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In the Newsletter this Month

We have had so many lovely contributions this month, and the newsletter is really interesting. First up is the start of a series by Susan Goldwyre detailing their beautiful water tower, woodland, and their prolonged planning permission saga with the local council. More to follow—of great interest to any other woodland owners having difficulty with planning issues. We also have a call for volunteers to help with tree planting at Woodgate Farm.

Gabriel Hemery has contributed a lovely article on owning and managing a woodland—great for those still considering this, but resonates a lot with those who already own woodland too. Ian Gouldsborough reports from the SWOG meeting in Julian Evans' wood and reflects on his book too. Sarah has written *in memoriam* to her sycamore, which after a long spell of reflection has been converted to standing deadwood.

There is so much news this month—new Forestry Commission publications, other wonderful downloadable publications to while away the winter months, and many other things to get involved with this autumn and winter. There are plenty of events still going on although the woodfair season has now finished—in particular there are courses you can attend during the coppicing season.

There promise to be some very interesting SWOG events in 2012 too. The Coppicewood event has been postponed to 2012, but there is a growing programme of visits planned, so please put these in your diary and try and come along.

Finally, I'd like to say a huge thank you to our contributors this month. Next month will be the Christmas edition—if you have any winter photographs, or Yuletide experiences you would like to share, please do contribute. Have a great autumn, and enjoy your coppicing!

Sarah Walters (sarah@swog.org.uk)

A Woodland and a Water Tower—by Susan Goldwyre



Hi. I want to tell you about the woodland that I live in and the story of a water tower, a gazebo and an eco house that all impacted in one way or another, on water tower wood.

As a young-ish couple in our early 30's Gerry Goldwyre and myself, Susan Goldwyre, bought a derelict water tower in Midlothian, Scotland. Gerry is an Architect and I am a Biologist. Gerry was ideally qualified to handle the renovation of a grade B listed building and set about obtaining planning permission before embarking on a 2 year project to create a home for both of us. It was tough times earning a living from the day jobs and then working in the evenings to manage the tower project. This was 1988 and after our first year of married life, we found ourselves staying with my mother until the tower was finished. Not ideal.

Planning permission for the grade B listed tower was pretty straight forward and a very helpful planning officer had the vision to recognise that Gerry was the sort of person to make this project work. A few discussions with Historic Scotland on the detail of a balcony led to an amendment in the design for the supports but that was our only issue. The tower



was renovated and we moved in 2 years later. Despite being grade B listed and the restrictions of a conservation area, our planning consents were very straightforward. The picture on the previous page shows the Tower in the 1970's.

On the left is the tower part way through its renovation showing the opened up louvered section at the top. Note the cottage in front of the tower and the sycamore tree behind it.

Below right is the finished article. It's a stunning building although not that large inside.

Next door to the tower was that cottage and we purchased it from the local council as a derelict

boarded up building in desperate need of tlc. We could barely afford it but it was very useful as a store during the tower project. It became a project in its own right some years later and especially so after Gerry won BBC Masterchef in 1994 when we opened up an area of it as a limited use restaurant. But that's another story and I suggest you Google Goldwyre and Restaurant if you want to know more.

What was particularly interesting about the cottage was that a small parcel of land was included in the sale and was

marked as a "drying green" to the West. It was a useful piece of land which we used to its full potential. Then in year 2000 we erected a wooden Gazebo in the centre of the ground.

But there's more to tell about the drying green before I introduce you to the woodland beyond.

The drying green site occupied a piece of scrub woodland sitting above an area called Ironmills Park. Sitting on the edge of the incised river gorge woodland of the river North Esk, it is a stunning site with magnificent views, and a haven for wildlife. The council owned the woodland beyond and up until 1998 the public had use of a short cut access path along the top of the ridge. So we had regular doggy walkers coming past the drying green.

In 1998 a local lad fell on the steep slope calling for the fire brigade to make a rescue and the council went on after that to block public access. There was no right of way. The weeds and brambles soon invaded our little drying green as the undergrowth became rampant with no walkers to trample the man made path. At this time we decided ask the council if we could buy a little more of the ground around us, set about obtaining planning permission for the Gazebo and waited, and waited. 2 years later we were still waiting for a reply. Then we asked to buy a larger area of the woodland and that worked, because the council had the opportunity to sell off a liability. The area they sold to us was a little over 1 acre of semi ancient woodland, mostly steep sloping ground down to the River Esk below, but with an area of flat-ish ground that was useful only to ourselves since we held the only access to the area beyond. We already had our Gazebo, with planning permission, and now we had an extended garden ground beyond and some 300 trees or more to boot. What a joy. We called it water Tower Wood and continued to use the area as a drying green. We loved it.

But what about the history of the woodland?



Course Directory

Field Studies Council

<http://www.field-studies-council.org/>

Institute of Chartered Foresters

Forthcoming events are on

<http://www.charteredforesters.org/default.asp?page=33>

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

A large range of courses for woodland owners

For *BTCV Short Courses*

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/536/level>

For *BTCV long courses*

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/561/level>

Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)

To see upcoming courses for 2011 and 2012 visit

<http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/>

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

To see courses for the coming year visit

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/events/courses.aspx>

LILI Courses

For the full range of courses from the Low Impact Living Initiative, please see

<http://www.lowimpact.org/courses.htm>

Wildlife Trusts

All 47 UK Wildlife Trusts run events of potential interest to woodland owners. For further details please see

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=events>



What you can see is the water tower and then the length of fencing stretching along the ridge is a tennis club boundary fence. The gap between the trees above the white bridge is the area where a Scottish Power line carries power cables to a few houses in the park below. Coming onto the RHS of the photo the ground looks pretty bare and this accords with a similar landscape picture of the surrounding Ironmills Park taken at the same time (shown right).



Can I tell you about the Scottish Power, before I tell you more about the woodland?

Scottish Power have a way leave for cutting the trees under the cables and the trees that were growing there were ravaged to the ground every 10 or so years. It was an ugly scar when the work was done and the general appearance of this section was not good. It was very untidy with lots of dead wood lying around or leaning against healthy trees. A woodland management plan identified a need to tidy up this area and to pile the dead wood at the bottom of the slope to create a wildlife habitat and natural barrier.

I set about managing the area and contacted Scottish Power for a possible re alignment of the power line to help protect an adjacent mature Lime tree. After some years Scottish Power did agree to relocate the line with the benefit not only of the survival of the Lime tree but also a reduction in the width of the cut when they upgraded the cabling to a higher insulation specification. The relocation works required the loss of 6 small trees, mainly Elm which would die anyway, and the area was scarred from the works. But now, 3 years later, the result is a managed area of great beauty with additions of cherry trees and understory planting of holly, hawthorn, blackthorn and rowan, which can be managed without the need for mass clearance in the future. A great result.

