, crowded superficiality of cemeteries. Ken realised that some people wanted a simpler, less ostentatious means of burial which would benefit the environment rather than detract from it. Carlisle City Council is a fairly progressive council, and was keen to improve its environmental record, so they gave him permission to establish a small area for natural burials on the outer edge of the main cemetery. They began by burying people in rows, in a grid shaped pattern, and planting an oak tree on each grave. These trees are now 15 years old and starting to crowd each other out, so they will be thinned when necessary. This was made clear to people at the time of burial. They also had named plaques on a memorial wall next to the graves but have since discontinued this practice.



*Carlisle Woodland Burial*

Nowadays, having outgrown the original area, they have developed a cross-shaped pattern, a bit like a 5 on die, with 2 graves side-by-side on each dot, and a numbered grave marker in the middle. Trees can be planted at the head of each grave. Apparently this system means better access to the second grave in a plot at a later date.

With the notable exception of Carlisle, a lot of the council-run natural burial parks, which now comprise 45% of the sites, are rather uninspiring places. They seem tacked on, an afterthought, a tokenistic adjunct to the main cemetery business. They tend to be square and dull, in a neglected corner of the cemetery, with a few small trees struggling through the long grass to mark unnamed graves. Unsurprisingly they are generally underpopulated. Council regulations about what can and cannot be planted and/or placed on the graves are rigidly enforced, even though 10m away all manner of decorations, ornaments, bouquets, soft toys, and plastic vases adorn the vast rows of mainstream graves. It seems somehow hypocritical - very “all-or-nothing” - in its execution. Certainly there doesn't seem to be much motivation to attract people to the more sustainable alternative.



*Carlisle Cemetery*

This is somewhat surprising because councils are not only under a lot of pressure to become more sustainable, they also have huge maintenance costs for cemeteries - just the rubbish disposal for the vast piles of plastic flower wrappers and other decorations they take to the landfill every week is substantial, not to mention the mowing, staff wages, weed control, road/path maintenance, etc. This is mostly subsidised by ratepayers as the costs charged to families for burial seldom if ever cover the actual ongoing maintenance costs. If they changed their policies and bylaws to actively encourage natural burial, and perhaps make burials currently considered “mainstream” a concession rather than the norm, they could save a lot of money, save a lot of landfill and offer good environments for wildlife and mourners, as well as beautifying their towns. See Ken West's “The financial case for woodland burial”: [www.globalideasbank.org/w2go/WTG-16.html](http://www.globalideasbank.org/w2go/WTG-16.html)

I was most impressed to see a sign at Glastonbury cemetery that said their policy has changed to allow parts of the cemetery to return to nature and so would not be mown or maintained as it had in the past. It also invited suggestions from visitors about how best to do this.



### 3. Funeral Directors

Some funeral directors have recognised the demand for, and potential of, green burials and opened their own green burial sites. Many of these have no allusions to being “natural” as they are mostly very manicured, frequently mown parks with graves and seats and paths everywhere. The owners/operators were rather difficult to talk to as they were all too busy with their funeral businesses, but none had any objections to me exploring and photographing the sites. I chatted with gravediggers at various locations, and a few grave visitors who were apparently benefitting from the more natural environment than the town cemetery.



*Peace Funerals' South Yorkshire Woodland Burial Ground*

People seem to enjoy spending time remembering their loved ones in green places, and some spend many hours gardening, tidying and maintaining the grave. At one site I met an elderly man whose wife had died a few months earlier, after nearly 40 years of marriage. He had paid £6500 for their double grave plot and had spent most of every day there since her funeral. He had planted her grave with flowers, built a small gazebo with a seat, planted shrubs around the edge and no doubt talked to her while he did it. It was raining hard the day I visited (as it was for most of my trip!) but apparently he was there almost every day regardless. It wasn't "natural" by any means, but, at least for him, it seemed to be money well spent; fresh air, good therapy, good exercise, good memories, and certainly healthier than sitting at home drinking his sorrows away.



