

Small Woodland Owners' Group



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October 2009

Weald Woodfair

The Bentley Weald woodfair was as good as always! The show was heaving with people and our SWOG tent was always busy. I can see we will need more help manning the tent next year.



This year we were selling charcoal for BBQ's and willow charcoal for artists, (Greyman) little stools (Richard), coppice stumps, (Nick) a planter, (Mick) and jam and muffins from Viv. Sales went very well and were a good draw into the tent. Thank you to all who brought things

and helped with the tent so I could go shopping every now and then!

It was also great to finally meet Toby and Aly and see their piling machine in action. They were filmed by woodlands TV, so we will all get to see how it works once it is online.



There is a great deal to see and do at the woodfair, for all ages and interests. More photos available on our SWOG website.

<http://www.swog.org.uk/events/bentley-weald-woodfair/>

Fungi ID Walk

The fungi ID walk with Martin Allison from RSPB was a great success. Thanks to Heather and Rod for preparing an excellent day. Despite the dry weather, they had located a number of excellent specimens. Brilliant day, gorgeous weather and good company – with lots of knowledge.

Photos and write up will be on the website soon.

Anyone else like to hold an event in their wood?

Events South East

Coming up
Early summer walk – plant ID,

Anyone else want to have an open wood? Let me know.

WoodlandsTV.co.uk

Art in the woods
Chainsaw guidebar maintenance
Squirrel recipes
Planting trees

Forestry Commission survey.

This is the development of the UK Forest Standard and associated Guidelines, which will have links to the evaluation and assessment of woodland and forest grants aid. The deadline for this is 30th October.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-5yvezz>

North and Wales meetings

14th November, 10am – 4pm

Delamere Forest Park Cheshire.

So far we have 9 people booked for this event, so hopefully it will be able to go ahead. Anyone else coming? Please let me know as soon as you can.

The topics are likely to cover issues of woodland management, managing for biodiversity, sharing ideas on books, resources and tools. Bring your favourite books and tools to share with others!

Middle meetings! Alvecote open days.



We are holding an open day on Sunday November 8th. Alvecote Wood is 11 acres of ancient semi-natural mainly oak woodland in North Warwickshire between Polesworth and Tamworth.

We are managing it for wildlife, and for community groups including schools and scouts. We will have guided tours and also a small gift stall with our range of eco-friendly candles, Christmas and greetings cards and calendars. There is relatively limited car parking so it would be good to know if anybody is planning to come. There are full details on our website where you can also find out how to get there.

<http://www.alvecotewood.co.uk/events.php>

Pub meeting

There is also a suggestion to meet up on a pub somewhere in the middle of our fine land, see this thread on the forum to sort out when and where:

<http://www.swog.org.uk/forum/topic.php?id=384>

We need a tool store and a shelter

New introductory guidance on building in woodlands, is available on our website

<http://www.swog.org.uk/articles/we-need-a-tool-store-and-a-shelter-by-margaret/>

Events Wales & Shropshire SWOG meetings

14th Nov, Delamere Forest Park,
Cheshire

www.forestry.gov.uk/delamereforestpark
Topic to be decided, possibly
'Managing woodland for
diversity'

Wide choice of courses

www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

Coppice courses in Pembrokeshire

www.coppicewoodcollege.co.uk

Woodlands.co.uk blogs

Woodland archaeology

Planting a tree

Fungi

Discovering Long Wood

Save our sedge

www.woodlands.co.uk/blog

More information on events
needed, please contact Tracy if
you know of any!

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Firestick

Adrian sent us this interesting idea – a firestick



Slice the log with the chainsaw long ways $\frac{3}{4}$ of its length make 4 cuts (i.e. divide the cake into 8) stand on end light fire in the top and it will burn giving light and heat and will self extinguish at the end of the evening.

The log in the photo is 'green' but burned all evening for about 4 hours.



(Picture from Mike P, from our day out at Wild wood)

A surprising find- by Stephen

We have camped a couple of times now much higher up in our wood. The usual place, lower down, has a deer tick problem. Also we wanted to get a better view of the estuary below, and be closer to an area that needs plenty of work.

However with camping higher I have to go down to get to our spring. So I had set off shortly after breakfast, heading down the hill with an empty 5l bottle. I was going slowly because it was early and because I tend to take my time when by myself. Anyway, I heard a rustling sound off to my right, and turned to look that way and saw something coming down a tree trunk. At first I thought that it was a squirrel, but then I realised it was too dark and too large for that. It started to come towards me, and then went under some nearby rhodo brashing. I kept still but thought that I would see no more. However it reappeared on my side, maybe about 10 feet away, and still approaching. At this stage I had a very clear view of its head markings - white/grey around the snout and behind the eyes but in front of the ears. Also there is a little white band going around the edge of the ear. The eyes are black. Most of the hair is black.

