



**Chiltern
Woodlands
Project**

News of the Woods

We hope you like the new A5 format of this newsletter. It has been changed to help us reduce costs, as funding becomes tighter, both of production and postage. It will also be available to download from www.chilternsaonb.org/publications

Issue 46 Winter 2010/11

New Book

Special Trees and Woods of the Chilterns

compiled by Rachel Sanderson, designed and edited by Marie Hanson.

176 pages, full colour throughout -
Costs £16.99 plus postage and packing

ISBN 978-0-95357-732-3

Special Trees and Woods Project volunteers spent four years identifying and recording the special trees and woods, researching the stories and social history behind the them which make each one special. This book is a collection of the volunteers' 50 favourite stories. From record-breaking trees to local legends, from commemorative trees to the weird and wonderful - there is something for everyone and you may just learn to love your local countryside that little bit more...



Also available

The Cultural Heritage of Chiltern Woods by John Morris, this 60 page full colour book is available from the office for £9.99 plus £1.45 postage and packaging.

Please make cheques for these books payable to the Chiltern Woodlands Project.



We care for the Chilterns

The Chiltern Society is delighted to sponsor this Newsletter

Latest news - A Call for Volunteers at Bottom Wood – the Chiltern Society's ancient woodland site near Radnage, Stokenchurch, Buckinghamshire

The Bottom Wood Conservation Group is now planning its autumn and winter maintenance programme and looking for more volunteers to spare a few hours to help in its maintenance work – many hands make light work! Between November and March we will have a monthly programme of hedge laying, coppicing, ground clearance as well as monitoring the fauna in the woods.

23 Jan, 20 Feb, 20 March, 17 April

For details please contact Tony Shields 01844 345650 email tonyshields@btinternet.com or John Morris at the Chiltern Woodlands Project

We welcome new members

Come and join people like you who love and care for the Chilterns.

For details of walks/cycle rides volunteering opportunities and membership

01494 771250

www.chilternsociety.org.uk

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The Chiltern Woodlands Project is supported by the Chilterns Conservation Board, Buckinghamshire County Council, Three Rivers, South Oxfordshire, Chiltern, and Wycombe District Councils, Dacorum Borough Council, the Forestry Commission and the Chiltern Society.

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Rooting for LEADER



It's not only chainsaws and timber cranes that can help improve our woodlands. News of the Woods has reported regularly on the significant, practical investments that the Chilterns LEADER fund has been making with local companies and woodland owners. Many of these grants have been for the purchase of timber processing equipment, especially for the production of logs for fuel.

Firewood production is an important way of adding value to lower quality timber stocks, but what about 'adding value' to the woodland flora? Step forward The Berkshire Pig Company! The LEADER team was delighted to get an application from Chiltern pig farmer, Bruce Garside, to help his rare-breed pork business develop and diversify, and at the same time help eradicate invasive weeds from a Chiltern woodland. Himalayan Balsam is becoming a severe problem on some of our commons and woodlands. It was introduced by gardeners in 1839 and, with its explosive seed capsules, quickly spread to the surrounding countryside. It tolerates low light levels and so

finds itself at home in damper woodland rides and edges; but perhaps now it has met its match. Bruce's woodland-reared pigs love to eat it, thriving on the nectar-rich plants and quickly clearing the ground. Fortunately the seeds are not persistent in the soil and two or three years attention from the pigs is enough to clear the weeds, ready to let our native plants return once the pigs have moved on.

Mike Furness, Chilterns LEADER Project Officer, says, "We were pleased to be able to help The Berkshire Pig Company to diversify as LEADER is keen to support local quality produce, but the opportunity to also help with woodland restoration made this a win-win situation for us. LEADER grants can make a big difference and anyone with a project in mind should get in touch."

For more information about how LEADER grants can help your company or your woodland, Mike can be contacted on 01844 210422, or by email to mike@chilternsleader.org.uk.

