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In the Newsletter this Month

Happy New Year to everybody. It seems that Spring is coming early this year, and our elder bushes already have leaves. This is a bumper edition after the Christmas break. Woodlands.co.uk are asking for your help with a survey, building on their initial work on why people buy woodlands and what they do.

We have a great contribution about Logging Arches, and something about tree safety policies, following the release of new guidance for owners of trees and woodlands. There is also an account of the visit paid to our woods by The Starfish Project—a project designed to help those with problems in their life get back on their feet.

There is also a contribution about Warren Woods—where it is, its history, and how it has developed into a centre for courses.

There is a lot of news this month, with the announcement of a badger cull in England, new tree safety guidance, the go-ahead for HS2 and the interim report of the Independent Forestry Panel, along with other parallel reports and their responses.

We are also coming up to woodfair season, and all the woodfairs we know about so far are listed here. Courses are also getting started in woodlands, and there is a feature on some of the courses coming up from well-known and less well-known providers. We also have a huge programme of SWOG meetings in the pipeline. Three are planned for April, and it is a good time to get these dates in your diary.

There are also lots of very good blog entries to read, and much to get you thinking.

We very much welcome your contributions, so please keep them coming. Next month, the newsletter may be smaller, as I have to go into hospital for a short while. However it will still be coming out, so don't despair, and don't let that put you off contributing.

Best wishes, and Happy New Year

Sarah Walters (sarah@swog.org.uk)

Your help needed with a survey

Woodlands.co.uk need your help with a survey.

“Following the extremely valuable research that Small Woodland Owner Group members helped us with last spring into woodland ownership (downloadable from <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/about-us/articles/woodland-owner-survey-report.pdf>), we would like to find out a little more about the impact of woodland ownership on people and their well being. We would be delighted if you would be prepared to take part in this very short survey (2 minutes max we promise!) using the following weblink:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6P3YDGD>

Please be assured that this work is completely confidential and once the results have been written up the original data will be destroyed. If you would like to receive a personal copy of the report that is created (in the form of a pdf) please do say (in the final text box) and we will email you a copy as soon as it is published.

Many thanks once again for your support and involvement.”

It only takes a minute or two to complete, so please help with this survey!

Logging Arches and the removal of timber from inaccessible woodland

David Morgan from Orion Heating tells us about his logging arches and their use.

Nature has developed a remarkable system for reaching above smaller plants and towards the light. The properties that give trees their strength and stature also provide us with an energy dense fuel or building material. However a tree that has fallen or been felled is heavy and difficult to move. Professional tree felling plant such as tractors and hydraulic equipment take the strain and stress out of moving heavy timber but these options are rarely available to small woodland owners.

Privately held woodlands rarely have the access roads and tracks required for manoeuvring large vehicles to the site of tree felling. More importantly the quantities of timber coming out of private woodland cannot warrant the investment required to lay and maintain tracks. If the woodland owner's primary concern is conservation and wildlife then the intrusion and damage caused by heavy plant is incompatible with carefully nurtured habitat.

The traditional Logging Arch could be a simple and safe solution for anyone wanting to move a heavy log through woodland or within a wood processing yard. It is a tool for supporting the weight of a log near to the ground on wheels. The Arch attaches to the log near its centre of gravity and acts as a lever to lift its weight, once the lifting is done you have a log held securely with a pair of sturdy wheels to move it on. One person can easily wheel the log across rough ground to where they need to carry out further processing.

Logging Arches are nothing new, prior to mechanisation every forester and saw mill would have used various sizes for moving logs. Today though these products are rare and the best examples are manufactured in North America.

Orion Heating in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex, are now distributing a range of Logging Arches from the American company Logrite. Their hugely popular Junior Arch is small and easy to use, but still capable of moving 16" diameter logs. For larger timber there are numerous models for manual moving, winching, 4x4 attachment or pulling with horses. There is an arch for whatever your requirements, all are low impact on the ground and constructed to be simple to use and maintain.

As a company our route into supplying these products has been driven by our customers. The market for woodburning stoves is definitely changing. For over 30 years we have sold stoves and cooking ranges to a mixture of rural, farming, land owning and town dwelling customers in Essex, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. A growing number of our customers are now woodland owners, ranging from those with wood on their land to people who have recently acquired woodland and want to use the timber as a fuel source.

Logging Arches help people serious about reducing their fossil fuel use. They open up opportunities to process woodland that is difficult to access while avoiding the requirement for expensive and specialist machinery that eats into profit margins from managed woodland or diverts funds from conservation projects.

Below are two examples of woodland owners who are making use of Logging Arches, both chose the smallest Junior Arch;

A Conservation project in Essex

Started around three years ago the project aims to promote native plantlife and wildlife with the aim of returning mixed use land back to into balanced natural habitat. Donations and grants have contributed fruit trees, saplings and hedging; however the original trees require the most attention. Originally laid out as stables and paddocks, the site contains 14 acres of grass and woodland planted between 50 to 100 years ago. Much of the tree planting was intended to be ornamental and provide privacy for a country

Course Directory

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 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>

LIFE 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>

house. When the family sold up the groundsmen went too and little woodland management has been carried out since.

Some areas were densely planted with Hornbeam and due to the lack of management now show signs of overcrowding. Other parts of the land contain mature Oaks surrounded Sycamore, now starving the ground of light and harming the older Oaks.

Although the site once had access between paddocks these tracks are now being reclaimed by the woodland and native species of flower including Orchid are moving in. It would no longer be appropriate to take vehicles through the land due to the disturbance they would cause to the plant life. However the removal of Sycamore and Hornbeam is required to promote new growth.

A small Logging Arch has enabled the owners and volunteers to fell and move trees in the inaccessible parts of the land. Transferring the timber from a number of sites to a place where logs can be split down and seasoned for firewood. A small number of previously felled trees had created their own access problems by blocking wheelbarrow routes. These have now been moved allowing for the managed removal of more Sycamore.

As the planned felling continues the project may invest in a larger Logging Arch, enabling the safe removal of some extremely large Sycamore plus dealing with frequent broken branches.



Private woodland on Suffolk farm land

A second user has very different priorities to the conservation project. Rather than being primarily concerned with the conservation of habitat they are keen to access rough and remote woods to remove substantial quantities of firewood. This is solely for their own use in a woodfired central heating system.

The woodland is dense and overgrown with tracks only giving Quad access to one side of the perimeter, for this reason the farmer was keen to use their bike to access as deep as possible into woods and take out logs in a trailer. Luck had it that the Junior Arch would fit inside their Quad trailer along with a chainsaw and other tools required for felling. The Logging Arch and tools could then be driven to the chosen trees, and on another journey the same trailer used to transport a hydraulic splitter to the processing site. After spending the required time felling and moving trees the Logging Arch could be used at the processing site



to move logs into position. One bonus of the Arches they also act as a chainsaw Sawhorse, lifting the log at one end for cutting.