It stopped a few feet away, and became rather hesitant. It then turned side on so that I could see its flank and tail markings. The sides are a sort of greeny brown. The shoulders and pelvis are capped with black fur. The tail is black and thick but not bushy. The animal is about 2 feet long, maybe a little less. Of course I was quite still and quiet, but I think at this stage it had my scent, and was perturbed. It next beat a hasty retreat to the rhodo brashings, and I continued my descent to the spring. A few days later we returned to the house so I had a chance to check on the Internet and in our nature books. The polecat was nearly eliminated from England, Scotland and Wales, but it managed to hang on in North Wales where the terrain is almost perfect. It likes rocky slopes and woodland, and that is exactly what we have got. There are masses of little rocky holes, very well suited for sheltering all sorts of wildlife. It is an efficient predator, and will scour woodland and nearby farmland looking for prey. It can take animals as large as geese, although they are too large to carry.

You can read more about polecats <http://www.bbc.co.uk/springwatch/meettheanimals/polecat.shtml>

Events North SWOG meeting

14th Nov, Delamere Forest Park,
Cheshire

www.forestry.gov.uk/delamereforestpark

Topic to be decided, possibly
'Managing woodland for
diversity'

Have you seen a ladybird? Help with
the national monitoring programme

http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk/wildlife/ladybird_survey.htm

Have you seen a pole cat or mink?

http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk/wildlife/polecat_mink_monitoring.htm

**Anyone able to have an open
day in their wood?**



Tracks and trackways - by David

Delving into the history hidden in your woodland

These seem to exist in almost every wood. Some are slightly sunken – something less than 0.2m and about a metre wide – while others are wide 2-lane highways with multiple sunken areas and banks on either side.

Before the days when land was enclosed, people used to walk almost anywhere in country areas, and this applied probably more to woodlands than to open fields. If there was a crop planted in a field you didn't walk across the field and destroy the crop because it was someone's livelihood to be harvested that year. Trees in woods were not planted as densely as crops in fields, so little damage was done by walking through the wood and in addition the woodland crop wasn't going to be harvested for at least eight years and with timber trees nearer 70 years. So people got used to walking through woodland to get from A to B, and if they were going to a place of work, they used the same route frequently. You've only got to walk along the same route for a year and you will have made a slight depression where you've flattened the leaf litter – I've done it myself in my wood. Tracks like this can last for some time before they become filled in, due to natural processes and you may find some in your wood. What you're looking for is a linear depression with no banks. The ground on each side of the depression should be the same height as the ground further away. If it is banked, you may not be looking at a track, but two banks running parallel.



The best way to decide what it is, is to follow it. If it looks as though it might have been a short cut through the wood, then it has a high chance of being an old track used by people on foot.

It may be that your linear depression is wider and deeper than this: more than half a metre deep and more than a metre wide. It could have water running in it; what you may have thought was a stream bed could well be a trackway. But is it straight or sinuous? – trackways are usually straighter than streams (but not always). It could be a drainage ditch: they run down the slope and tend to be straight as well, but are not very deep or wide. If by this point you are satisfied that you may have a fairly substantial trackway then, once again, follow it. Look at the sides and sometimes you will see trackways that join it. It may peter out at the top of a slope and then continue again further on. Or it may disappear altogether. Whatever happens to it, you can assume that if it is this wide and deep it was probably used to transport materials carried by pack animals or wheeled transport. The profile of the trackway should still be that of A in the diagram above – rounded, rather than V-shaped and with no banks at the top.

Perhaps you have a trackway with a bank on both sides surmounted by a hedge and over 10m wide. The remains of the bank will still be visible and the trees growing on the bank may show evidence of having once been laid (assuming you've still got the trees). This form of trackway may have a bed lower than the surrounding land, or it may be at roughly the same level. This construction of trackway indicates that livestock may have been driven along this route, either to pasture or market. It is not unusual to find trackways such as this, but it is particularly important to record them as they were once part of the rural system of roads, and are not generally marked on modern OS maps. Farmers and landowners level them, the drivers of large forestry extraction machinery seem to look upon them as an assault course, and so we are losing them.

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Recording trackways

The basic principles used for recording trackways is the same as that used for recording banks (look back at part 3). However, trackways do seem to vary more than banks in their profile (some peter out) so what I do is to measure the profile in one or two places which I consider to be typical of what's there, and then add whatever variations there are. For example I might say, '...up to 3m deep...' to show what it's like at its most extreme.