*Woodland Burial, cardboard coffin*

## 4. Large commercial enterprises

At the same end of the natural burial park scale are the highly commercial and usually successful big burial businesses. Colney Woodland Burial Ground in Norfolk is a magnificent example of these. 12 acres of mature woodland have been utilised and landscaped to provide a beautiful environment for burials and ceremonies, including gentle paths, golf buggies for chauffeuring people around the site if required, and a magnificent architecturally designed hall for funerals. They have 17 staff at Colney Wood, and also operate 2 other natural burial grounds, in Essex and Buckinghamshire. There is a wide range in plot price, apparently according to location and desirability, but all of them substantial. Because the trees are already mature double depth plots are allowed. Trees are not planted on the graves but the graves are planted in a circle around a mature tree, often with a smaller ring of ashes burial plots inside.

Here it is also possible to sponsor a tree - a mystifying concept! (Why anyone would imagine that a tree needed sponsoring is beyond me!) As a means of making money by providing what people want Colney Wood is both impressive and somewhat frightening.



*Colney Woodland Burial Ground, Norfolk*

As a “natural” alternative to existing cemeteries it is visually stunning. But as an ethical, affordable, “green” burial option its value is dubious, to say the least. It very cleverly exploits and capitalises on the connection that bereaved families make between life and death and our transient place in the cycle of nature to the great financial advantage of its shareholders, whilst offering nothing new to the environment.

However, I particularly like their policy regarding grave markers. These must be made of untreated wood within certain size limits. They can be oiled or left natural. Families who visit graves regularly and keep memorials clean and well oiled will find they last a long time. When graves are no longer visited and the memorials no longer maintained they will decompose and fade away within a few years, which is perfectly in keeping with the natural environment. As a result of this policy the woodland is dotted with many beautiful wooden sculptures - owls, cats, books, plaques, guitars and even a dormouse.

There were many tiny frogs in the foliage and on the paths; so many that at times I worried I would step on them. Grey squirrels raced up and down between the trees. It's an enchanting place and it's not too difficult to see why people are so willing to pay large sums of money to R.I.P there.



*Colney Woodland Burial Ground, Norfolk*

## 5. Charities and churches

At the other end of the scale is the Alice Barker Welfare and Wildlife Trust in Yorkshire. This is administered by John Bradfield, who wrote the first book on the subject - "Green Burial", now sadly out of print. The Trust operates three green burial grounds and I had great pleasure in staying for two days at one of them - Gertrude's Pasture - and having John show me around the burial ground and the Great-Crested Newt cairns that have been built on some of the graves. This is a perfect example of conservation needs and human bereavement needs being entirely compatible, with neither being exploited. It's a beautifully symbiotic arrangement for mutual benefit and was by far the most impressive project I witnessed.

The conservation land is a habitat for Great-Crested Newts and has a pond in one corner where they breed for 2 months of the year. The rest of the year they live nocturnal lives under rocks and stones around the site, where they feed on worms, etc. The newts are protected under British law to the extent that it is illegal for anyone to touch, disturb, or even photograph them, or their habitats, without a licence. John Bradfield has such a licence and an obvious passion for his work. He has done extensive research into British burial laws and advises and assists families arranging green burials, either at one of the Trust's sites or on their own private land. There is no cost for burial at Gertrude's Pasture, but donations towards the ongoing work of the Trust are welcomed.



Some of the families of those buried there choose to build a cairn on the grave. This usually involves a day's work of digging and arranging rocks and slabs in such a way as to provide the ideal habitat for the newts. It's often a family outing, a picnic and a joyful day of remembrance for those involved, sometimes a year or more after the burial. The cairns are then covered with turf and quickly blend into the landscape so well that most people visiting the site would not know that there are either newt habitats nor human graves

there at all. Trees are not planted on graves and, apart from the cairns, the only site marker allowed is a small flat stone handcarved with a name. Graves are deliberately dug deep because the whole site is a wildflower meadow and wildflowers need low fertility in order to grow. If bodies were buried nearer the surface it would increase the soil fertility and therefore change the flora of the area. Some other natural burial ground operators want to increase the soil fertility, for example to grow trees, and so bury in much shallower graves. None of the people I interviewed had experienced any problems with burrowing animals accessing bodies.