In this case the site of felling and processing were never more than 100-300 yards apart, so the Junior Arch was ideal for safely moving cut trees to the splitting and stacking site. Some customers also report using the Junior Arch as a set of jockey wheels, strapping the handle down onto the log and attaching the other log end to a larger Arch, Quad or 4x4.

We are happy to speak with woodland owners interested in these products. Please visit www.OrionHeating.co.uk or telephone David or John Morgan on 01279 813591.

Dr David Morgan
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25 Cambridge Road,
Stansted Mountfitchet,
Essex, CM24 8BX

Tree Safety Guidance and Policies



New guidance has been published regarding tree safety for landowners. This is an outline of what the guidance says, and the approach we have taken in our woods, before and after the issue of these guidelines.

The Forestry Commission have recently released new guidance for tree-owners and land-owners regarding tree safety, produced by the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG). This is designed to provide clear guidance, to ensure

that trees critical for safety are managed while preventing over-zealous pruning or felling of trees that are in low-risk areas. The document is called *Common Sense Risk Management of Trees*, and is available with two companion documents: *Common Sense Risk Management of Trees—Landowner Summary* and *Managing Trees for Safety*, the latter being a guide for householders who own trees. All three documents are available from <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B>

As small woodland owners, we need to take the approach outlined in the Landowner Summary, and carry out a risk assessment of our trees. This booklet is subtitled *Landowner Summary of guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for estates and smallholdings*, and that pretty much covers most of us!

The NTSG outlines five principles of tree safety:

- trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society
- trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall
- the overall risk to human safety is extremely low
- tree owners have a legal duty of care
- tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management

What we, as small woodland owners, have to do, is balance the risk posed by the tree with the benefit provided by the tree. Both risks and benefits will be locally-determined, and therefore need to be assessed in the context in which the tree grows.

Reading this booklet at first seems rather alarming—surely we don't have to go around

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 February 2012 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2012/02/01/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

and assess every branch on every tree in our woodland? Well, yes and no.

The booklet outlines three steps to tree safety management

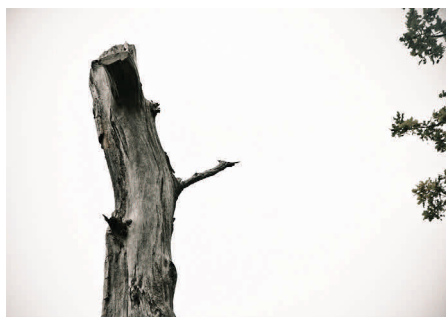
- zoning: appreciating tree stock in relation to people or property
- tree inspection: assessing obvious tree defects
- managing risk at an acceptable level: identifying, prioritising and undertaking safety work according to level of risk

The key concept here is zoning, i.e. defining different areas of the land you own depending on the use to which it is put. Clearly, if the land has no public use, and does not border on land that is used by the public, and if the only users it has are you and your family and friends, you can take a different approach to tree safety from a woodland owner who allows public access, who has a public right of way across the woodland, or whose woodland borders a road, footpath, canal or other area in use by the public. You do not need a specialist to zone your site—the landowner is the person best placed to do this.

High use areas, such as roadside trees, those on paths, footpaths, alongside canals, and in areas used by the public, or adjacent to public areas, will need a system of formal and recorded inspection and action. Low use areas can rely on informal or *ad hoc* inspection, and action taken only as required.

Tree inspection

Tree inspection can be informal, formal or detailed. Informal inspection is relatively straightforward—as we walk around the site, we look at trees, may see some action that is required, and take that action. Other people may also report to us a problem with one of our trees. Formal inspections may be drive-by or walk-over—again, fairly self-explanatory: you drive by or walk over your land and assess the trees for safety. You don't have to be formally qualified to do this, but you do have to have a knowledge and appreciation of trees and *“the ability to recognise normal and abnormal appearance and growth for the locality. This includes an ability to recognise obviously visible signs of serious ill health or significant structural problems, such as substantial fractured branches or a rocking root plate which, were they to cause tree failure, could result in serious harm. They also need the ability to assess approximate tree height and falling distance from the tree to the area of use as well as when to request a detailed inspection.”* If you are new to woodland ownership and not confident to do this, it is helpful to have a qualified tree surgeon do your formal inspection, at least to begin with. This is what we did, and learned from him.



Detailed inspection is reserved for individual, high concern, high value trees growing in public areas, and need to be undertaken by professionals.

So, once you have zoned your woodland, you need to determine what the appropriate inspection regimen is for your trees.

Managing risk

Even if you have identified a tree as a potential risk, you don't have to fell it, or cut off branches. The booklet gives guidance on managing risk by managing access e.g. you could divert a path so it no longer goes past the tree in question, re-locate parking spaces or play equipment, or just allow brambles and grass to grow long around the tree, so people find it hard to approach. Of course, you may need to take action, including, on occasions, felling the tree. But this all depends on the zone in which the tree sits and

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/

therefore the risk it poses. Remember also, if you need to fell a tree or branch, look out for roosting bats and if necessary, perform a bat survey before doing any work.

Keeping records

Another important thing to do is to keep records: somewhere, you should have a record of the zones in your woodland, your inspection types and schedules, a record of any trees of concern, and the action you have taken. We all know that trees can do unexpected things. We had a standing dead tree near a path that was assessed as safe by a tree surgeon. Less than 6 weeks later it suffered a frost fracture and fell across the path, fortunately while nobody was there. Nobody could have predicted that. But, had somebody been injured, we would have been able to show we had inspected the tree, been concerned, and invited a detailed inspection by a qualified individual, and taken appropriate action based upon what he said.



What we have done

We are not tree surgeons, nor are we lawyers. However we have to take tree safety seriously because our woodland borders a road, a field used variously for horses and sheep, an arable field, and a canal. Although there is no right of way through the woodland, we hold open days, have volunteers come and help us (including from a rehabilitation project) and run photography courses and other meetings in our woodland. We also know that poachers enter the woods illegally—and we have to protect them too.

Before the guidance came out, we already had a scheme of tree inspection, in particular of the trees along the road, which is a national speed limit road, and therefore traffic speeds are high.

The first thing we did when we bought the woods was get a tree surgeon to inspect the trees alongside the road and undertake safety work on them. As we gradually created paths, we had him inspect the trees alongside the paths for safety too, and undertake work required. This work initially required planning permission (due to a site Tree Protection Order), but is now incorporated in our woodland management plan.

Under this plan, we undertake an annual tree safety survey along the road and main paths on foot, looking for signs of weakness in the trees. Dead branches and hung-up branches are the main concern, but we also look for other issues.

We don't want to fell trees or cut off dead branches where it isn't necessary because our woodland is mainly a wildlife site. But we have cut some branches, and left them as habitat piles. We have also had to fell one large oak tree growing extremely close to the road, as this was not only a collision hazard, but also impaired visibility when entering and leaving the site. Most trees need no management, as they are nowhere near the boundaries or paths, so they are left alone, unless we notice a problem with them.

