

Issue 2 **September 2018**

Earth Trust News

Exclusive newsletter for Earth Trust Friends

Combating the threat of ash dieback

Also in this issue...

Gateway underway

Digging for the future

A very special
meadow



Introduction

Welcome to the autumn edition of Earth Trust News!

It has been an exciting six months since our inaugural issue, which has seen us launching our new strategy and breaking ground to begin the Earth Trust Gateway.

This issue is all about our vision to be your champion for accessible, natural green spaces and we'll also share with you some of the recent achievements made possible through your support.

On page 4 you can read about Earth Trust's living genetic collection of trees, Paradise Wood, which has been crucial in the fight against ash dieback. The Living Ash Project has now come to an end and Earth Trust will be holding a conference to mark the transition into the next phase for this unique woodland. You are invited to The Living Ash Conference, which will be held at the Earth Trust Centre on 17th October.

We recently broke ground on the Earth Trust Gateway project by removing our dilapidated scout hut (before it fell down!), which was the first step towards achieving our vision and mission. As the project unfolds there will be lots of opportunities for you to get involved. First up, we are partnering with DigVentures who specialize in community archaeology; together we'll be offering a chance to be part of the dig and discover more about the ancient history of the landscape we care for.

As ever, thank you very much for your continued support of Earth Trust. Please do take a look at the back page of this publication for all forthcoming events offered exclusively to Friends; there are lots of exciting opportunities to enjoy time outdoors and learn more about what your support has enabled.

And very importantly I need to remind you that we need more Friends like you! As we roll out our plans (please see the enclosed strategy), we would value your feedback and further support. If you would like to know how you can get involved please email Laura directly (supportus@earthtrust.org.uk)

Until next time,
Jayne

Credits

Editor: Laura King

Contributors:

Jayne Manley,

Chris Parker,

Lucy Benyon,

Harriet Trevor-Allen

Cover image: Tom Lucas,
taken in Paradise Wood

Thanks to: ImageWorks,
Naomi Douglas,
Sophie Bryan,
Dr Jo Clark
Alison Quick



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**Best Place to Learn
About the New
Season (Autumn)**



Get in touch

General Enquiries

admin@earthtrust.org.uk
01865 407792

Friendship Enquiries

Laura King
supportus@earthtrust.org.uk
01865 409426

Event Bookings

Holly Timbrell
web@earthtrust.org.uk
01865 407792



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News in Brief

Digging for the future

The first phase of the Gateway project is underway and kicks off with an exciting archaeological dig to prepare the ground for our new skills and learning building. Throughout the autumn, archaeologists will be on site and we are delighted to be able to invite members of the community to join us to discover what is under our feet.

The opportunity to explore the archaeology on a site of such significance is intriguing and rare. Don't miss your chance to come and find out more at our Archaeology Evening on 27th October when we'll present our findings - please see the back page for more information.



Earth Trust Strategy 2018- 2023

2018 is the start of a new era for Earth Trust with the launch of a new strategic direction. Defining our work for the next five years, the new strategy gives a clear indication of our action plan: to engage the public with issues surrounding green spaces and help them make better decisions; to demonstrate sustainable land management and be an exemplar of how increased food production, agriculture and conservation can coexist; to care for and improve green spaces for the public benefit. This new strategy is an exciting progression on the work Earth Trust has previously undertaken; you can read the strategy in full at www.earthtrust.org/strategy2018

Our four strategic areas: ● Care ● Engage ● Demonstrate ● Financially Sustainable



Launch of exclusive Friends events

The new benefits Earth Trust offers Friends includes a selection of exclusive events, bringing you behind the scenes on our work caring for important green spaces. Two events have been held over the last few months with more planned for later in the year (please see the back page for more details). A walk around the restricted areas of Radley Lakes in May to view the rare orchids growing there was a particular highlight. Lead by Lucy, our Community Reserves Warden, the group were "overwhelmed by the abundance of orchids [and] other flora" that they saw. One guest commented that "Lucy is a brilliant guide, extremely knowledgeable in all aspects of the Reserve"; she'll be leading another walk for Friends, this time around Wallingford Castle Meadows on Sunday 13th October. Friends will get an insight into how Earth Trust manages this environmentally significant green space, as well as learning more about the history surrounding the site. Please do book early to avoid disappointment!

Artweeks exhibition success

During the last two weeks of May, the Earth Trust Centre became a hub of artistic activity with an exhibition by eight local artists. Focusing on the theme of nature, each of the artists interpreted the subject matter in their own way. The exhibition included stained glass, metal work, sculpture, watercolours, oils and collage. Thank you to all the artists who exhibited and all those who visited.