*Gertrude's Pasture Newt Cairn, Yorkshire*

## **Ireland**

Ireland is at about the same stage as New Zealand in its natural burial development; at the time of writing we still don't yet have anything more than a row of grave plots in Waikumete Cemetery (although several councils are close to establishing them). Judith Hoad is the primary instigator in Ireland and she invited me to visit and compare notes, which I would have loved to do. However, since there are no actual sites to see yet I decided to prioritise seeing more of Britain instead. Judith runs a business called Living Earth Funeral Options and is also a Herbalist. She is spearheading the “Bury Me Green” campaign in Ireland. Bury Me Green is campaigning to establish natural burial grounds, initially, one in each of the Four Provinces: Ulster, Leinster, Connaught and Munster. Consultations are underway in several areas. As with New Zealand, it's only a matter of time...

## **Consecrated Ground**

The subject of consecrated ground often came up spontaneously in conversation with burial park operators. The policy almost universally was that the sites are not consecrated, but families were welcome to have individual graves blessed by their spiritual leader if they so wished. One person said “It's not consecrated because the whole Earth is sacred.”

## **Natural Death Centre**

The Natural Death Centre (NDC) was particularly helpful in my research. ([www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)) Their “New Natural Death Handbook” became my bible for where to go and who to meet. They also run the Association of Natural Burial Grounds ([www.anbg.co.uk](http://www.anbg.co.uk)) which has a comprehensive database of sites, and functions as a voice for natural burial ground operators. NDC was also instrumental in me getting involved in this work 7 years ago; it was, and still is, the world's leading source of information, inspiration, facts and ideas on everything to do with natural death.

## Survey

I wrote a questionnaire, partly so I was consistently asking the same questions at all sites, and also so it could be distributed to members of the Association of Natural Burial Grounds, because I knew I wouldn't be able to visit all 225 sites. The Natural Death Centre in London kindly sent it out to all the ANBG members and I received several replies, in addition to the people I interviewed. The questions and summaries of the answers are below.

- 1. What is the name of your natural burial site?*
- 2. What makes it "natural"?*

The general response to this question was that the planting of trees on or near the graves, and the use of only biodegradable products, made the sites natural. One person pointed out that anything man-made is inherently unnatural, and that includes the act of burying the dead, as the vast majority of species on the planet just rot where they fall and are naturally consumed by other species.

- 3. How big is it?*

Parks ranged in size from 1 to more than 30 acres. Most are expandable, meaning that they start off with 1 or 2 acres and increase outwards as it fills up.

- 4. Who owns/operates this site* - *Council?*
  - *Registered charity?*
  - *Business?*
  - *Private?*
  - *Other?*

- 5. Is it run for profit? Break even? Runs at a loss to benefit the community? If so, who carries the loss?*

Most are run for profit in theory but are often just breaking even, at least in the first few years. Most of the private small businesses are primarily trying to supplement farm income, with varying degrees of success. In the short-term the landowner usually carries a loss.

*6. What is the current cost of a burial plot?*

Prices range from nothing to £20 000, (possibly more, but the high end of the range was difficult to ascertain) with huge variety, sometimes within one site, depending on locations, views, etc.

*7. Interment costs?*

Some charge an extra fee for interment (grave digging, etc), some include it in the plot price.

*8. Any ongoing maintenance costs?*

Most do not have ongoing maintenance costs. Often the graves are maintained by the families of those buried there. Maintenance is minimal anyway as the site is designed to be natural.

*9. Can families choose the grave site?*

Sometimes parks allow families to choose the grave site, depending on the system in use. Some of the sites are filled consecutively and therefore cannot be prebooked, although it is often permissible to reserve an adjacent plot for a spouse or family member.

*10. Can people pre-purchase a specific grave site if they wish?*

Some sites allow pre-purchase of a specific grave. Most don't.

*11. Are embalmed bodies allowed?*

Embalmed bodies are discouraged in all sites, and only permitted in very few, under exceptional circumstances.

*12. Are coffins compulsory?*

Coffins are usually not compulsory, shrouds are permitted and sometimes nothing at all.

*13. Any restrictions on coffin materials or styles?*

Everything in and on the grave must be biodegradable. Generally few other restrictions.

*14. Are shrouds permitted instead of a coffin?*

Shrouds are generally permitted.

*15. What sort of memorials are allowed, if any?*

Memorials range from none to small slate plaques, to handcarved wooden sculptures, to flat local stones, to trees - with or without identifying tags on. Some of the more commercial sites allow seats, gazebos, and other paraphernalia.