When we hold any public events, we always carry out a site inspection before opening the wood: this is usually a buzz round on the quad bike. We started doing this after three cows escaped from conservation grazing on a nearby wildlife site, and ended up in our wood, to the surprise of us and our visitors, but it is clearly useful for tree safety too.

Tree safety policy

In response to the booklet we now have a Tree Safety Policy too. This didn't take long to write, as we were already doing everything the booklet asks of us, and fits on two sides of A4.

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 Festive Willow Craft 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>

First of all, we described our woods, and decided whether in general, they were high or low risk—clearly they are the latter. We then described four different zones in which different policies for inspection should apply

1. Roadside (high risk, heavy daily use, formal inspection, detailed inspection if needed)
2. Main woodland paths (low risk, intermittent use, formal inspection)
3. Woodland away from paths (low risk, informal inspection)
4. Newly-planted woodland under 2m tall (low risk, informal inspection but will need modification as trees grow)



We then outlined additional precautions we will take e.g. siting the camping area away from the drip line of trees, cancelling events in high winds, inspecting paths prior to every public event, undertaking specific risk assessments for specific events, and advising public visitors to keep to the paths at all times.

This year we have completed our formal inspection along the roadside, and found no current issues. The formal inspection of the paths and parking areas has highlighted a few dead branches of concern, which we plan to cut before re-opening in the Spring. We also have a hollow tree about which we have been concerned for a while, and which is close to a path. We have now re-routed this path, so the tree would fall away from it—this has knock-on benefits of keeping visitors off our bluebells.

What to do

Four things: read the booklet; write a policy; inspect your trees; record it!

You don't have to inspect every tree, you don't have to cut every tree down, you don't

Volunteers in our Woodland—Welcoming the Starfish Project

This is an account of a day spent with some special volunteers in our woodland, showing the mutual benefits of working with community organisations to benefit both people and woodlands.

We were on holiday in Devon when it all started. Walking along the cliff path at Lynton. I am never very speedy due to an inherited lung problem (cystic fibrosis) and we fell in with another couple walking at about our speed. So imagine our surprise when it turned out that they lived in a village about three miles from our woods in North Warwickshire.

Not only that, but as we talked, it turned out that they were involved in a project called The Starfish Project (<http://www.starfishprojecttamworth.org/about.html>). This is a joint project of the Churches in Tamworth, providing a listening ear to those with all sorts of problems—alcohol, drugs, homelessness, domestic problems, financial problems, loneliness or mental health issues, and many more besides. They had a number of visitors who had been going there for quite some time and who were looking to do different things. Many had low self-esteem and low self-confidence, and some were unable to find jobs for a variety of reasons. They thought that it would be a brilliant idea for some of

Woodcraft School have published their timetable for woodcraft and bushcraft courses

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

Acres Wild Woodland have 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.underwoodsmen.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.



their visitors to spend time in the woods, helping out with various tasks, enjoying the outdoors, learning some new skills and enjoying different surroundings and new company.

We had long held the dream for our woodlands that it be used for the benefit of people, as well as wildlife.

In particular, we were keen to see if

by spending time in the woods, people with difficult backgrounds, drug or alcohol problems, or other misfortunes in life, could turn their lives round. It was potentially a dream come true for us too.

We exchanged contact details and headed on our way. A few weeks later, John from the Starfish Project contacted us and asked us if we were still up for a visit from some carefully selected clients of theirs. We certainly were! We discussed what might be the best thing for them to do, and we decided that tree-planting would be a good start. We had 430 trees to plant this year. Part of this number was for beating-up (making good the losses) in Betty's Wood, which we planted last year. The rest of the trees were earmarked for an area that we didn't plant last year (due to waterlogging), and to establish new areas of coppice in the woods in areas we had cleared of bramble and elder.

When the selected day arrived, the weather could not have been better. It was sunny, amazingly warm for January, and free from wind. We chose to plant a new area first, and had prepared the area in advance, marking spots with forestry paint to show where the trees were to go. We brought planting spades and gave a demonstration of the correct method for planting these trees (which were mainly alder buckthorn and common alder). Four visitors and two helpers came, and we got stuck in.

Gina arrived on time with lunch, and very kindly offered us some lunch; we reciprocated with soup and cake. Talking to the visitors, it was clear what difficult lives they had. Bad luck can hit anybody, and they were all very nice people, who had been unlucky. Working together in the sun, it was clear that everybody was enjoying the day. We quickly finished our new planting, and moved on to the beating-up—again, marked out in advance, but this time planting oak, ash and hazel. We worked until it was time to go home, although one visitor stayed on, as he lived very near and could walk home.

What was clear to everybody was how much the day was enjoyed by everybody involved. We felt we had helped them in a small way, and they most certainly had helped us. It was a classic win-win situation. We are already planning further visits, and hope that some of the visitors may become regular helpers with coppicing, dead-hedging, path maintenance and the other jobs that we all need to do around our woodlands.

We would definitely recommend working with community organisations if you have a woodland—you have little to lose and a lot to gain. And you will, undoubtedly, be making a difference to their lives.

Interested in having a community group in your woods? Look here! <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/community-woodlands/>



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 woodworking.

<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

www.acornecology.co.uk

Forest Garden Show-elstode

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

Common Sense Risk Management of Trees

The National Tree Safety Council and Forestry Commission have published guidance on risk management of trees for landowners and managers, as well as homeowners (see the article on page 4 for more information). The full document and landowner summary can be downloaded as pdf from <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B>

Independent Forestry Panel—Interim Report

The Independent Forestry Panel, formed in the wake of the public outcry against the Government sell-off of publicly-owned woodlands, has released a progress report. This summarises the views of over 42,000 people who responded to their request for views, together with meetings held during their visits to various key forests and woodlands. They highlight two key themes: the first is the need to deal with forestry policy on timescales that reflect the life of trees, rather than electoral cycles, and the second is the evident diversity of benefits that woodlands and forests bring for people, nature and the economy.

The document shows the way they are heading in drawing up final recommendations later this year. First, they see the need for more woodland creation, and better management, and in particular bringing more privately-owned woodlands into management plans. However they also see the need to provide woodland owners with more advice and help to do this. Underpinning all of this is the principle of *the right tree in the right place to achieve the right goal*. No more indiscriminate planting of conifers on valuable habitat sites, but a carefully considered woodland creation and management plan. Second, they see the need for the public forest estate to be maintained. Indeed, they see the role of the Forestry Commission as of key importance, and a role that needs to be brought into line with what they are currently doing. They also re-iterate the need for policy to follow tree, rather than electoral, timescales.