Around the time that Scottish Power moved the line we had embarked on the building of an Eco house on the site of the Gazebo. It was at this juncture that what should have been a joyful house build project, became marred with complaints from a handful of local residents who reacted to the removal of the 6 trees under the power line. The Eco house had planning permission but its appearance on the hillside, along with the opening under the power line, was too much for some folks to bear and a complete lack of appreciation of the long term benefits was turned into immediate scrutiny and complaint of everything that was going on in the woodland.

In next months' article I'll go into the detail of what has happened in the woodland in the last 10 years, what happened with the Eco house project and the impact of the complaints. It's a planning permission story that you would not believe. Although the Eco house gained planning permission; a fence, a sitting out area, some steps on the steep bank and an area of path broadening were all advised as requiring planning permission and although the planning officer recommended approval, the local authority over ruled his recommendation and permission was refused! After renovating a water tower, rescuing a cottage and building an award winning Eco home, as they say up here in Scotland, you couldn't make it up.

'Til next month.

Call for Volunteers to help at Woodgate Farm

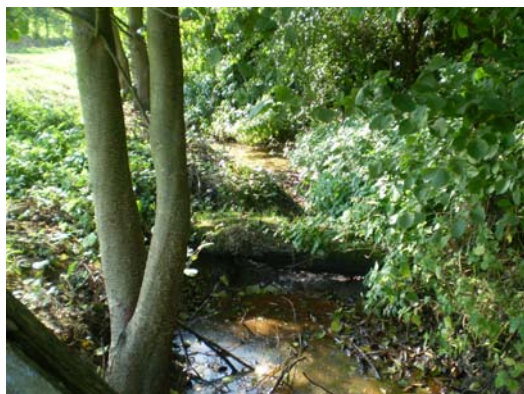
Woodgate Farm is a small holding of 22 acres, 10 of which is woodland. We have recently purchased this wonderful place in the heart of East Sussex and our intention is to run it as a small sustainable enterprise. Woodgate Farm has been much neglected over the years and is in need of a lot of love, maintenance and development.

We are just 2 people and are looking for volunteers who would like to help us develop what is going to be an organic/biodynamic small holding growing fruit and vegetables to



a high standard and small scale animal husbandry

- We need to clear the stream that has been filled with debris and clogged with vegetable matter
- Clear land and erect a poly tunnel for growing crops throughout the year
- Plant a new orchard for future generations to enjoy
- Woodland to thin and re-coppice
- Developing meadowland for bumble bees
- Creating areas for various animals – chickens, bees sheep
- Fence repairs
- General help with the organic garden - sowing, planting, growing, making compost, sharpening tools



All volunteers will be shown how to use equipment safely and will not be expected to use tools that need special experience – e.g chain saws.

If you would like to find out more and you have a few hours to spare to learn new skills whilst enjoying the benefits of the outdoor life, please contact us on the 01792 260 763 or email cmarkson@btinternet.com

So, you want to own and manage a woodland? —by Gabriel Hemery

Reproduced by kind permission from Gabriel Hemery. Read many more interesting posts on his blog at www.gabrielhemery.com

Do you have an ambition to own a woodland? Today there is unprecedented interest in owning woodlands, perhaps due to the high profile of forests in the media in the last year. Maybe you've had a life long ambition to invest in land or to be a custodian of our landscape and wildlife heritage. There is a lot to consider if you are thinking of investing, and when you are a proud woodland owner, even more to think about, and to do, in the woods. Here's a brief guide.

Buying a woodland

Private ownership of woodlands in Britain is among the highest in Europe at 82%, compared to the European average of 49.6% (<http://gabrielhemery.com/2011/02/02/forests-in-public-ownership-a-european-perspective/>). Many of these woodlands in private hands will be traditional large inherited estates; the preserve of the most wealthy. Increasingly however, more and more hobby owners have taken advantage of some of the larger existing woodlands being split and put on the market in smaller parcels. These new, socially-orientated owners, may have little experience of managing woodland.

There are several companies that specialise in selling woodlands. I'm not going to provide these with a free advert here but a simple Google Search <http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=buy+a+woodland> will reveal some of the main providers. You need to decide whether you want to invest in leasehold or freehold woodland. A small freehold woodland is likely to require an investment comparable to the purchase of a large family car, although prices vary significantly and are dependent on woodland type, region of the country, proximity

The Greenwood Centre offer a range of courses of interest to woodland owners

<http://www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk/WoodlandCourses.htm>

Phil Hopkinson of Malvern Coppicing offers practical coppicing courses

<http://www.malverncoppicing.co.uk/>

Yorwoods offer courses for woodland owners and managers in the Yorkshire area

<http://www.yorwoods.org.uk/training>

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

offer a wide range of courses, some of which are of interest to woodland owners

<http://www.ieem.net/otherevents.asp>

Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events The

programmes for October 2011 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2011/11/01/month/all/all/1>

Bat Conservation Trust

Run a number of training courses. The full brochure is available at

<http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/training.html>

There are special courses for arborists, on use of bat detectors and bat surveys

to population centres, access quality, whether there is public access, shooting rights, lakes or streams, and so on. Larger and/or more commercial type plantation woodlands are typically cheaper per unit area than small woods of high cultural or biological value.

Important aspects to consider when choosing a woodland:

- **Location** – buy nearby so that you access the woodland regularly with minimal cost and effort. One of the joys of owning a woodland is getting to know it well and watching it evolve through the seasons.
- **Investment** – making money from a woodland is difficult and requires time and effort. Timber sales are quite complex, whilst firewood is a growing opportunity. Agroforestry, adventure and leisure activities, are likely to yield more income if you have the right skills. In reality it is the land itself that is likely to provide the greatest return on investment.
- **Statutory** – check for designations and how they may affect your plans. e.g. conservation areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Park.
- **Legal** – if leasehold check for any rights retained by the freeholder. Also, access rights for wayleaves (e.g. powerlines, mineral rights are often separate. Public rights of way (e.g. footpaths, bridleways), environmental designations (e.g. European protected species).
- **Planning** - check local plans for urban expansion or road building.
- **Access** – is there an all-weather track(s) through the woodland. If so, this can help considerably when it comes to management, which often takes place in the winter. Is there hardstanding where cut timber can be stored?
- **Potential** – what opportunities are there for development? For example, if you have ambitions to develop shooting, fishing or adventure activities. If you want to live in the woodland, are there services to the site (e.g. electricity, water), and does planning permission exist?



The pride in planting and managing your own woodland is unbeatable. This is an oak forest I planted in 1993 (18 years ago) but unfortunately I don't own it!

land, such as a whole farm, you are likely to compete with many other land investors. If you are thinking of a small area, say between 2 hectares (ha) and 5 ha, you may end up competing with the horse fraternity and their inflated land prices. Slightly larger land areas will avoid this, and so relatively the price per m² will be less but you will need to

Planting your own woodland

There can be nothing more satisfying than planting your own woodland. You can create the woodland type of your choice and you will only have yourself to blame in the long term if things aren't to your liking! You will quickly develop a long term view but that's one of the joys of owning/managing a woodland.