*16. How are grave sites marked/recorded ?*

Sites are all surveyed before opening to draw up an accurate map using triangulation points and/or GPS. Graves are marked on the map and also often identified by buried microchips, trees or other memorial markers.

*17. Are the regulations yours or some other body's, such as council bylaws?*

Usually the regulations are the owners/operators. The national regulations are minimal.

*18. How deep are the graves dug? Why?*

Grave depth varies between 4' and 7' depending on the circumstances, such as the water table and what the site is for, ie, forestry, wildflowers, etc. The minimum requirement is 2' 6" of soil on top of the coffin.

*19. What is the distance between them?*

Distances also vary, with council graves crammed much more closely together, and most privately owned sites fairly spaciouly spread out. When the emphasis is on providing a sustainable environment for mourners and wildlife, rather than profit or economy, most operators prefer to space graves out.

*20. Are trees planted on graves? Between graves? Randomly around graves?*

At some sites trees can be planted directly on the graves. In others graves are planted in clusters around or near a tree or trees. In some the area is left as meadow with trees around the outside.

*21. Can the families choose the trees?*

In most cases families can choose the trees from a list of options known to thrive in that area. These were mostly native broadleaf species such as oak, rowan, etc. The list varied according to the location and climate.

*22. How are the graves laid out in relation to the woodland plantings?*

Sometimes in a grid pattern, sometimes randomly, usually there is some pattern to the site layout, whether it be circular, linear, square or other.

*23. How many graves per acre are there?*

Up to 1000 is considered possible. However most operators have 300 – 600 per acre.

*24. Are graves able to be double or triple depth? If so, what happens regarding access at a later date to add someone above a person who died sometime previously?*

The sites where trees are planted on, or next to, the grave are usually single depth. A few of the ones that have trees already established, or are maintained as meadows, allow double or triple depth graves between or among them. Most don't.

*25. Can families dig the grave? Fill it in?*

In most cases families don't want to dig the grave. Occasionally they ask to and are usually permitted. They sometimes fill the grave in afterwards. The few occasions when families have dug the graves have apparently been therapeutic and beneficial events with participants being very glad they had the opportunity to do so.

*26. How often does the site get mown?*

Mowing varies – some sites (usually the more commercial ones) get mown frequently in summer. Some have a policy of once a month in the growing season. Some don't mow at all, the area either being grazed or cut for hay once a year, or completely abandoned to the wildlife. Others just mow paths between the graves.

*27. When families choose this type of burial can they do the whole funeral themselves? If so, are there any Health and Safety issues with families working in the Cemetery?*

Apart from the sites operated by funeral directors families were allowed to do the whole funeral themselves in almost all cases. The only Health and Safety issue is with gravedigging and this can be supervised by a gravedigger or Health and Safety officer.

*28. Have you had any difficulties with such things as subsidence, water tables, foraging animals, vandalism, etc?*

Where the water table is a problem the site won't get permission to operate, and some would-be owners have been turned back for that reason. Once it's been established that the site is suitable there are usually no problems, although at least one operator has had to pump excess rainwater out of a dug but unfilled grave before the burial. No-one reported subsidence as a problem. Rabbit control is practiced in some sites but is generally not considered a huge problem, except to young trees. No reports of vandalism.

*29. How have you resolved these?*

Everyone recommended good planning and preparation.

*30. How long is the grave protected for?*

This was apparently a difficult question to answer concretely. Most sites had a covenant that lasted 50, 75 or 99 years after the last person was buried there. Exactly how legally binding these covenants are is unclear.

*31. What is the long term site management plan?*

Most of the private small businesses have their properties in Trust which are planned to be taken on by their heirs. Some will be left to a Wildlife Trust to manage when full - a rather cunning plan on the part of some of the large commercial operators - which makes me wonder: why are the Wildlife Trusts themselves not profiting from the commercial opportunity, but just being left to carry the long term responsibility?

*32. In your experience do "natural" burials present any greater, or different, health risks to the public than other burials? If so, what?*

None whatsoever. If there is any difference natural burial parks are considered safer – fewer toxic chemicals, less risk of falling tombstones, less traffic, mowers, etc...