Gateway underway

Protecting green spaces is at the heart of Earth Trust's mission. With 150,000 visits to the Wittenham Clumps recorded every year, this iconic landmark is the most visited free to access green space in the South East. Unfortunately, this popularity places stress on the landscape which is now under threat.

The Earth Trust Gateway is an exciting project which will ensure Earth Trust has the facilities necessary to protect this incredible place and keep it open and accessible for the public to enjoy. Starting in the summer of 2018 and due to be completed in several phases over the coming years, the Earth Trust Gateway will provide better access, parking and amenities for the Wittenham Clumps, as well as the facilities Earth Trust needs to be a champion for accessible natural green spaces.



Bessie Kelaart

We are deeply saddened to bring you the news that Anne (Bessie) Kelaart has passed away. A former Trustee of Earth Trust (or the Northmoor Trust as it was known then), Bessie was also a High Sherriff of Oxfordshire, during whose tenure her theme was 'the rural dimension'. She was a Deputy Lieutenant and Bessie's legacy lives on in many aspects of Oxfordshire life - particularly important for Earth Trust was her determination to bring the farming and conservation communities closer together. She will be missed enormously.



● Care
 ● Engage
 ● Demonstate
 ● Financially Sustainable



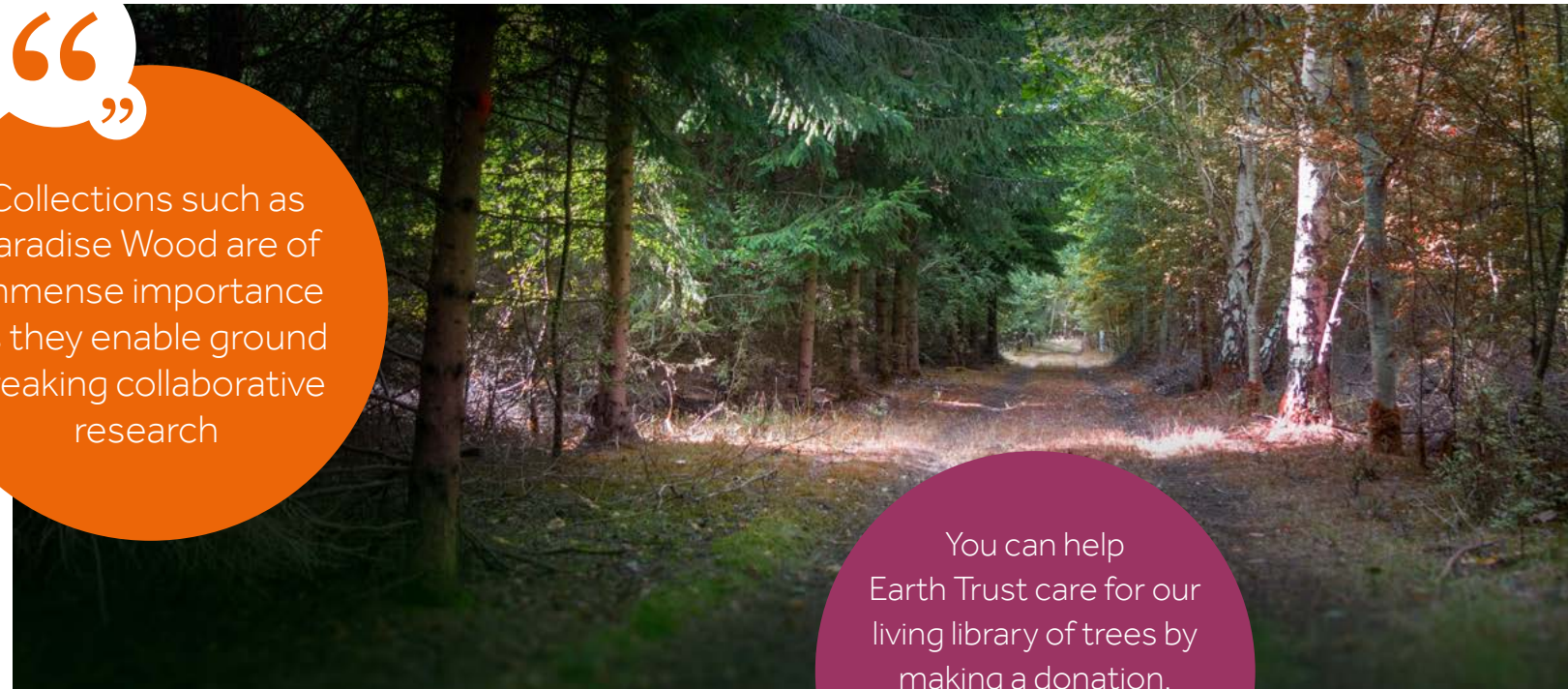
Paradise Wood

Caring for our living plant collections is central to Earth Trust's strategy and nothing typifies the intrinsic environmental value these collections have, more than our living genetic library, Paradise Wood. Covering a 35 hectare site and with more than 60,000 trees planted since 1993 onwards, Paradise Wood is a nationally significant research woodland and the UK's largest genetic collection of hardwood trees.

The delicate ecosystem of this research environment means that Paradise Wood is not open to the public and as such can sometimes escape our notice. However, this hidden gem is one of the UK's most important forestry and silviculture research sites and forms a significant part of the Earth Trust. Over the last 25 years Earth Trust has lead and been a key partner in a variety of research projects using the trees in Paradise Wood, looking at silviculture techniques, seed improvement, timber production suitability, agroforestry and resistance to disease and pests. Perhaps the most important of all the research trials undertaken in Paradise Wood by Dr Jo Clark, Earth Trust's Forestry Research Manager, was the work done in conjunction with funding from DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) on the Living Ash Project which is now coming to a close.



Collections such as Paradise Wood are of immense importance as they enable ground breaking collaborative research



Research of this nature is only possible within the setting of a well-managed long-term resource such as Paradise Wood

This incredible piece of research identified genetic markers associated with tolerance to Chalara and will lead to the breeding of a new generation of Chalara tolerant trees. Thanks to Paradise Wood and the expertise of Dr Jo Clark, there is hope for the future of ash in the UK.

Paradise Wood has shown that it could be worth its weight in gold! The future for Paradise Wood as the home of a living