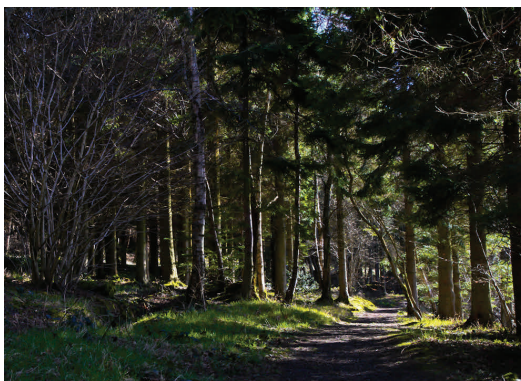
For private woodlands, they see improving management and increasing access as the key. It appears they will stop short of compelling private woodland owners to open up their woodlands (this was the position the Ramblers were advocating), but is looking at ways to incentivise access by looking at ways to help with costs of infrastructure, liability management and other costs incurred when opening woodland to the public. It is possible, for example, that Forestry Commission grants could be made contingent upon open public access, and this may be of concern to private woodland owners who are managing woodland that is not suitable for public access for a variety of reasons, or who are looking to develop small, undisturbed wildlife woodlands.

Although they are not actively seeking views on this interim report, they would still be welcome. It can be downloaded and read at

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/files/Independent-Panel-on-Forestry-Progress-Report.pdf>

Biodiversity in Fragmented Landscapes

A new report from the Forestry Commission considers the implications of fragmented landscapes for biodiversity. It is based upon research that looks at the preferences for



The Field Studies Council

run a wide range of courses for individuals, families and professionals at their centres around the UK. Courses of interest to woodland owners include tree identification, woodland management and woodland ecology, and wildlife surveying and recording techniques. See their web site for details of all courses

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

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>

Coastal Survival and Bushcraft Courses

Available from the Coastal Survival School in North West Wales. Courses include 1-day, 2-day and 5-day survival skills courses for individuals and families. See web site for more details.

<http://www.coastalsurvival.com/>

species moving between habitats, particularly where their chosen habitats are fragmented. In general, species normally prefer habitats similar to those where they breed, but they can be idiosyncratic. The full research note is available on [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRN010.pdf/\\$FILE/FCRN010.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRN010.pdf/$FILE/FCRN010.pdf)

OurForests publishes their vision for the future of woodland

The OurForests group, set up to monitor the activity of the Independent Forestry Panel, has set out its own vision for the future of forests and woodland in England. They set out a vision based upon five principles:

- Full and lasting protection for the Public Forest Estate
- Active management for ALL woods (including private woodlands)
- Taking the long view (management on appropriate timescales)
- More trees—a Domesday Forest for the 21st Century
- Robust and publicly-accountable leadership

In particular, the document considers potential future roles for the Forestry Commission, together with potential models along which it could be run. The full document can be downloaded from

<http://gabrielhemery.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/our-forests-vision.pdf>

HS2 given go-ahead

The Government have given the go-ahead for HS2 (High-Speed Rail 2) from London to Birmingham, with future extensions to Manchester and Leeds also likely to get the go-ahead after further consultation in 2012. The Woodland Trust have identified 21 ancient woodlands that will be destroyed by the line, and a further 27 that are within 50 metres of the proposed track, and will therefore be damaged or impacted (for example, being cut for wayleaves, or access to the track). These include Perivale Wood in Ealing, reported to be the second oldest nature reserve in Britain, founded in 1902.

At present, only the route to Birmingham has been announced (this includes a Y-route that connects to the existing West Coast Main Line near Lichfield), but if you own a woodland along potential routes to Manchester or Leeds (*editor's note: we do!*), then you will want to watch very carefully for news of coming consultations on this.

There are more details of woods affected by HS2 on the Woodland Trust web site

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/campaigning/Pages/HS2-map.aspx#.TyA7qYHh5oY>

Engagement around the phase 2 preferred route (to Manchester and Leeds) will start in Autumn 2012, with the formal consultation announced in 2014 and the final route announced in late 2014.

See <http://www.hs2.org.uk/about-hsr> for more information on the timetable.

RFS Woodlands Awards 2012

Entries are sought for the Small Woodlands award from woodland owners and managers in the South West. This award is sponsored this year, as last year, by woodlands.co.uk, and there are lots of SWOG members with woods that could be potential candidates for this award. The award scheme rotates around different parts of the UK, so this year woods in the South West are eligible. First and second prize are worth £1000 and £500, so please have a look at the criteria and enter your wood. Details are on <http://www.rfs.org.uk/involved/RFS-Woodland-Awards-overview>

FC Wales to merge with Environment Agency and Countryside Commission for Wales

Approval for the merger of these three bodies was given by the Welsh Environment Minister in late November 2011. The move is designed to streamline and improve services and value for money, but there is considerable concern that it will have a detri-

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

First Responder Course from Emergency Life Support Team—as reviewed by Tracy and Mike. Learn first aid in the outdoor environment and get HSE accreditation as a First Aider too.

[Http://www.elst.co.uk](http://www.elst.co.uk)

mental effect on the forestry industry in Wales. In particular, it is not clear how the links between FCWales and the other arms of the FC in England and Scotland will be maintained, particularly in respect of common services such as Forest Research. Foresters are concerned that the merger will lead to a greater emphasis on public access and recreation, which may adversely impact the forestry industry that is very important to the economy in parts of Wales, and much of which is run by FCWales.

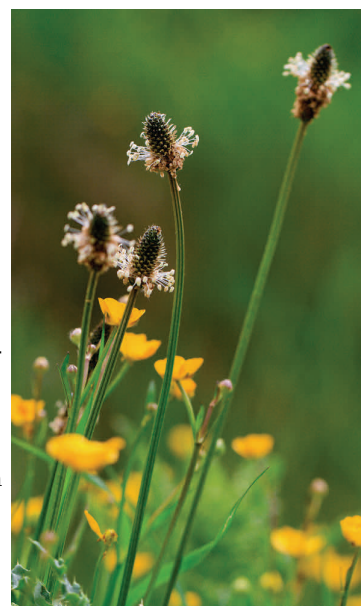
Details of how this will work are yet to appear on the FCWales web site, but there are plans for a consultation on how to proceed with the merger in early 2012. See the Welsh Government web site for more information.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/seb/?lang=en>

Plantlife Report – Forestry Recommissioned

Plantlife, the charity that is charged with protecting all of our native wild plants, from ground level flora to large trees, has produced a report about forestry in the UK. This is another report with a vision for the future of our forests, but this one is largely about quality of management, rather than quantity of forests. Arguing passionately for better and active management, it seeks to ensure that woodlands are managed along traditional principles (sustainable management, coppicing and pollarding, letting in light), so that threatened species of woodland plant, and the insect life and other species that they maintain, can grow and flourish.