*33. Are you a member of the Association of Natural Burial Grounds? Why?*

Most of the sites are linked with the ANBG because they benefit from the credibility that membership offers. They also have access to support and resources, including marketing advantages. Some chose not to, for reasons such as: it costs £50, they didn't think it would advantage them, or they didn't meet the criteria for a nature reserve.

*34. How long has this natural burial site been open?*

The sites I visited varied from one month to 15 years.

*35. Based on your experience, what do you think the ideal management structure is?*

This was not a good question and I should have been more specific. Those who answered it said it was vital for those who make the decisions to have a hands-on role in the running of the place, and that local knowledge, compassion and the personal touch were very important.

*36. What difficulties did you encounter in setting up and operating this site?*

Some people had experienced difficulties meeting council requirements regarding access and parking. Some had met with initial resistance from locals.

*37. How did you overcome them?*

People reported: improved communication, compliance, and persistence.

*38. What advice would you give to people who plan to open one?*

The main suggestion was: start planting as soon as possible, before you get permission. Mature trees make a lot of difference and convincing people that a bare paddock will one day be a woodland reserve is a difficult task. Plan ahead, and talk to your neighbours.

*39. What sort of feedback do you get from families who have used the site?*

All the feedback reported by operators was positive, of course, with a lot of gratitude and relief that the site was there. I also met several mourners visiting graves and they all appreciated being able to come to a beautiful place to remember their loved ones. The environment seemed to enhance to their happy memories.

*40. What would you do differently if you were starting again?*

Most operators felt that they had it right all along and there was little or nothing they would do differently. This was interesting considering the wide range of alternative styles and systems of operation. Some comments were:

“Good relationships with undertakers are essential.”

“The land must be accessible to people – ie, not too steep.”

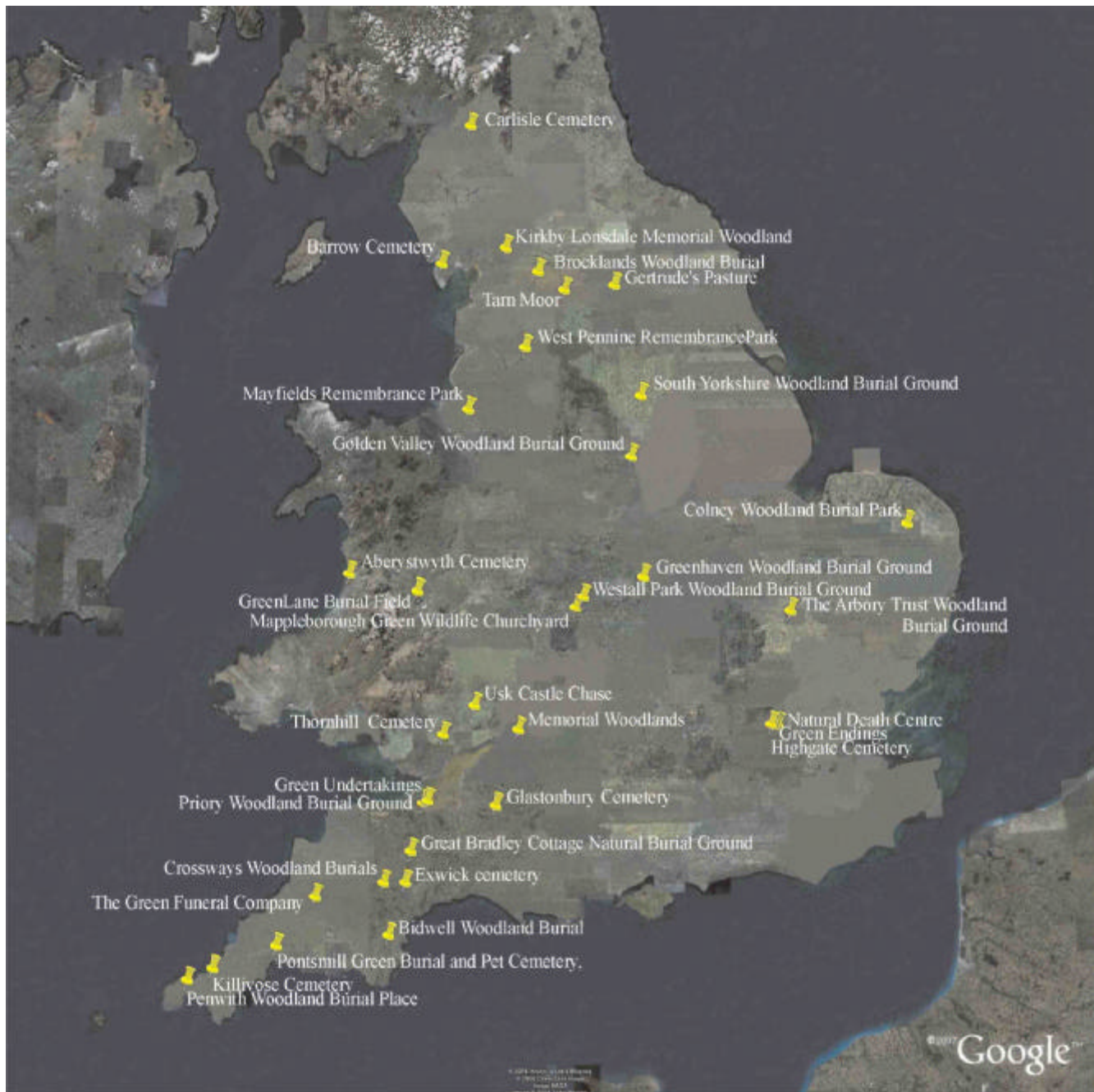
“Be very specific about terms and conditions before you start, and invite people to visit the site.”