This summer we bid farewell to Dr Jo Clark, our Forestry Research Manager since January 2004.

Over the last fourteen years Jo has lovingly looked after Paradise Wood, using the timber trials to investigate genetic diversity within populations of some of our most important species including oak and ash. In her time at the Earth Trust, Jo established the country's first Ash Breeding Seedling Orchard; was instrumental in planting Neptune Wood, and, more recently led on the Living Ash Project. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jo for all of her hard work, commitment, passion and enthusiasm over the last 14 years.



Dr Jo Clark amongst the trees she has nurtured in Paradise Wood

We are delighted that we will be welcoming Jo back as a speaker at our Living Ash Conference on October 17th – more details on the events listing on the back page.



The visible signs of Chalara

The current predicted effect of the virulent tree disease Chalara (ash dieback) is the loss of 99% of our ash trees, which considering that 44 species of invertebrates and plants are also obligate on ash, makes Chalara a major threat. Working to identify Chalara tolerant trees, analyse their genetic traits and create a new population of highly tolerant ash trees, the Living Ash Project along with other associated research is beginning to make crucial progress towards the ultimate goal of saving Fraxinus for future generations. For instance, it was a single specimen growing in Paradise Wood which could be the key to this goal: specimen 2451S, showed tolerance to Chalara and importantly had low heterozygosity meaning that a team of researchers from Queen Mary University of London were able to successfully map its genome.

You can help Earth Trust care for our living library of trees by making a donation. Please visit www.earthtrust.org.uk/donate

plant collection and genetic bank for future research, is exciting and highly relevant for green spaces locally, regionally and nationally. An

established collection of this kind is extremely rare and offers an incredible platform upon which to build rigorous research investigations, giving the UK an asset to enable scientists to answer important research questions. In the future, Earth Trust will be offering access to our living gene bank in collaboration with several academic institutions. A variety of new projects are under consideration, including agroforestry and silvopastoral trials looking at the effect of grazing in woodland; improved seed production; and further genetic trials with

Paradise Wood's ash population. Paradise Wood has already been instrumental in changing the face of forestry, but its future is dependent on your support.

Earth Trust will be holding a conference focusing on Paradise Wood and the Living Ash Project including presentations of research findings. As valued Earth Trust Friends you are invited to attend but as places are limited we ask that you book early; please see the events list on the back page for full event details.

Care Engage Demonstrate Financially Sustainable



Thomas's lasting legacy

Every green space Earth Trust protects is nurtured for the benefit of people and wildlife. Earth Trust is honoured to be able to begin work on a new green space on the banks of the Thames which has particular significance: *Thomas's Meadow*, named in memory of Thomas Quick.