They recommend that new woodland where possible is allowed to grow through natural regeneration, and that woodland creation schemes should look at the suitability of the scheme to ensure that valuable open habitats are not destroyed by the planting of trees (such as conifer plantations on valuable heathland). They also advocate that woodland should consist of at least 25% open space, and that ancient woodland and other important plant areas should be protected by any reform of the planning system. Read their report on www.plantlife.org.uk/about_us/news_press/forestry_recommissioned



£20 million for forestry equipment

A scheme from DEFRA to provide grants for equipment such as forwarders, harvesters for forestry businesses was rapidly over-subscribed in round one, announced in November 2011. However, it is likely that further funding will be released, and a second round of applications will be considered, in March or April 2012. Please check on <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/funding-sources/farm-and-forestry-improvement-scheme> for details of the scheme when it re-opens to applications later this year.

Woodland Trust and Tree Council comment on Independent Forestry Panel interim report

The Woodland Trust has welcomed some aspects of the Independent Forestry Panel interim report, but is disappointed by other aspects, in particular the absence of any reference to increased protection for ancient woodland sites under planning regulations.

<http://t.fw-reply.com/info/+b3zz7/A8Qwze/B9FT2I/D8PDcu/W/www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/campaigning/our-campaigns/panel/Pages/forestrypanel.aspx>

Also the Tree Council was disappointed that the many trees outside woodlands, and in urban locations, were not included in the IFP Report <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/press-and-news/item/3460-fc>

Environmental Protection Laws heading for the shredder?

Damian Carrington reports in The Guardian that the Environment Secretary is planning to reduce thousands of pages of environmental protection legislation to 50 pages of guidance, in a similar fashion to the planning and policy framework announced in 2011. This has not yet been confirmed, but it is worth watching out for any proposals and commenting on them as soon as they appear.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2012/jan/25/environment-regulation-pollution-red-tape?CMP=twg_gu

FC England announces support for community forestry

Forestry Commission England has announced a new joint working agreement with the country's Community Forests, which will increase collaboration between the two parties and enhance links between national and local level activity.

As part of the rolling three-year agreement, the Forestry Commission will act as a “national champion” for the Community Forests, the local tree planting partnerships which engage people and increase woodland cover around urban centres including Manchester, Liverpool and Swindon. In return, the Community Forests will share their long experience of neighbourhood-scale working and community engagement, and will provide links into local communities and local government.

The agreement, which will be reviewed every year, will build upon existing joint work between the organisations, which in recent years has included land reclamation, community and health projects. For more information, please see <http://www.communityforest.org.uk/>

Woodlands.co.uk survey in Quarterly Journal of Forestry

An article has been published in the Quarterly Journal of Forestry based upon the survey of small woodland owners undertaken by woodlands.co.uk in 2011. A summary of the findings of this survey were reported in the last edition of this newsletter and are on <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/why-buy-a-woodland/owners-survey-2011/>

At present, this is not available online in full to read, but for those with access to online journals or paper journals via an academic library, the full reference is:

Leach J, Hanton P, Gurling H *Why people buy small woods and what they do with them.* Q J Forest (201): 206 (i): pp 19-21

Project to restore Elms along waterways

The Conservation Foundation is running a project to restore elms along waterway corridors in partnership with British Waterways. The trees are propagated from mature elms that seem to have resisted Dutch Elm Disease. It is hoped that these new trees will help the endangered white-letter hairstreak butterfly, which feeds on elm in its caterpillar stage. This is part of a larger initiative to plant resistant elm and restore this beautiful tree to our countryside, called the Great British Elm Experiment.

More information on the Great British Elm Experiment, and how you can take part is on <http://www.conservationfoundation.co.uk/>

Grants for re-stocking after compulsory felling for ramorum from FC Wales

FC Wales is providing fresh grants to replant woodlands that were compulsorily felled as part of the *Phytophthora ramorum* control/eradication programme in Wales.

Landowners who have been issued with a Statutory Plant Health Order to fell infected trees are eligible for the new funding. The grants will help with the cost of restocking with trees and replacing boundary fences to protect the newly planted areas from damage by wildlife and livestock. The grant rates for restocking range from £500 per hectare to £2000 per hectare depending on the type of trees planted. So far, the majority of the outbreaks of ramorum disease of larch have been on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate but there have also been eight outbreaks in private woodlands in Wales. For more information about the grants, contact the Grants and Regulations Technical Services Team on 0300 068 0300 or bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. (Please note, the picture left shows unaffected, healthy larch!)



Help sought to map hedgehogs

Public help is sought for project to map how hedgehogs are responding to climate change. Hedgehogs are particularly vulnerable to climate change, which can affect when they hibernate and wake up again. Data are available from 40 years ago, and we need people to register and provide information on current hedgehogs to allow a comparison to be made. There is a report on the BBC web site at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-16597723> and you can register to help on <http://www.hedgehogstreet.org/pages/hibernation-survey.html>

New adviser to West Weald Project

Sussex Wildlife Trust have appointed a new wildlife adviser to the West Weald Project. If you live or own woodland in the area, and need information or advice on how to manage wildlife in your woodland, this may be a valuable resource for you. Please see <http://www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/page00244.htm>

Badger Cull to go ahead in England—first pilot areas announced

Following the decision, made late in 2011, to proceed with the badger cull in England in the hope that it will help with control of bovine TB, the first pilot areas have now been announced. These will be Gloucestershire and West Somerset.

Natural England are now offering the opportunity to comment on the licensing process for those landowners who are likely to be affected in these pilot areas. The Gloucestershire pilot mainly affects the council areas of Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury (although the public forest area of Forest of Dean will not be included). It also includes part of Wychavon, Malvern Hills and part of South East Herefordshire. The Somerset pilot affects West Somerset and Taunton Deane council areas. If you live in, or have a business in these areas, you are invited to respond to a survey (you can respond if you don't live in those areas, but less weight will be given to your response). If you own a woodland in these areas, the cull plans could affect you, and you may wish to comment on the licensing process.

The web page also gives details on how you can apply for a trapping licence to trap badgers for vaccination, which needs to be administered by trained personnel, usually a vet. This could be an option if you wish to help with bovine TB control, but do not wish to see your badgers culled. Details are on the web page below.

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/species/badger/b.aspx>

Royal Cornwall Show Competition



Businesses that add value to Cornwall's forestry and woodlands industry have been highlighted in an important, biennial competition. The Forestry Woodlands Competition is run by the forestry section of the Royal Cornwall Show (7-9th June) and is designed to draw attention to the county's need for a healthy and developing woodland estate. All aspects of forest and woodland operation are covered in the competition – amenity, landscape value, new planting, recreation, management, broadleaved

and coniferous plantations. A new category for 2012 is for any business operating in Cornwall with the primary objective of using and adding value to round timber produced in the county. Judges will look at examples of value-added products and take into consideration the efficiency of the business, environmental factors, quality of workmanship, local marketing, simplicity or complexity of the process from wood to end-product.

Nominations are now open and close on 1st March. Judging will be completed and results announced before the show in June.