There are a great many issues to be considered in planting a new woodland, that I cannot hope to address adequately here, so I'll have to revisit these in later posts. Unless you are able to invest in a significant area of

Ben Law

Runs a wide range of woodland management and woodcraft courses in Sussex

<http://www.ben-law.co.uk/education.html>

Brighton Permaculture Trust

Run a number of courses of potential interest including courses on pruning old fruit trees, introduction to permaculture and building with straw bales.

<http://www.brightonpermaculture.org.uk/>

Bulworthy Project

The Bulworthy project run courses including guided walks, as well as one day introductions to charcoal burning

See <http://www.bulworthyproject.org.uk/>

Kingcombe Environmental Studies Centre

Run a wide range of courses on wildlife, livestock and lifestyle management. See their web site for more information.

<https://www.kingcombe.org/courses/intro.aspx>

Plantlife

A charity dedicated to wildflowers and wild plants, run a programme of educational activities

http://www.plantlife.org.uk/things_to_do/activities/

invest more capital. You could consider a joint investment with a friend but make sure you receive good legal advice.

Managing your woodland

First get to know your woodland. Conduct some historical research by talking to local people, neighbouring woodland owners and farmers, visiting the local library to look at old maps. Seek advice, often free in the first instance. Try contacting the Government forest service (in the UK the Forestry Commission have *Woodland Officers*) or if you're lucky, there may be an extension service operating in your area (in the UK examples include [Cumbria Woodlands](#), [Coed Cymru](#), [Yorwoods](#), [Oxfordshire Woodland Project](#)). You may find that there are grants available to help you manage the woodland.

Consider joining an association or society and taking part in visits to other people's woodlands. Often you will gain a lot from the debates about management between other woodland owners. Perhaps even invite a group to your woodland! A specialist group, such a wildlife interest group, will provide you with very valuable insights into the value of your woodland.

Find out what is in your woodland: the tree species, sizes, condition. Look for archeological features, areas of ecological importance, and the condition of rides and fences. If you would like to map your woodland, and perhaps create an inventory, consider using the free [myForest Service](#) provided by the Sylva Foundation. When you know what is in your woodland, and you have a clear idea of what you would like to do with it, then you should consider producing a management plan. [myForest](#) can help with this too.

Just remember, enjoy your woodland and don't over tidy; let nature evolve.

Resources:

Web resources

[myForest Service](http://www.myforest.org.uk) (<http://www.myforest.org.uk>)

Owner groups

[Confederation of European Forest Owners](http://www.cepf-eu.org/) (Europe) (<http://www.cepf-eu.org/>)

[National Woodland Owner Association](http://www.woodlandowners.org/) (USA) (<http://www.woodlandowners.org/>)

[Small Woods Association](http://www.smallwoods.org.uk/) (UK) (<http://www.smallwoods.org.uk/>)

[Small Woodland Owner Group](http://www.swog.org.uk/) (UK) (<http://www.swog.org.uk/>)

Books and Guides

[Common sense forestry by Hans Morsbach](http://www.amazon.com/Common-Sense-Forestry-Living-Mother/dp/1931498210) (<http://www.amazon.com/Common-Sense-Forestry-Living-Mother/dp/1931498210>)

[So you own a woodland? Forestry Commission publication](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/so-you-own-a-woodland.pdf/$FILE/so-you-own-a-woodland.pdf_) ([http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/so-you-own-a-woodland.pdf/\\$FILE/so-you-own-a-woodland.pdf_](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/so-you-own-a-woodland.pdf/$FILE/so-you-own-a-woodland.pdf_))

[Woodland management: a practical guide by Chris Starr](http://www.woodsmithstore.co.uk/shop/Products/Books/Product/Woodland+Management++A+Practical+Guide/) (<http://www.woodsmithstore.co.uk/shop/Products/Books/Product/Woodland+Management++A+Practical+Guide/>)

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – Forest

Schools/Delivering the Curriculum Outdoors, a full range of courses for those working with children in their woods

<http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/files/documents/1258.pdf>

The Sustainability Centre

offers lots of courses around the theme of sustainable living. Upcoming courses include Permaculture, Low Energy Living and Coppicing.

http://www.sustainability-centre.org/courses_adult.php

Bishops Wood Centre at

Stourport on Severn, offer a wide range of courses of interest to woodland owners including bushcrafts, photography, pole lathe and other woodland crafts, as well as offering forest school leader training and CPD

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/education-and-learning/be-healthy/outdoor-education-centres/bishops-wood-centre/training-and-courses.aspx>

British Dragonfly Society run a programme of field visits and educational events.

<http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/diary-field-trips-and-other-bds-events>

A Wood of Our Own—Ian Gouldsbrough

Ian Gouldsbrough recently attended the SWOG meeting hosted by Julian Evans in his beautiful woods. Julian Evans has written a wonderful book entitled “A Wood of Our Own” which is referred to in this report. It is available through Amazon (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Wood-Our-Own-1/dp/1856230228>) and as an e-book (http://ebookstore.sony.com/ebook/julian-evans/a-wood-of-our-own/_R-40000000000000109136). You can also get Julian's book online at <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/owning-a-wood/books.php#badgers-beeches-and-blisters>



As a newbie amateur to wood ownership, I hired a forester in Hampshire to provide an overview of our six week owned 24 acres. After two hours of survey work, it was obvious that I needed further guidance.

Without hesitation, he suggested I get hold of a copy of Julian Evan's experience of a wood in his book *A Wood of Our Own*. What a coincidence I said. We are attending a one day session in two weeks with the very same author

who has an open day at his wood. I heard about the event via SWOG and [woodlands.co.uk](http://www.woodlands.co.uk). As soon as we arrived I asked Julian if we could obtain a copy and a signing of his book, which we did. I now see via Google that he has videos too. (<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/>)

The ten attendees came from as far as Somerset and owned woods from 1.9 acres to much more. Some had been involved in silviculture for a decade, others for two months. We all shared a thirst for knowing more from Julian about our investment. His knowledge is profound and his delivery is full of enthusiasm for the subject. Topics ranged from measuring logs to a history of wood prices and the influence of biomass. His wife, Margaret, provided drinks including an excellent homemade apple juice. Needless to say, I can heartily recommend *A Wood of Our Own* as I could not put it down. It isn't a thriller but it is a thorough overview of what you will need to know.

In Memory of our Sycamore—by Sarah Walters

This weekend we killed a tree. It isn't something we are proud of, or even happy about. I don't mean we cut it down, I mean we deliberately tried to kill it and leave it standing. Why? Why on Earth would somebody who loves trees, who is a guardian to our beautiful woods, do something like this?