“Plant trees first.”

“Advertising and publicity.”

“Keep it simple.”

# Places visited:



## Conclusion

During my journey I discovered that the scope of possibilities for natural burial parks was much bigger than I had imagined. Whilst some are definitely “greener” than others, all are an improvement on New Zealand’s straight line concrete cemeteries. I have serious concerns about death becoming a big money making venture for the benefit of a few and strongly believe that councils should be providing natural burial parks as a low-cost, environmentally-responsible option for as many people as possible, and offering meaningful incentives for people to make that choice, ie, by making it beautiful and affordable.

The Ministries of Health and Environment, and the Department of Conservation could also make a huge difference by allowing the establishment of small natural burial parks on private and Crown land. The Burial and Cremation Act, 1964, has no provision for the establishment of private burial grounds; this is outdated legislation that needs to change. If Britain with its population of 60 million can afford the space there is no doubt that slightly larger NZ with a population of 4.25 million can too. Ecologically speaking we have far more to fear from cremation than from burial. Nicholas Albery, the co-founder of the Natural Death Centre and an editor of *The New Natural Death Handbook*, wrote, "Anyone with green pretensions should think twice about cremation."

Before I went to the UK I had already been contacted by many council cemetery managers around NZ wanting information about natural burial parks. This research will enable them to start offering this sustainable alternative to their communities. The aforementioned government departments also need to know what the options are, because their laws, regulations and policies directly impact on people’s freedom to choose, and I’m hopeful that the government will enthusiastically embrace natural burial parks and facilitate their establishment nationwide. In addition to this report I am available to consult with those who may need more specific details. I’m also running workshops, writing books and actively promoting green funerals through “Living Legacies”.

## **Participants (and websites if available):**

### **Private small businesses:**

Bidwell Wood, Totnes, Devon  
[www.bidwellwoodland.co.uk](http://www.bidwellwoodland.co.uk)

Birdsong Green Burial Site, Alford, Lincolnshire  
[www.greenburialsite.co.uk](http://www.greenburialsite.co.uk)

Brocklands Woodland Burial, Settle, Yorkshire  
[www.brocklands.co.uk](http://www.brocklands.co.uk)

Crossways Woodland Burials, Cheriton Bishop, Devon  
[www.crosswayswoodlandburials.co.uk](http://www.crosswayswoodlandburials.co.uk)

Great Bradley Cottage Natural Burial Ground, Tiverton, Devon  
[www.gbcnaturalburials.co.uk](http://www.gbcnaturalburials.co.uk)

Greenhaven Woodland Burial Ground, Rugby, Warwickshire  
[www.greenhaven.org.uk](http://www.greenhaven.org.uk)

GreenLane Burial Field, Powys, Wales  
[www.greenlaneburialfield.co.uk](http://www.greenlaneburialfield.co.uk)

Living Earth Funeral Options, Ireland  
[www.dublin.ie/burymegreen](http://www.dublin.ie/burymegreen)