For competition details and entry forms, please contact Roger Pook on 01566 773935 Mobile: 07971 517795 or visit www.royalcornwall.co.uk



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>

Black Country Living Landscape –

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

The Bulworthy Project

These SWOG members 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.greenwood-days.co.uk/>

Woodland Skills Centre

Courses in coppice and greenwood crafts- Woodland management, basket-making, Chair-making, timber-frame building, Wood carving, coracles, oak swill baskets, Make and use pole-lathe and shave-horse, Charcoal, home chain-saw, hedge-laying. Bushcraft courses and Family Holidays.

www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk or 01745710626

Warren Woods—A Woodlands for All

Rod Waterfield writes about his woodland, Warren Woods, the Woodlands Skill Centre and the courses that are run in these lovely woods in Denbigh.

About 28 years ago Rod Waterfield bought Warren Woods, 21 acres of neglected woodland in the Wheeler Valley which cuts through the Clwydian Range of Outstanding Natural Beauty. At the time he was working as a teacher in a community comprehensive school in Queensferry and the woodland was a place where his children could play and where he could enjoy a different type of work to his teaching.

The woodland had been rough grazing until about 1945 when it was allowed to revert to woodland as the trees which were on the old hedge banks seeded onto the bare ground. Most of the new trees were sycamore which were overstocked and same age with little ground flora or natural regeneration. The first job was to remove most of the sycamore and plant a range of native hardwood trees with the aim of creating a coppice with standards woodland. A considerable amount of timber was extracted and so it was necessary to look for ways to add value to it to meet the cost of managing the woodland. One of the first ventures was to turn some of the wood into charcoal using a ring-kiln and this proved successful.

From the outset the woodland management had three equal objectives : social, environmental and financial. The woodland was opened to permissive public access with over 2 kilometres of maintained paths and is well used by the local community. The environmental objective is that the woodland should contain all the plants and wildlife that you would expect to find in such a woodland and so habitats have been created to protect and encourage different species with regular monitoring of their success. A pond has also been restored. The coppice rotation has seen a noticeable increase in ground flora and wildlife. The financial objective is that the woodland should provide enough income in cash and materials to pay for its management.

As the coppice woodland became productive, Rod became interested in coppice and greenwood crafts and went on a number of courses with Tim Wade, Gudrun Leitz and Mike Abbott.



In 1997 Rod took early retirement from teaching having decided that, even though he had greatly enjoyed teaching, it was advisable to leave while he still had time and energy for another career. He was then able to turn his hobbies into a full-time job. He was also able to buy two adjoining pieces of land, some woodland with grazing and an old sand quarry, bringing the total block up to 50 acres. The sand pit was planted up with a mixture of native hardwoods to extend the coppice with standards. By this time he had developed a small tree nursery of local provenance stock and the nursery provided the 20,000 trees that were needed in the extended woodland. He set up a woodland and environmental business which worked in local woodlands, supplied firewood, charcoal and coppice products and undertook the management of local

play areas, sports grounds and primary schools. A big part of this is working with schools to develop their grounds with Forest School sites, nature areas, gardens and play areas.

Rod was also asked by people who wished to find out more about charcoal burning if he would run some charcoal courses. Then some of the people who had been on the charcoal courses asked if they could come back and do courses on other woodland topics, particularly coppice and greenwood crafts. These started to run in 2005 and met with success.

There were some redundant farm buildings on the land including a large sheep shed and these were adapted to provide covered work-shop areas, w.c. and shower and the Studio, a living space with wood-burner stove, comfortable seating, cooking facilities and a small library of books.

Having developed the Centre, Rod then started asking friends who were skilled craftspeople and also good teachers to run some of their courses at what was by then called the Woodland Skills Centre. Regular tutors now run courses on basket making, bushcraft, coracle making, gypsy crafts, timber frame building, chair making, willow sculpture, wood carving and ancient technologies. In 2010 a community-owned, not-for-profit Social Enterprise company, Warren Woods Ltd, was set up to take over all the educational work of the Woodland Skills Centre.



In 2007 two of Rod's children, Alan and Helen, took over the business, Bodfari Environmental, which carries out woodland management, grounds work, play area design and construction, environmental contracting, firewood, charcoal and sawmilling as well as the coppice and woodland crafts which they demonstrate at shows and fairs. They also manage the Warren Woods and take firewood and coppice materials in exchange for looking after the woodland. Alan and Helen are also now part of the Tutor team at the Woodland Skills Centre and have qualified as Forest School Leaders as there are now two successful Forest School sites in the woodland. As part of the Woodland Skills Centre programme Rod, Alan and Helen run the courses on coppice and greenwood crafts and woodland management.

As part of the drive to increase access to the woodland and the activities associated with it, the Centre now runs Holiday Club for children, Birthday parties in the woods, courses for local youth and community groups and day, week-end and week courses for families with children. Activities on these courses include exploring the woodland, some bushcraft with fire-lighting, shelter building and camp cooking and a range of coppice and greenwood crafts with the programme tailored to suit the age and interests of the members. Rod, Alan and Helen each contribute different activities to the courses.

The last 28 years have seen 50 acres of neglected woodland transformed into a haven for wildlife and enjoyed by the local community and all who come on courses. The woodland is self-supporting financially and Woodland Skills Centre provides employment for many local craftspeople as well as bringing income to local B and Bs, shops and restaurants.

The Woodland Skills Centre 2012 course programme can be seen at www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk or a course leaflet can be obtained from Woodland Skills Centre, The Warren, Bodfari, Denbigh, LL16 4DT (tel 01745 710626)

The woodland and environmental management work can be seen at www.bodfari-environmental.co.uk

Courses for 2012—A flavour of what is coming up, and where

Lots of courses are coming up in 2012, and we summarise some of them here. There are also a lot of courses featured in the side bars of this publication, and these links are regularly updated, so please check them regularly to find the course you are after, whether it is a professional qualification, a certificate, or a course for leisure and pleasure.

Smallwoods Courses at The Greenwood Centre

Smallwoods run a huge range of courses in the Greenwood Centre at Telford in Shropshire, ranging from professional courses to short courses for personal interest. Courses range from yoga and reiki, through making love-spoons, willow sculptures, longbows, coracles, rustic chairs, bushcraft, pole lathe making and turning, and hedge-laying to OCN courses in woodland management, coppicing and other forestry skills. For further information, please see <http://www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk/GeneralCourseInformation.htm>

Field Studies Council (FSC) Courses for 2012

The Field Studies Council runs a number of training centres throughout the UK. There are centres in South-East England, East Anglia, the South West, Wales, Northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Courses are run for both professionals and individuals and families. Some of the main categories, and the web link for further information, are listed below. Many of these courses contain items of individual interest, as well as professional interest.