The answer is that the tree is a sycamore. What is wrong with sycamore? Well, sycamore is non-native - it was introduced some time in the 16th Century. It is a lovely tree: beautiful leaves that turn a glorious colour in winter and those lovely little helicopter seeds that we



Woodcraft School have published their timetable for woodcraft and bushcraft courses

<http://www.woodcraftschool.co.uk/woodcraft-courses.htm>

Acres Wild Woodland have a 2011 and 2012 timetable of woodland and woodcrafts courses available on

<http://www.acreswildwoodlands.co.uk/courses/index.shtml>

Willowcraft and Woodlands is a social enterprise doing woodcrafts and woodland management based in Worcestershire. They run a number of woodland management and woodcraft courses of potential interest to woodland owners including courses on Living Willow structures, coppice management and treebog construction.

<http://www.willowcraftandwoodlands.co.uk/>

John Waller, Underwoodsman has an extensive programme of courses available. Lots of green woodworking, coppice management, charcoal making, living willow and introductory blacksmithing. See http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/at_a_glance.html

Shift Bristol are running a year long practical sustainability course as well as a seasonal programme of workshops. See <http://www.shiftbristol.org.uk/index.html> for further details.

all played with as children. The wood is beautiful - hard, even-grained, nice to work and reasonable as firewood too. It grows quickly and can act as a good nurse tree for other species including oak. However, sycamore in the wrong place can be very destructive. And our beautiful, magnificent sycamore is in the wrong place.

In an ancient woodland, sycamore can invade. It grows more quickly than oak and shades out the oak seedlings. It is also against the southern boundary of the wood, which aids spread of seed through the wood. If we left it, in 100 or 200 or 300 years, we would have a sycamore woodland, rather than an oak woodland. And all the species that depend on oak would also be lost. We will have to deal with the seedlings for many years to come: the daughter trees are being coppiced, and we aim to cut them for wood before they are producing seed. This will give a chance for new oaks to start growing too.

Why did we leave it standing? Well, this is actually quite an old tree - could be up to 100 years old, but more likely about 60-70 years. It has lots of little crevices and a few lovely holes for nesting birds. The standing dead wood will continue to provide a habitat, and a feature in the woods too. As it gradually rots, it will be home to insects, mosses and lichens and become a small ecosystem in itself.

Was there an alternative? This is something we have asked ourselves many times, and we have sought a great deal of advice around this question too. It pains us to kill a beautiful mature tree, and we have taken 4 years to reach this decision. However the problem of sycamore invasion needs tackling and we could no longer put it off. This tree is the source of the seed, and the source of our invasion problem.

Woodland management is essential in a wood like ours. It is lovely to leave woods wild, and we do this as much as possible - there are areas we are not touching as nature is doing very well. In a large wildwood, trees live, grow, die and fall, and the regeneration process moves around from place to place: a clearing appears, new trees start to grow, and finally it reverts to high forest, only for another clearing to open up elsewhere. Deer browsing new trees create natural coppice of multi-stemmed trees. A wide variety of self-sustaining habitats. A lovely, natural cycle. But these woods were huge. Ours is small, long and narrow. It is the only island of ancient woodland left over a huge area of North Warwickshire. The rest of the ancient forest around it has been cut down, leaving it without the capacity to self-heal. We have to intervene to produce a coppice habitat. We have to thin trees to give them the space to grow. Failing to make provision for regeneration of the oak trees will mean this resource is lost for all time, something we cannot let happen.

The right tree in the right place. The sycamore, a beautiful tree, was not in the right place. As it dies, it will provide new habitat and new life, and allow new life to emerge in its shadow. We give thanks to this beautiful tree, and for the pleasure it has given us. It is now time to move on.



Courses from The Mammal Society – a wide variety of courses, at various venues and dates. 2012 dates now announced.

<http://tinyurl.com/69l76s7>

Courses in forthcoming months include mammal identification and radio tracking.

Dorset Centre for Rural Skills

Run a range of courses of interest to woodland owners including hurdle-making and green wood-working.

<http://www.dorsetruralskills.co.uk/courses.htm>

Cotswolds Rural Skills Courses

Include grassland management and drystone walling. Details on.

<http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=cotswolds-rural-skills>

Acorn Ecology in Exeter run a range of courses including a Phase 1 habitat survey course, and courses on surveying and handling bats, otters, water voles, dormice and other protected species

<http://www.acornecology.co.uk/>

Forest Garden Shovelstrode

Practical woodland courses and yurt camping. Upcoming courses include green woodworking, hurdle-making, beekeeping for adults and children.

www.forestgarden.info

News for Small Woodland Owners

New Forestry Commission Guide to Management of Deadwood



Deadwood is a vital habitat, both standing and lying on the forest floor. The Forestry Commission have produced a guide to the management of deadwood, dealing with its importance, and ways in which deadwood habitat can be encouraged

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/lifeinthedeadwood.pdf/\\$FILE/lifeinthedeadwood.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/lifeinthedeadwood.pdf/$FILE/lifeinthedeadwood.pdf)

Report on The Big Pond Dip 2011

Pond Conservation have produced a report on the results of the Big Pond Dip, charting changes between 2009 and 2011. The key conclusions were

- If you can make a really good quality wildlife ponds – as judged by the invertebrates – it will be twice as likely to have breeding newts or toads compared to a poorer quality pond
- In the countryside, ponds with a wider variety of plants have a wider variety of animals. The same seems to be true in garden ponds as ponds with all three types of water plant - marginal, floating-leaved and submerged - had the greatest diversity of animals.
- It is harder to keep the smallest ponds, i.e. those up to just 1 m x 1m - in good condition. Medium-sized and large ponds are easier to make into top quality habitats.

Read the full report on Pond Conservation web site, where further information about making a good wildlife pond can be found.

<http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/bigponddip/Big+Pond+Dip+results+from+2009-2011>

National Planning Policy Framework

The consultation on this has now closed. Many important national and local bodies have responded to this. All the key players' responses are gathered together in one post on Andrew Lainton's blog.-

<http://andrewlainton.wordpress.com/2011/10/23/the-key-bodies-nppf-responses-in-one-post/>

Latest version of Forest Research News now online

The Forest Research Newsletter is always worth a read. This edition includes details of new FC publications as well as reports on Woodlands for Water, Cultural values of European Trees, and details of a new Tissue Culture Laboratory.

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FR_News_Autumn_2011.pdf/\\$FILE/FR_News_Autumn_2011.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FR_News_Autumn_2011.pdf/$FILE/FR_News_Autumn_2011.pdf)

The Field Studies Council have a number of interesting looking courses in 2012. At Epping the courses include plant identification and hedgelaying.