Penwith Woodland Burial Place, Penwith, Cornwall  
[www.woodlandburialplace.co.uk](http://www.woodlandburialplace.co.uk)

Pontsmill Green Burial and Pet Cemetery, Par, Cornwall

Priory Woodland Burial Ground, Old Cleeve, Somerset

Tarn Moor, Skipton, Yorkshire  
[www.tarnmoor.co.uk](http://www.tarnmoor.co.uk)

West Pennine Remembrance Park, Entwistle, Lancashire  
[www.remembranceparks.com](http://www.remembranceparks.com)

## **Council run woodland burial sites:**

Aberystwyth Cemetery, West Wales

[www.westerleighgroup.plc.uk/Locations/AberystwythCrematorium](http://www.westerleighgroup.plc.uk/Locations/AberystwythCrematorium)

Barrow Cemetery, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=103>

Cardiff City Council Cemetery

[www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2867,2903,2919,3494&id=1449&Positioning\\_Article\\_ID=&Language=&parent\\_directory\\_id=2865&d1p1=1](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2867,2903,2919,3494&id=1449&Positioning_Article_ID=&Language=&parent_directory_id=2865&d1p1=1)

Carlisle City Council Cemetery

[www.carlisle.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/council\\_news/archive,\\_october\\_2007/carlisle\\_cemetery.aspx](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_news/archive,_october_2007/carlisle_cemetery.aspx)

Exwick Cemetery, Exeter City Council, Devon

[www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=726](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=726)

Glastonbury Green Burials

[www.glastonbury.gov.uk/g\\_gov/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=5704&page\\_id=191&PHPSESSID=10e049af8162](http://www.glastonbury.gov.uk/g_gov/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=5704&page_id=191&PHPSESSID=10e049af8162)

Killivose Cemetery, Camborne, Cornwall

[www.kerrier.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=7536](http://www.kerrier.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=7536)

## **Funeral directors:**

Herongate Wood, Essex

[www.green-burial.co.uk](http://www.green-burial.co.uk)

Memorial Woodlands, Alveston, Bristol

[www.memorialwoodlands.com](http://www.memorialwoodlands.com)

Golden Valley Woodland Burial Ground, Ripley, Derbyshire [www.peacefunerals.co.uk/golden.html](http://www.peacefunerals.co.uk/golden.html)

South Yorkshire Woodland Burial Ground, Ulley, Yorkshire

[www.peacefunerals.co.uk/yorks.html](http://www.peacefunerals.co.uk/yorks.html)

## **Charities and Churches:**

The Arbory Trust Woodland Burial Ground, Barton Glebe, Cambridgeshire.  
[www.arborytrust.org](http://www.arborytrust.org)

Gertrude's Pasture, Harrogate, Yorkshire

Kirkby Lonsdale Memorial Woodland

Mappleborough Green Wildlife Churchyard, Studley, Warwickshire

## **Large commercial enterprises:**

Colney Woodland Burial Park, Norfolk  
[www.woodlandburialparks.co.uk](http://www.woodlandburialparks.co.uk)

Mayfields Remembrance Park, Cheshire  
[www.mayfieldspark.com](http://www.mayfieldspark.com)

Usk Castle Chase, Monmouthshire, Wales  
[www.nativewoodland.co.uk/index.php?page=54](http://www.nativewoodland.co.uk/index.php?page=54)

Westall Park Woodland Burial Ground, Redditch, Worcestershire  
[www.westallpark.net](http://www.westallpark.net)

## **Also visited:**

The Big Green Gathering, Cheddar, Somerset  
[www.big-green-gathering.com](http://www.big-green-gathering.com)

Green Endings, London  
[www.greenendings.co.uk](http://www.greenendings.co.uk)

The Green Funeral Company, Launceston, Cornwall  
[www.thegreenfuneralcompany.co.uk](http://www.thegreenfuneralcompany.co.uk)

Green Undertakings, Watchet, Somerset.

Highgate Cemetery, London

Ken West, London

Natural Death Centre, London  
[www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)

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“Under this tree where light and shade  
Speckle the grass like a thrush’s breast  
Here in this green and quiet place  
I give myself to peace and rest”



*Highgate cemetery, London*

## Living Legacies

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