Tree Health

Tree diseases are continuing to cause problems and make the news around the country. Conifer plantations and ornamental trees are at particular risk at the moment. Pine trees, especially Black or Corsican pines, are being affected by Red band needle blight caused by the fungus *Dothistroma septosporum* here in the Chilterns – this leads to a reduction in foliage as older needles are dropped, so reducing the health and vigour of the tree. One answer seems to be thinning to give more air and space to pines.

Another disease that is proving very serious in the West Country and recently in Wales is caused by *Phytophthora ramorum* which is now using Japanese larch as a host for its reproduction by spores. These spores can then infect other species of tree. Rhododendrons are another host for this disease. A major clearance programme is underway of infected plantations to try to stop the disease spreading to other trees. The wetter climate in the west may be an important factor in this disease.

Oaks are suffering from a wide range of declines, die backs and other syndromes – often a mix of diseases rather than just one, with bacteria a major cause.

Insects and mammalian pests – many imported from other countries, add to the problems of tree health. It is becoming a real problem to grow healthy quality trees for the future, both for their amenity and as valuable timber.

More information is on the Forestry Commission website www.forestry.gov.uk

A letter from a woodland owner:-

Registering Your Land

To claim grants under WGS, EWGS or FWPS with FC for WAG, WPG, WMG, WIG or WCG including SSSI's in AONB and payments under SPS supported by EU and DEFRA under RDPE. You must apply to RPA for an SBI and a CPH, fill in RLEI and register with RLR.

I hope this clears up any confusion.

Tim Clark, Francis Wood



The Chiltern Woodlands Project is able to help woodland owners, such as Tim, decode the English woodland grant system. The good news is that the funding is still in place from the Forestry Commission for the next few years to support owners with the management of their woods. The Woodland Planning Grant can pay £1,000+ for a long term management plan which can lead onto other grants and felling consent for work in the woods. The Woodland Improvement Grant can pay upto 80% of standard costs for certain operations to restore ancient and semi-natural woods in the Chilterns.

Contact John Morris for more information!

Woodland birds

A recent report by the RSPB on the state of the UK's birds 2010 can be found at www.rspb.org.uk/Images/sukb2010_tcm9-262382.pdf

It says that UK woodlands have tended to increase in area, become more mature and many show changes in structure and tree composition. Fourteen bird species (29%) showed improvements in status post 1994, attributable partly to the rapid population expansions of species such as the nuthatch and green and great spotted woodpeckers. Overall the status of 12 species (24%) worsened; previously stable numbers of nightingales and marsh tits were followed by declines. Lesser spotted woodpeckers, spotted flycatchers, hawfinches and willow tits declined through both periods.

Species such as cuckoo, wood warbler and turtle dove have shown rapid and so far largely unexplained declines. Although in some cases, changes in UK breeding grounds may be driving decline, analysis of trends of migrants across Europe suggests there are also factors associated with migration; whether on the migration route or in the African wintering grounds, contributing to the declines.

Diary dates 2011

The Bottom Wood Group is organising volunteer work parties to help look after the Chiltern Society's ancient woodland nature reserve on Sunday mornings on **23 January, 20 February, 20 March and 17 April.**

Please contact John Morris if you would like to help.

Friday 4th March repeated **Saturday 5th March**

Woodland Archaeology Workshops in Pigotts Wood, North Dean near High Wycombe lead by John Morris. Booking is essential, costs £40 (£30 discount rate for woodland owners and volunteers).

Friday 11th March Chilterns Woodland Conference at the Clare Foundation, Saunderton, Bucks organised by the Chiltern Woodlands Project for the Chilterns Conservation Board. Booking essential, costs £30 including lunch. Speakers include Tim Hodges, Woodland Trust on restoring plantations on ancient woodlands, Alistair Yoemans on MyForest, Matthew Woodcock, Forestry Commission on woodfuel.

For details of other events see www.chilternsaonb.org

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