<http://field-studies-coun-cil.org/eppingforest/professionaldev.aspx>

At Flatford Mill there are courses on on film-making, photography, painting and drawing wildlife as well as birds, wildflowers, dragonflies, butterflies and tree identification. <http://field-studies-coun-cil.org/flatfordmill/professionaldev.aspx>

For full details of courses at all the FSC Centres of particular relevance to woodland owners see <http://field-studies-coun-cil.org/professional/2011/habitats/habitats.aspx>

AJS Crafts

Offer a wide range of courses covering many different woodland-related crafts. Upcoming are courses on spoon making, charcoal burning, willow basketry and sweet chestnut gates and hurdles.

<http://www.ajscrafts.co.uk/courses/CourseList.aspx>

DWWP offer a range of woodland activity and traditional woodcraft courses in Yorkshire

<http://www.dwwp.co.uk/Woodland%20Skills.asp>

New Guinness world record tree hug set in Delamere Forest

Are we all tree-hugging hippies? Well, even if we are, it appears we are definitely not alone. A new world record for the maximum number of simultaneous tree huggers was set on 11th September 2011 at Delamere Forest, with over 700 participants travelling from far and wide to take part.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPRByCountryLang/9C001E5E8CD17C9E8025792E00529897>

Innovative scheme helps restoration of North Yorkshire ancient woodland

Birch is being harvested and used for horse-racing hurdles forms part of a native forest restoration scheme in North Yorkshire -

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPRByCountryLang/82F98F792A175B7A8025792C00589194>

A new tree disease affecting Lawson's Cypress in the UK

Lawson's cypress is a common feature of gardens, parks and urban landscapes across the whole of the UK. Unfortunately a new disease, *Phytophthora lateralis* has been spotted in the UK, and could mean trouble for ornamental conifer growers, as Lawson's cypress and its hybrids are very widespread as ornamental trees.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPRByCountryLang/3DB0A5C2FFF962B68025792E0027DC57>

Cut-price offer on Royal Forestry Society Membership

RFS are still offering 14 months' membership for price of 12, and half price membership for students. To take advantage of this offer, go to

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/join/join-online>

Woodlands and Water: New report from the Forestry Commission

A new report on the importance of woodland for water and for management of water resources has been released by FC

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/woodlandforwater>

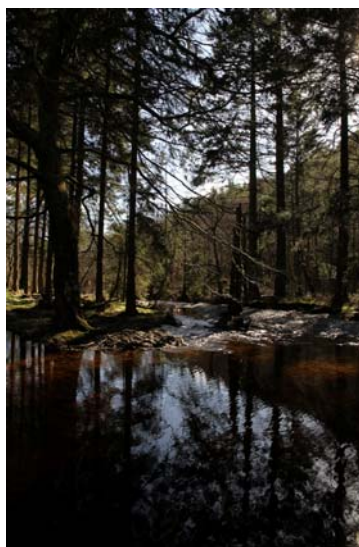
There are three reports - a main report, case study and summary report, and all can be downloaded from the link above.

Forests and Climate Change—Forestry Commission Report

We may not all agree on the causes of climate change, but we are aware that the climate is warming. The rate of warming has implications for how we manage trees now, bearing in mind their long life-cycle. A new report from the Forestry Commission looks into the issue of how to manage forests to cope with this new threat. Human Dimensions of Adaptive Forestry Management for Climate Change can be downloaded from the FC web site on [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRP016.pdf/\\$FILE/FCRP016.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRP016.pdf/$FILE/FCRP016.pdf)

Whitelee Forest Oral History Project—free download

A wonderful book on Whitelee Forest from the Oral History Project is available as a free download from the Forestry Commission at



Biocensus

Offer a range of courses including Phase One Habitat Survey and Wildlife Legislation. Full programme available on

<http://www.biocensus.co.uk/Upload/docs/BiocensusTrainingTimetable2011.pdf>

Moelyci Environmental Training Centre offer a wide variety of courses of interest to woodland owners, including courses on Phase 1 habitat surveys, national vegetation classification and wildlife surveys. <http://www.moelyci.org> for further information.

Monkton Wyld Court in Dorset offer a wide range of courses in sustainable living. See <http://www.monktonwyldcourt.co.uk/> for more information.

BTCV London are running courses on woodland management and coppicing.

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level4/19/level>

They also run a wide range of other courses on wildlife and conservation including practical and certificated training.

Woodlandskills.com Based in Sussex, they offer a variety of courses in the field of woodland living, survival and traditional wood crafts.

Abbots Living Wood offers a range of green woodworking courses

http://www.living-wood.co.uk/2011_course_dates.html

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS118.pdf/\\$FILE/FCMS118.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS118.pdf/$FILE/FCMS118.pdf)

This book is a lovely trip into the past and the history of Whitelee Forest from farm to forest from the point of view of those who worked on the land.

Research on Health Benefits of Street Trees

The Forestry Commission have been busy this month: another report has come out looking at the health benefits of street trees in the urban setting. Health benefits are vital, not just for the benefit of residents, but also for the economic knock-on benefits that well-being brings. The report can be downloaded at

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf/\\$FILE/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf/$FILE/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf)

Focusing upon the role of street trees in moderating the climate and environment of urban areas, the following benefits were considered:

- reducing air pollution,
- providing an environment conducive to physical activities,
- reducing stress and improving mental health,
- reducing noise levels,
- cooling air in summer by giving shade (including associated savings to the
- National Health Service (NHS) from avoided heat stroke),
- reducing ultraviolet radiation through shading (including associated savings to the NHS from avoided skin cancer),
- reducing wind speeds in winter thereby reducing heat loss from buildings.



The review showed that there is a growing body of research generally, but not unanimously, confirming the above benefits of street trees. However, few economic estimates of associated health impacts have so far been published for the effects specifically of street trees. Research on benefits such as reduction in noise, ultraviolet radiation and wind speeds in winter, is mainly limited at present to initial physical measurements.

New leaflet/poster summarising Forestry Facts and Figures for 2011

Summary poster/leaflet of Forestry Facts and Figures for 2011 has been produced by the FC. It can be printed and folded yourself, or used as a poster. Download from

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCFS211.pdf/\\$FILE/FCFS211.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCFS211.pdf/$FILE/FCFS211.pdf)

Plane tree disease confirmed in London

A new threat to the London planes, so typical of the metropolis' parks, has been confirmed. Previously known in Germany and Holland, Massaria (*Splanchnonema platani*) is attacking the capital's iconic plane trees. More information is available on www.ltoa.org.uk.

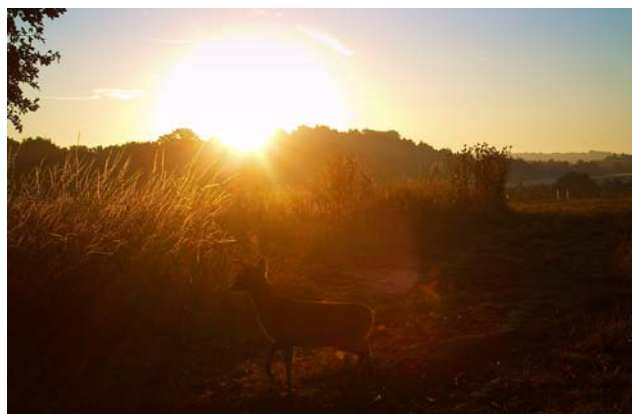
New note on Invasive Tree Pests and Diseases issued by Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology

This note summarises a lot of the recent guidance on how to deal with invasive tree pests and diseases, and is full of advice. Definitely worth reading, particularly if you have a sick tree.