Perhaps I should add a word here about maps and different scales when you are plotting features. It's important to realise that when you increase the size of a map (as I mentioned in the first part of this series) you are also increasing the inaccuracies of that map. It is better to use a map of the right scale without increasing its size if you can. Woodland owners receive a large-scale map of their wood in their contract when they apply for a grant from the Forestry Commission under the EWGS. Large-scale maps can be bought at various scales from local agents of the Ordnance Survey with your wood in the middle. Details are on the OS website.

David Brown www.sewaf.org.uk

All SWOG members living in the South East are invited to attend a meeting of the South East Woodland Archaeology Forum on November 5th at Bedgebury Forest Visitor Centre at 1.30pm. Please contact David Brown for more details. david@sewaf.org.uk

Log cabin building by Adrian

Here are some photos from a log cabin build in Kynoydart. The sun came out to show the West Scottish coast at it's very best. It was fantastic.



You can see the rest of the photos on our website:

<http://www.swog.org.uk/articles/log-cabin-building-by-adrian/>

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Making charcoal by Trish

After spending a day with Ben Law and attempting to help him and Brian lift the lid of the 6ft kiln, I just knew, much as we wanted to make charcoal ourselves, there was no way I could ever assist Brian with the heavy lifting.

Also like everyone else any woodland enterprise has to be done on a shoestring let alone budget. So it was back to the drawing board and the SWOG newsletter with the trail of charcoal making caught my attention. I left the page bookmarked and said to Brian, "you could build that" and went to work the next day in London.



By the weekend, Brian had found a really friendly scrap metal man, sourced the drums through Ebay and we were up in the woods cutting, welding and assembling. (I just hold and pass the spanners)

We tried our larch first as the pine is earmarked for Stockholm tar and that is another specially designed kiln to try out soon. Then it was time for the loading of the drums, how we use our brush to ignite it, the slow feed and then most spectacular the ignited gas blowing through the holes feeding the fire itself. Plus the end result - really good quality charcoal.



We have seen huge changes this year with increased biodiversity, even though we have really coppiced a minimal amount due to juggling work, (that pays the bills), time in the woods and me being a slow slave!



You can see larger pictures on the website.

<http://www.swog.org.uk/articles/another-design-for-making-charcoal-by-trish/>



News from the woods

Heather and Rod found this flowering wood anemone on the 11th September. Not sure if it is very early or very late!



September in our woods, what we have been doing

Exeldama: Felled my first big tree, today. Measured it at 60 feet. Only had a handsaw so took warmed me up a bit. Also took two teenagers camping and cooked bacon and cheese together.

My newly dug pond is starting to fill to, just rainwater but its staying there....2 years to fill I expect.

Docsquid: Went on Phil's coppicing course! Now need to put it all into action. Another major glut of form-filling awaits for this privilege as our wood has an entire site TPO. We're very busy getting work done before the winter sets in and the ground gets too boggy to drive the tractor round. Bramble and scrub clearance, completing the drainage work we started last winter, building proper all-weather tracks, marking species of trees in the area to be coppiced, preparing for the September Open Day...lots to do!

Jillbean: Unfortunately our trailer was stolen this month; so all thoughts have gone to security, where they had been on wildlife and other feel good subjects. I bought a shavehorse at the Weald woodfair, knowing that I would never get round to making one, not that I am lazy you understand, but waiting very patiently for the Forestry commission to come and coppice my TPO wood so I might finally be able to build something. They said they would organise it before March 2010, which made the shavehorse seem a good quick fix. In the light of the trailer theft, I'm now waiting to see if its still there every morning. (the shavehorse, not the wood,) Still clearing pathways, mushroom hunting, and I have spent a lot of time and effort getting my firearms certificate Which now means the squirrels had better find some other trees to kill. It's literally raining acorns, and beginning to smell of Autumn I am thinking of dead hedging the gaps I'm my ancient hedge, which is nowadays more a row of trees. Blackberry crumble for weeks now, nice they have some use. I might transplant them all to the hedge instead of burning them.

Family Forestry photography Make some money!

www.familyforestry.co.uk

Calling all family photographers-
Earn money from your wood!

Here at Woodlands co.uk we need pictures to illustrate "Family Forestry". We need these pictures to show the range of things owners and their families enjoy in their woods. The pictures we use must imply "family". It should ideally include more than one person – people of two different generations, for instance, or a man and a woman, or just children.

The activities could include a whole range of obviously forestry work, e.g. clearing, using a bow saw or a chain saw, stacking cut poles, chopping firewood, clearing bracken or undergrowth, planting, weeding young trees, erecting deer fencing, sharpening a saw, mending gates or digging ditches. Or they could include activities appreciating or encouraging nature and bird-watching, studying a fungus or a moss, photographing wild flowers, investigating a hole in the ground, handling a frog. It must be clear in the photo what they are doing!

And they could certainly include having fun: picnics, camp fires, swings, cooking, climbing, playing.