Courses include bird identification, birdsong, bird survey techniques – at a wide range of FSC Centres in the UK. <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/birds-and-other-animals/birds.aspx>

There are also courses on bat surveying and bat identification, as well as mammal survey techniques <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/birds-and-other-animals/mammals.aspx>

Butterfly and moth ID courses run at Flatford Mill and other FSC Centres—useful if you want to learn how to identify butterflies in your woodland <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/birds-and-other-animals/butterflies-and-moths.aspx>

A wide range of habitat and conservation courses, including woodland ecology and conservation are also held, including woodland conservation and management, woodland ecology, phase 1 habitat surveys, tree identification and hedge-laying <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/habitats-and-conservation/general.aspx>

Courses on flowers and trees include tree identification, flowers in a wide variety of habitats including woodlands and identification and management of grasslands. <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/natural-history/flowers-and-other-plants/trees.aspx>

There are art and craft courses too, including willow basketry, dry-stone walling and hedge-laying <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/arts/crafts-and-traditional-skills/traditional-skills.aspx>

Wide range of photography courses on theme of nature and landscape, with beginners and experts all catered-for. <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/arts/photography/nature-and-landscape.aspx>

Coppicewood College Courses

Coppicewood College is in Pembrokeshire, West Wales, and offers a large range of woodcraft courses, including charcoal-burning, hedge-laying, pole-lathe turning, green woodworking, scything and coppicing. They also offer a 6-month woodland skills course. Details on <http://coppicewoodcollege.co.uk/courses/short-courses/>

Hedge Laying

Duration: 4 days

Starts: Mon 13th Feb 2012

Fee: £175

Do you have neglected hedges on your land? Then join us to learn how to make them stockproof and more beneficial to wildlife. We will teach you traditional hedgelaying using hand tools. Learn how to use a bill hook – the iron age tool that is still the best for the job today.

Make a Shavehorse

Duration: 3 days

Starts: 28th April 2012

Fee: £175

Make your own shave-horse workbench to take home with you. All materials and tools supplied.

The shave horse is an ingenious device for working hands free on various greenwood work pieces.

At the College we use a shave horse for making chair and stool parts, legs for saw horses and chopping blocks, pegs for wellie boot racks, coat hooks, parts for shave horses, tent pegs and many other items besides using this essential part of the green woodworkers kit.

Yorwoods Centre

Yorwoods offer a range of courses in Yorkshire around woodland management. They are offering a new Forestry and Climate Change qualification on 22/23 and 28/29 February 2012—see <http://www.yorwoods.org.uk/events/forestry-and-climate-change> for more information. They are also offering an Ignite Woodfuel Production event on 16th February <http://www.yorwoods.org.uk/events/ignite-firewood-production-and-supply> and an Ignite Managing Woods for Woodfuel training event on 15th March <http://www.yorwoods.org.uk/events/ignite-managing-woods-woodfuel>. Contact erica.spencer@yorwoods.org.uk if you are interested in attending any of these courses. Some are eligible for reduced rates under the Lantra scheme.

Acorn Ecology

Acorn Ecology are based in Exeter. They are offering a new Certificate in Ecological Consultancy http://www.ecologytraining.co.uk/page/certificate_in_ecological_consultancy. They also offer a wide range of introductory and advanced courses available including bat surveying, dormouse surveying and handling, and an online course in Habitat Management. See their web site for more information on short courses and advanced courses.

Nature's Craft

Andy at Nature's Craft is offering all 2 and 3-day courses at just £100. These courses are based in Savernake Forest, and include Bushcraft Fundamentals, Bushcraft for Families, Nature's Craftsman, Hunter Gatherer and Gack to Nature courses. Nature's Craft also run one-day workshops. The next course is Nature's Craftsman on 25-27th May. For further information, please see the web site <http://www.naturescraft.co.uk/courses/courses.htm>

Bat Conservation

The Bat Conservation Trust offer a wide range of courses in Bat Identification, Bat Surveying Bat Detectors and Bat Sounds, and Bat Handling. See <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/training.html> for more information and download the professional training courses brochure http://www.bats.org.uk/data/files/form_uploads/BCT_Training_brochure_2012.pdf

Moelyci Environmental Centre

Moelyci Environmental Centre offer a wide range of woodland and countryside-related courses from general interest to professional. Includes woodland, heathland and other habitats as well as permaculture and low-impact living, and traditional hand crafts. Coming up, and of interest to woodland owners are courses on moss identification on 24th February, and 22nd and 23rd March. For further information, please see <http://www.moelyci.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=203&Itemid=2>

Sustainability Centre

These good folk, based in Hampshire, run a range of courses from single skills courses through OCN certifications. Coming up, living willow, bow-making, mammal-tracking and tree-identification. Coming up are Living Willow—11th February, Hedge-Laying 3/4th March, Bow-making 2-4th April and OCN Sustainable Woodland Management 16-20th April. For more information, please see http://www.sustainability-centre.org/courses_adult.php

Black-Country Living Landscapes

There is a two-day course on amphibian and reptile identification and recording with Black Country Living Landscapes <http://www.bcll.org.uk/> on 21st and 22nd March. If you are interested, this may be a good course for you.

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre

Devon BRC will be running courses on woodland plant and grassland plant ID 10/11th May and 5th/6th July. See <http://www.dbrc.org.uk/training-course/> for further information.

Alvecote Wood Photography Courses

Sarah will be running one-day photography workshops in Alvecote Wood throughout 2012. As well as the popular introductory photography workshops on 22nd April, 21st July and 7th October there will be a specialist macro/insects/flowers photography day on 22nd July. Details on www.alvecotewood.co.uk. Download the events programme from <http://www.alvecotewood.co.uk/2012SpringProgramme.pdf>

Events for 2012

Valuing Trees and Woodlands—A new understanding of their true worth

This one day conference organised by the RFS and the RASE at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire on 23rd April 2012 will examine and explain many of the recent developments placing both traditional, newer and future monetary and societal values on trees and woodlands.

The conference will cover:

- traditional valuations of woodlands and timber
- putting a price tag on ecosystem services, such as biodiversity
- flood alleviation
- recreation and landscape
- the concept of “natural capital”
- carbon trading and forestry bonds
- grants - are they value for money?

Full details are on both the RFS website at www.rfs.org.uk/involved/event (follow the special events links) and the RASE one at www.rase.org.uk. Bookings will be taken by the RASE Events Team on www.rase.org.uk/events or 02476 69 69 69.

Small Scale Timber Extraction Event

Heartwoods are running a demonstration of methods of timber extraction for small woodland owners at the Wyre Forest National Nature Reserve on 29th February 2012. In particular, they will focus on demonstrating low impact methods of timber extraction. The event will focus on the following aspects:

- Practical low impact machinery demonstration
- including tractor based forwarding, forwarders, winching and a firewood processor demonstration
- Discussion on maintaining an income from woodlands
- that can also be managed for biodiversity
- Timber markets and adding value

The event is being held on Wednesday 29th February 2012 at Unclys Farm, Ruskinland, Bewdley, Worcestershire, DY122LR and will cost £6. For more information or to book your place please contact the Heartwoods office on **01952 435860** or alternatively email info@heartwoods.co.uk www.heartwoods.co.uk

Horse Logging Demonstration in Scottish Borders

An advance date for you diary in Scotland / North England is 27 May 2012: Horse Logging Demonstration, Scottish Borders (venue and details tbc in due course on www.bordersfestivalhorse.org or telephone 07831 327319).