[http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/Postpn394 Invasive Tree Pests and Diseases.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/Postpn394%20Invasive%20Tree%20Pests%20and%20Diseases.pdf)

New report on the problem posed by muntjac deer in Scotland

Until recently, Scotland has been one of the few areas of the UK free from muntjac deer, an introduced ornamental species that has escaped into the wild and which now thrives in most areas of England and Wales. The economic cost of controlling these deer, and the consequences of not doing so are considered in the report available at <http://www.snh.org.uk/>



Woodfuel WIG announced in FC North West Region

A new Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant has been announced in the North West Region by the Forestry Commission. If you would like to apply, the details are here:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs-wigwoodfuel>

New analysis in wake of Climategate concludes that the Earth really is warming

Following “Climategate” (the revelation of e-mails from the University of East Anglia suggesting that data may have been manipulated), a re-analysis by an independent group was commissioned to see if the climate is really warming. The conclusion: yes, it is. There are more details on the BBC web site.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13719510>

New book from Natural History Museum: Trees of Britain and Ireland

This new Natural History Museum/Tree Council publication by Edward Milner is available at a discount to RFS members, as the Society belongs to the Tree Council. Normally £20, the special price is £15 + p&p. For more information about the book and to view sample pages, log on to www.nhm.ac.uk/publishing. To order, phone Bookpoint Ltd: 01235 827 702; mailorder@bookpoint.co.uk, quoting NHM/TREES. A review of this book is to follow in the next newsletter.

Find something to do in your woods this Autumn

There are lots of autumn-related woodland activities for children and families on Nature Detectives web site including activity books, Halloween activities, seed hunts, Autumnwatch activities and many, many more. See <http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/> for more information.

The Greenest Government Ever?—Not according to a recent report

Nature Check have released a new report on the Green credentials and track record of the current Government. Examining their performance against a set of explicit criteria, the conclusion is that they are pretty un-green, although there are some shining lights amid the gloom, including the National Ecosystem Assessment and the White Paper on the Natural Environment. The report is available from Nature Check’s web site:

<http://www.wcl.org.uk/nature-check.asp>

Rugged Oil Beetle Survey from Buglife

The insect charity, Buglife, are looking for people in Central and South England and South Wales to record sightings of the rugged oil beetle online. If you can help, please see <http://www.buglife.org.uk/getinvolved/surveys/Oil+Beetle+Hunt/>

European Atlas of Soil Biodiversity

http://eusoils.jrc.ec.europa.eu/library/maps/biodiversity_atlas/Documents/Biodiversity_Atlas.pdf

Understanding your soil is absolutely the key to understanding your woodland, and how to manage it. A new atlas from a European project can really be of assistance here. First of all, it tells you everything you ever needed to know about soils, structure, ecosystems and diversity. Then it maps soil biodiversity in the European area, based



on a huge wealth of research data. It is a very large document, but really worth downloading and reading: but you will need broadband to download the file.

Another planning consultation launched – this time on neighbourhood planning

This consultation has been lost among the news on Libya and the EU Referendum Vote in the Commons. However, Grant Schapps, the housing Minister, has been seeking views on this consultation via social networking sites, including Twitter. Neighbourhood planning will need to mesh closely with the new National Planning Policy Framework, so it is well worth looking at what this involves. Although it predominantly cites urban examples, neighbourhoods could have a say on a wide variety of planning issues, including the use of rural land. Have a look at the consultation and its implications here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningregulationsconsultation>

National Tree Week 2011

Will run from 26th November to 6th December this year. This event is run by the Tree Council, and is a great opportunity for communities to get involved with their local trees and woodlands. The web site has a list of events, but you can also register an event at your woods through their web site. If you are planting trees, or even doing work on your existing trees, and would like to involve the local community, this could be the opportunity to do it. Local Schools and other groups may also be interested in participating. Details on the National Tree Council web site

<http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/national-tree-week>



New FC Publication on Environmental Effects of Stump and Root Harvesting

The removal of tree stumps and coarse roots from felling sites as a source of woody biomass for bioenergy generation is well established in parts of Europe, and interest has been expressed in replicating this practice in some regions of the UK. Overseas research shows that stump harvesting can pose a risk to sustainable forest management, unless care is taken in site selection and operational practice. Poor practice can lead to detrimental effects on soil structure, increasing the risk of soil erosion, and depletes soil nutrient and carbon capital. Stump and root harvesting can also have impacts on woodland biodiversity, archaeological heritage and tree health. stump and root harvesting operations in Britain.

Download at [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRN009.pdf/\\$FILE/FCRN009.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRN009.pdf/$FILE/FCRN009.pdf)

Greenwood Centre

The Greenwood Centre offers a wide range of woodland management and wood craft courses the whole year round. Based in Shropshire.

<http://www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk/index.htm>

Sharpham Trust

Mammal Tracks and Signs for Photographers
http://www.sharphamtrust.org/event_detail.php?id=13376

How to cultivate fungi

Free course in South London from Trust for Urban Ecology
<http://www.environmentjob.co.uk/adverts/28312>

Black Country Living Landscape –

courses including wild-flower plug planting and rustic fence-building
http://www.bcll.org.uk/whats_happening/events.html

BTCV London is running local courses on woodland management as well as on tree identification in summer and winter.

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/536/level>

The Bulworthy Project SWOG members, they offer a range of courses to suit your own needs on the subject of charcoal burning.

<http://www.bulworthproject.org.uk/>

Greenwood Days

Offer courses to public and corporate groups on green woodworking and a wide range of creative arts in Leicestershire

<http://www.greenwooddays.co.uk/>

Events for SWOG Members and General Events

Coppicing Event for SWOG Members at Coppicewood—Now re-scheduled for 2012

Details will appear on the SWOG web site closer to the day, but here is a taster of what is in store.

Cwm Plygog Woods consist of about 11 acres of deciduous trees mostly, willow, sycamore, ash, hazel and hawthorn, with a perimeter of Douglas Fir consisting of a further 6 acres which we do not work. The Douglas fir borders the river Teifi a renown Welsh salmon river. The woodland was neglected previous to our tenure some 6 years ago since when we have been restoring about one acre per year. The work is done by volunteers and students. The woodland is fairly flat and has clear pathways that are easy to walk but they can get muddy in wet weather. We do have a compost toilet and a workshop with a log burner, there is also a covered area nearby housing the pole lathes.