Thomas grew up in nearby Burcot, not far from the Wittenham Clumps and Earth Trust. He was always happiest outside and he believed in cherishing our natural landscapes, both for ecological reasons and as places to enjoy.



Photograph courtesy of the Quick family

Educated locally, he went on to read Anthropology at UCL followed by a Masters in Environmental Technology at Imperial College where his interest and enthusiasm for both subjects was rewarded by taking the top prizes in both courses.

Thomas's working life was characterised by a desire to bring positive change. As one of the Department of International Development's youngest government advisors on climate change and the environment, Thomas worked in southern Africa on projects aiming to minimise water conflict across national boundaries. Sir Mark Lowcock, the Permanent Secretary at DFID, wrote that Thomas had been destined for a "glitteringly successful and impactful career". After devastating and entirely unexpected news that he had a rare and incurable cancer, he returned to the UK where he died in January 2017, aged 29.

In his working life Thomas was able to effect real environmental change. In the last weeks of his illness, Thomas spoke of wanting to effect change locally with the creation of a green space, managed sustainably for the benefit of people and wildlife. Thomas's family immediately thought of working with Earth Trust to realise their vision for Thomas's Meadow, which will ensure that out of such great sadness will come something of immense purpose and importance.



Over the coming weeks, months and years, Earth Trust will regenerate Thomas's Meadow from its current state to an accessible riverside haven for wildlife and people. Using the site as a demonstration of the sustainable land management techniques that Earth Trust has pioneered and promoted, Thomas's Meadow will be an exemplar of how land can be managed not only as a publicly accessible green space, but also as a flood plain meadow: a much needed yet increasingly rare environment.



A nearby meadow, showing our vision

It will provide productive grazing pasture for our Farm Step tenants, as well as a perfect habitat for invertebrates and both ground nesting and wading birds. Importantly, Thomas's Meadow will provide much needed flood alleviation when the river is high, helping to protect Wallingford and other places downstream.



We are extremely grateful to Robin Buxton, who enabled the acquisition of the meadows, and to the Quick family, Sarah Bonham, and all those who have donated to Thomas's Woodland Fund for their generosity to Earth Trust, providing vital support for our work protecting accessible natural green spaces

Jayne Manley, CEO



Thomas's Meadow

Clifton Hampden

Dorchester

Please come and enjoy a visit to Thomas's Meadow which is located along the Thames footpath, between Clifton Hampden and Dorchester, OS grid reference SU 56088 95718.

Sign up to our e-bulletins offered weekly or monthly for all our news, including updates on how Thomas's Meadow is progressing (www.earthtrust.org.uk/privacy)

Save the date!

Take a look at the exclusive Friends only events and offers Earth Trust has coming up:

Saturday 29th September

1pm - 3.30pm | £10 | Earth Trust Centre

Food & Farming Walk

Join Chris Parker our Head of Land Management for a guided walk of the Earth Trust Farm. A knowledgeable and interesting guide. Chris will bring you in on the stories behind the Farm, its history and how we manage our green spaces.

Saturday 13th October

1pm - 3.30pm | £8 | Wallingford Castle Meadows

Wallingford Castle History Walk

Spend time enjoying one of Earth Trust's community nature reserves, with our Reserves Warden, Lucy Tomkinson. Together with the expert knowledge of Wallingford's history from Wallingford Museum Curator, Judy Dewey, this guided walk will shed new light on this important green space Earth Trust cares for.

Wednesday 17th October

10am - 4pm | Free | Earth Trust Centre

Living Ash Conference

Join us for this very special conference, where experts will be presenting the findings of the Living Ash Project. Please register your interest at web@earthtrust.org.uk

Saturday 27th October

7pm | £15 | Earth Trust Centre

Archaeology Evening

This enthralling evening of talks and presentations from the expert archaeologists working on site with our partner, DigVentures, will be the culmination of an exciting week of archaeology at Earth Trust. Not to be missed!

Thursday 29th November

5.30pm - 7pm | Free | Earth Trust Centre

Friend's Festive Reception

Let us show you our appreciation for your support by coming along to the Earth Trust Centre and joining us for a winter tipple to kick off the festive season.

Places are filled on a first come first served basis so book early, quoting your Friends membership number, to avoid disappointment.



www.earthtrust.org.uk

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Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire, OX14 4QZ

01865 407792