We are ready to pay £10 each for any photos we use in our publicity. And we would like to use lots!

Be sure no one in the picture objects, and send your photos (reduced to under 100kb in the first instance, please, and not more than six per e-mail) to margaret@woodlands.co.uk. All pictures received will be acknowledged. No person or place will be identified.

All pictures used in any way will be paid for.



Coppice .co.uk
your coppicing resource!

Small Woodland Owners' Group

Courses and information

Introduction to Woodland Management Flimwell, East Sussex

Friday 6th November 2009 10.00 – 4.30

The course will provide you with knowledge and skills to help you identify what you have in your woodland and how you would like to manage it.

Coppice Products – Generating income from coppice woodland

Thursday 19 November 2009 10.00 – 4.30

Learn about the uses of different coppice trees for fencing, charcoal, crafts, logs, construction etc; and learn how to harvest, store, market and sell your wood.

These courses are funded by the LandSkills South East Programme, part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). If you work in farming, forestry or production horticulture in the South East you may be eligible for the subsidised course fee. For more information about the eligibility criteria please contact us on 01424 775615.

Course tutor: Tim Saunders, Rother Forestry

Tim has a wide range of experience in the harvesting, storage and marketing of coppice and woodland products in the South East. Places are limited to 12. Advanced booking essential.

Cost: £80. Subsidised cost £24.

Venue: Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, Flimwell, East Sussex, TN5 7PR

To book a place contact Plumpton College at Netherfield tel 01424 775615

For more information

www.swog.org.uk/events/introduction-to-woodland-management-courses-by-ruth

Courses

WoodNet, East Sussex

www.woodnet.co.uk

Malvern Coppicing, Worcestershire

www.malverncoppicing.co.uk

BTCV

Countrywide

www.btcv.org.uk

Greenwood Centre

Coalbrookdale

www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk

Wildlife photography

Near Crawley

www.davidplummerimages.co.uk

Woodland Skills Centre, Wales

www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

Centre for Alternative Technology

Machynlleth

www.cat.org.uk

Small woods association

www.smallwoods.org.uk

facebook

The Small Woodland Owners Group (SWOG) is also on facebook. Come and join us, post photos and videos and share with others. You can also become a swog blog fan and receive feed from the site when new articles go up.

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61487332523

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Coppice courses

Worcestershire – by Phil

My September course is now fully subscribed. I still have a few places available on my course on 24th-25th October and I am now taking bookings for my course on 14th-15th November.

Here is some feedback from Phil's courses.

Superb course, very informative and enjoyable. I now know my Spindle from my Dogwood and can spot a Field Maple at 20 paces. Bernard - Tewksbury

Your tips regarding Bristol Design, etc were also very much appreciated (as was the food). Informative, friendly and much enjoyed. Thank you Phil. Stephen - Tamworth

Just a quick note to say that we both really enjoyed the course. It was lovely to visit a different wood - when you own a wood you tend to spend so much of your spare time there that you don't have time to visit anywhere else!

It was really helpful to learn the methods of coppicing, how to select trees to keep as standards (something that was really confusing us), and how to organise the work area and stack the timber properly. The tools you provided us with were really good, and the catering arrangements were very good too.

All we've got to do now is to do some coppicing when the winter comes! And buy some billhooks!

Best wishes

Sarah- Warwickshire

Centre for
Alternative
Technology



Canolfan y
Dechnoleg
Amgen

www.cat.org.uk

Monday 2nd Nov – Friday 6th Nov

Coppicing: Managing woodland sustainably.

This course is a practical introduction to coppicing in local woodland. Learn the ancient skills of growing and harvesting coppice using traditional methods. This course will lead to accreditation at Level 3 with the Open College Network.

Sustainability centre, South Downs

October 3rd-18th Full Permaculture Design

October 4th Apple Pressing & Bottling

October 10th Herbal First Aid

October 24th-25th Practical Coppicing

October 31st-1st November Gate & Wattle Hurdles

November 8th Campcraft TWO for adults

November 9th-13th OCN Woodland Management with Ben Law

December 6th Festive Willow

If you need anymore information on any of these courses please contact Raina Jones at the Sustainability Centre, Droxford Road, East Meon, Petersfield, GU32 1HR, Tel: 01730 823 166 or see our website

www.sustainability-centre.org

And finally:

Wood Troll has started a confession discussion on the forum – on tools!

Which tools have you bought that you did not need, could not afford and do not use?

The list so far includes:

Slick with a 3 and three eighths inch blade

Old stock knife blades

Tool belt

Tennon cutters and spoke pointer

Logmatic choppers

Angle grinder

6 huge saw blades

Can you add to this list?

Enjoy Autumn in your woods!