We plan to devote the day to coppicing which will involve hands on experience for those keen to have a go. The day will be led by our Senior Instructor and naturalist Nick Barnes (Nick is also a volunteer and member of the management committee). Nick will explain the basics of coppicing, illustrate the hand tools their use and maintenance and about all the importance of this low impact approach to woodland Management.

We can accommodate up to 20 people and 10 cars parked along the track outside the woodland entrance and parking is possible in the village of Cilgerran just a 10 min walk away.
Refreshments – We can supply hot water and mugs for teas etc .Please bring lunch and snacks. Regret no facilities for cooking.

Dogs can come but must be on a lead at all times, remember we will be using sharp edge tools at times during the day. Most people who bring their dogs leave them in the car and take them for a walk up to the river on another track during lunchtime and this is preferable.

10:00 for 10:30 start finish around 3:00pm tea and coffee offered

The woodland address is:

Cwm Plygog Woods

Cilgerran

Pembrokeshire.

SA44

For directions on how to find us go to: <http://coppicewoodcollege.co.uk/how-to-find-us/> and download the PDF

Telephone number for the day will be 01239881394 before 9:30am and 07831 158346 after that time.

We are a charity and we would appreciate a donation on the day if people have enjoyed their visit.

RFS Divisional Meeting in London

On Friday, 2 December, the RFS London Division have a tour of the Olympic Village Site in East London to check out the extensive tree planting there. Preference will be given to London RFS members but ask local Chairman, Paul Akers, if there may be spare places for any SWOG members who are not RFS members. Tel: 0207 641 2618; pakers@westminster.gov.uk.

New Free Course in Natural Environment in Tower Hamlets

A free course is being offered to residents of Tower Hamlets and Hackney in January and February 2012 to help

residents learn more about the natural environment. This will run at Hackney City Farm, and details can be found on

<http://www.environmentjob.co.uk/course/29993-The-Earth-Course-Hackney-Tower-Hamlets>

Forestry Commission Forest Health Day

A Forest Health Day will be held at Taunton Rugby Club, Devon on 8th November 2011. This is FREE to attend, but you need to notify of your attendance. The South West Region has had major issues with tree diseases over the past year, so this is definitely worth a visit if you live in that area.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/fhdswwengland>

New collection of academic articles to celebrate International Year of Forests

Publishers Taylor and Francis have released a series of academic articles for free download to mark the International Year of Forests. These articles normally attract a charge, so it is worth a look to see if you would like to read any of these articles before the event finishes.

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/access/YearofForests.pdf>

The Mammal Society Autumn Conference

The Mammal Society are holding their conference at the Brambell Building, Bangor, 12th November 2011

http://www.mammal.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=354&Itemid=335

Kucinski Wildlife Foundation Wildlife Photography Project: Britain's Natural Treasures.

This is an exciting project to encourage members of the public to share their photographs and build up a picture of the natural treasures of Britain. Photographers agree to abide by a code of minimal impact and non-interference. <http://www.kwf-ecological.org.uk/BNTPhotography.html>

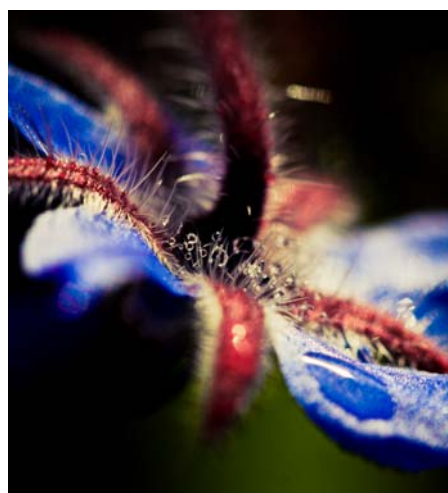
Chilterns Woodland Project events for 2011/2012

Chilterns Woodland Project are running a huge series of interesting events for the remainder of 2011 and 2012. This includes a demonstration of the MyForest web site by Alistair Yeomans and a seminar in Oxford on 5th November: Trees and Woods of England: Past, Present and Future. One of the speakers at this seminar will be Gabriel Hemery, who has contributed to this newsletter, and to past editions. A leaflet with full details can be downloaded from the SWOG website on

<http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/woodland-events-update-1.pdf>

Places remaining on Native Hands Autumn Courses

Native Hands still have some places on Autumn Courses, including some in November: Including acorn day on 19th November. Details can be found on the SWOG web site at <http://www.swog.org.uk/events/native-hands-courses/>



Courses

Upcoming Courses from Smallwoods

We have been notified of an upcoming event on Woodland Pest Control on 25-26th November. There are also a lot of other courses running through November to early 2012, including OCN Introduction to Woodland Management, Hedge-Laying, Timber Extraction, Forest School Leader Level 3 and Coppicing. For further information please see the Greenwood Centre web site on <http://www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk/WoodlandCourses.htm>



Forest School Leader Courses from The Green Light Trust

The Green Light Trust, in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk are running Level 1 (Introduction), Level 2 (Assistant) and Level 3 (Leader) Forest School courses. Forest Schools are an excellent way to get children engaged in nature and the natural world, as well as helping children to learn self-reliance, working in groups, increase self-esteem and to enhance learning in the wonderful outdoors. Details are on <http://www.greenlighttrust.org/forest-schools/>

Mammal Society 2012 Courses now launched

If you want to learn to identify mammals, or how to survey them on your land, including how to obtain licenses to handle vulnerable species, then the Mammal Trust offers a range of courses for amateurs and professionals. Their 2012 calendar has now been released

http://www.mammal.org.uk/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&page=shop.browse&category_id=9&Itemid=219&vmcchk=1&Itemid=219

British Trust for Ornithology Courses

The BTO run a whole range of ongoing surveys of birds in the UK. They also run a range of courses aimed at amateurs and professionals, running from introductions to bird identification right through to advanced surveying techniques and bird ringing. The Professional programme for 2012 has now been launched <http://www.bto.org/news-events/training/professional-courses> and the general courses for 2012 can be seen on <http://www.bto.org/node/5912>



Stepney City Farm

In an urban setting, Stepney City Farm offers a wide range of rural crafts and permaculture courses. Upcoming courses on mushroom cultivation and polyveg gardening are advertised, but watch the web site, because more courses will appear soon. There are also rural arts workshops including bird feeder construction and Christmas card making coming up. See <http://www.stepneycityfarm.org/#!/whats-on> and <http://www.stepneycityfarm.org/#!/courses> for more information.



Brighton Permaculture Trust

If you live in Sussex, then this could be the place to learn about permaculture, as the Brighton Permaculture Trust runs lots of courses on permaculture and eco-renovation. Upcoming courses include planning and planting an orchard, caring for your fruit trees and eco-renovation of existing housing. Courses are also available in eco-friendly building techniques including building with straw bales. For further details please see <http://www.brightonpermaculture.org.uk/>

Forthcoming SWOG Meetings and Events

Note from Tracy

If you do book a place, please actually turn up! We have rather a large number of 'no shows' at meetings which is very disheartening for those running them and means that others might have been able to go in your place.

SWOG Meeting South Ayrshire: POSTPONED to 2012

This meeting, originally scheduled for 29th October 2011, is now to be re-scheduled for 2012. Please see the SWOG web site for updates on dates. It promises to be an excellent meeting. Nick and his local FC officer are leading a walk around his wood in October. The woodland is half semi ancient and half coniferous, and abundant in natural regeneration! There are deer, hare, squirrel (red and grey) and birds of prey.



This looks like a fantastic event, so please do try and support it if you can. Please let tracy@woodlands.co.uk know if you are interested in attending.

SWOG Meeting, Alvecote Wood, North Warwickshire, 28th April 2012

Sarah and Stephen are pleased to invite SWOG members to their woods again in 2012. Alvecote Wood comprises 11 acres of ancient oak woodland, together with 9 acres of newly-planted woodland, wildflower meadow and ponds. Gina Rowe, Director of Living Landscapes at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust will be coming along to discuss landscape-scale conservation and how small woodland owners can work together with each other, with farmers and other organisations to provide the best environment for wildlife across a whole landscape. This can be demonstrated at Alvecote Wood by looking at the newly-planted Betty's Wood and the way in which the site is being managed for wildlife in itself, and in conjunction with neighbouring wildlife areas. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust can also talk about other landscape-scale conservation initiatives in the area. Camping will be available on site, and Stephen and Sarah will also happily provide a walk and talk through the woods, discussing the management issues that have arisen since they took ownership in 2007.

SWOG Meeting Rainham, Kent, 17th June 2012

Andy has offered us a SWOG meeting with a difference! This one involves his Alpaca farm (and lots of newly planted trees) There will also be a guided walk by Peter from Butterfly Conservation.

More details to follow, please keep the date free in your diary!

SWOG Meetings in 2012

We have already been offered some new woods (and old favourites) for SWOG meetings in the coming year. Meeting venues include Pembrokeshire, Warwickshire, Falkirk and Andy's Alpaca Farm. This list is being regularly updated and you can follow progress and get the dates into your diary on the SWOG web site at

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meetings-2011/#more-1419>



On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk and woodlandsTV



The Importance of Coppice Workers: A family tradition worth supporting *by Angus*

A fascinating trip through the history of coppicing in the South East, looking at coppicing as a form of woodland management and the families who keep this tradition alive.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/the-importance-of-coppice-workers-a-family-tradition-worth-supporting/>



Bedstraws *by Chris*

In his series on woodland plants, Chris focuses on the bedstraws, a family that includes the ubiquitous cleavers with its sticky seeds. Learn more here.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/woodland-plants-flowers/bedstraws/>

Invasive Species—Monk Parakeets? *By Lewis*

Ring-necked parakeets have naturalised in the South East, but the Monk Parakeet is a potential threat. Read more on

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/invasive-species-monk-parakeets/>

Madder *by Chris*

Closely related to the bedstraws, both groups of plants have been used to make dyes over the centuries—madder associated with red and pink dyes. Read more here

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/wild-madder/>

How to make charcoal from *woodlands.tv*

Learn how to make charcoal with this great video from Woodlands.tv

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/2011/10/how-to-make-charcoal-making-charcoal-with-a-charcoal-burner/>



Please visit woodlands.co.uk regularly as the blogs are updated very frequently and are always very interesting and informative

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About SWOG

The Small Woodland Owner's group has been formed to aid the enjoyment, diversity and conservation of British Woodland. As Woodlands.co.uk is sponsoring the group there will be no annual fee for members, and events are free of charge unless otherwise stated.

Anyone can join in, (you do not need to own a woodland) just send Tracy your details (name, address, email) to be put on the list. We will not pass your information to anyone else.

Please do join with us and share your wealth of knowledge and experience with others, as well as your joys and moans. We have members from all over the country. We are also on Facebook if you like to communicate that way! See www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61487332523

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www.swog.org.uk

On the forum...what have we been doing this month?

With the season returning to cold weather, the topic of firewood and methods of drying has reared its head again. Methods of splitting, stacking and use of moisture meters has been discussed. **Greyman** posted about a beehive method of stacking, but others were skeptical about its value in a damp British climate. If you have a particular method you'd like to share, please visit the forum.

Bagnally got an answer to the mystery cherry-like tree—it's a crab apple! Members helped to identify this by means of pictures. **Meadowcops** also asked for help identifying a pupa or chrysalis found in an ash tree—again, the forum came up trumps with a leaf-cutter bee. Do you have any trees, plants or insects you need identified? Ask the forum!

Solar_bud asked whether a charge should be made for an application for permitted development in woods. This triggered a long discussion about planning law and what does, and does not, constitute permitted development. It seems as if councils are not always consistent in their response, and owners may end up with two charges—one for permitted development and another for planning permission if the former is turned down.

Jennysmate asked whether pig arks could be used as shelters in woods, and it seems they make ideal stores and shelters—another good idea from the forum.

Cassie asked how to create a good habitat pile. Lots of ideas here—from a complicated layered structure to just piling up lots of brash.

Saxon asked about how to make nest boxes look aged, rather than having new wood standing out when placing them as boundary markers. Methods of staining with tannins from oak or chestnut bark, or even tea bags were suggested, as well as other methods of boundary marking.

Mike asked about how to prevent hare damage to ash coppice. Again, it seems like lots of members have had this problem and there was lots of advice about appropriate fencing.

Steve rollnick asked how much a small stand of spruce might be worth—lots of help again given on the forum, including methods of calculating wood value whether simple cut timber or processed firewood.

Tom is looking for a small wood to rent in order to build obstacles for mountain biking. If you can help, please see the forum.

Cassie told us more about the legal battles regarding a jointly-owned wood. Again, some constructive suggestions were made and we look forward to an update on how things go.

Please do visit the forum and contribute to the discussion threads. Don't feel any question is too simple, or difficult—just come along and participate. It's a good place to be!



Contributions for Christmas Newsletter

It is lovely to receive contributions for the newsletter, and it would be great to hear more about what you are doing in your woods. We are looking for all sorts of things: personal experience of courses or workshops, articles on a particular area of expertise, accounts of lovely days or nights in the woods, reviews of equipment you have bought or made and lots of photographs. Poems or reflective writing are also very welcome. Please don't worry about writing lots, just have a go! There are so many people with such a lot to share—so please think about sharing some of your experiences. Photographs don't have to be press quality—just interesting, fun, or illustrative. Please send all contributions to sarah@swog.org.uk, preferably by 25th month for inclusion in the next month's newsletter. Keep them coming! We are all very, very grateful.