Soil Association Annual conference 2012: Facing the future

This conference will take place at the Royal Horticultural Halls, London on 02 March 2012. It explores the exciting scientific and technical progress being made in organic and low-input farming systems; and Good Food for All, which contributes to the important debate about food, public health and social justice. See the web site for further information.

<http://www.soilassociation.org/conference>

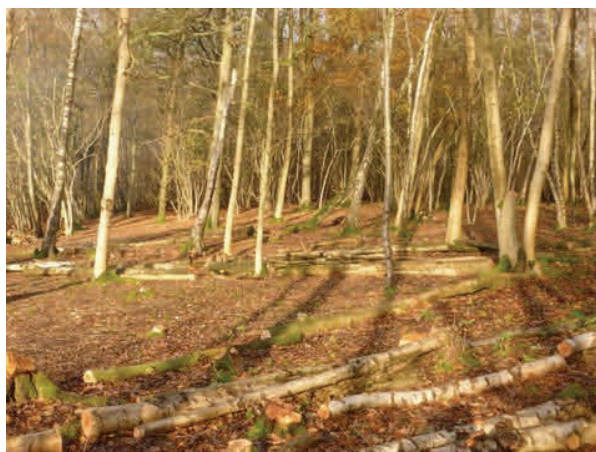
Forthcoming SWOG Events

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, Clan Wood, April 14th 2012

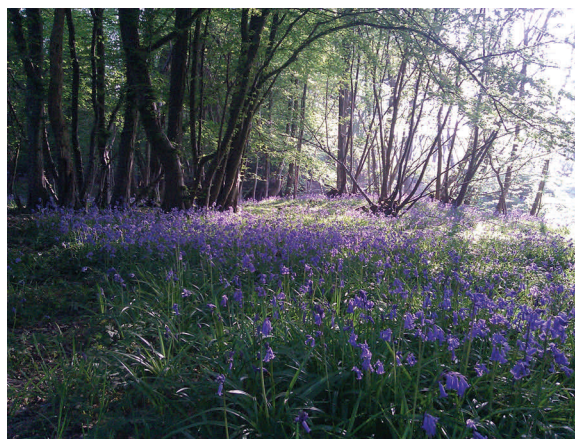
Many thanks Howard and Shirley Symonds of Clan Wood, who have kindly offered to host a meeting at their wood in April. They first mooted the idea whilst attending a meeting last year at Julian Evans' wood in Hampshire. Howard has sent us a nice introduction to the wood and some great photos. Don't the bluebells seem a long way off, but actually it's been such a strange mild winter, some of ours are already poking their tips through the leaf litter! Clan Wood is part of the East Hyden Wood and is part of a range of woodlands which is now in the South Downs National Park. It slopes gently to the south and is on clay with flint over chalk. The wood contains hazel, ash and some mixed broadleaves. The west side consists of a grass valley which has in the past been used as a shooting ride. The remainder of the wood is oak plantation and unthinned mixed broadleaves. The area we are currently coppicing and forms part of our Management Plan is part of an area totalling 1.5ha. It is seriously overstood hazel and ash coppice with too many hazel, ash and birch standards and is being restored and managed on traditional lines. The objective is to maintain the valley as grassland, bring the coppice into rotation and thin the plantation to improve the mix of trees. Some mature beech trees will be retained to become veterans.



SWOG Meeting, Hendall Wood, Heron's Ghyll, East Sussex, April 21st 2012

Two adjacent parts of Hendall Wood are open, courtesy of Duncan & Bridget Ferns and Penny and Rich.

Duncan & Bridget Ferns family bought their 52 acres in two halves, the first in 2004 and the second in 2006. It is Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) with a seasonal stream, carpets of anemones and bluebells, areas of orchids and many archaeological features surveyed by Wealden Iron Research Group (8 pits, 15 or so charcoal platforms and a couple of likely sawpits). The east end of the wood is coppiced sweet chestnut, split into 8 cants. We are now in the fourth year of coppicing cants of 0.5-1 acre. Extraction has been by the low-impact 'Iron Horse' machine with caterpillar tracks, and mowing we use a BSC power-scythe, both of which we hope will be demonstrated. Deer browsing is a serious issue, despite fencing, and deer management has started during 2011-12. The majority of the woodland is being left as 'wildwood' of mature ash, hornbeam with beech and oak standards.



Richard and Penny's adjacent wood is the northern spur of Hendall wood and about 11 acres in size. The woodland shares a lot of the features and history of the main part of the wood (charcoal platforms and a sawpit) and is slowly being restored to a working wood. We have found mention of the wood as far back as the 1500's, Hendall was one of the gateways to the Ashdown Forest, and derived from the word for a 'hind' presumably a hind deer.

We have been actively managing the wood for about 4 years now, coppicing and opening up a ride. The main problem as with anywhere close to the Ashdown Forest is the pressure of deer numbers. These have proved almost impossible to keep out of the newly coppiced cants, however they definitely have an order of preference for certain species. Oak, hornbeam and hazel tends to get browsed the hardest, whilst chestnut and alder is left relatively unscathed.

If you would like to attend the meeting, please email: tracy@woodlands.co.uk , full details will be sent out nearer the time.

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.



There will be a public Open Day at Alvecote Wood on Sunday 29th April, and visitors are welcome to stay and make a weekend of it, and see what we do on our Open Days. Please contact tracy@woodlands.co.uk for more information, and to book a place!

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!

Woodfairs in 2012

The season of woodfairs is about to start, so here are the dates for your diaries. More information is available on woodfairs.co.uk

Woodfairs in Scotland

Royal Highland Show

Edinburgh

21st - 24th June 2012

<http://www.royalhighlandshow.org/visitors/tickets>

Peebles Wood Market

21st and 22nd October 2012

Tweed Valley

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

Woodfairs in Wales

Dates for 2012 yet to be confirmed, please check woodfairs.co.uk for more information.

Woodfairs in England

Live crafts and festival of woods

Nr Reading, Berkshire

Variety of dates through the year.

http://www.livecraftslimited.co.uk/live_crafts.html

Capel Manor Gardens

20th - 21st April

<http://www.capelmanorgardens.co.uk/events/celebration-of-trees-and-the-countryside.html>

Silk wood fair

5th - 7th May 2012

Venue - Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury Gloucestershire, GL8 8QS

www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt

Weird and Wonderful Wood

12th and 13th May 2012

Haughley Park, Wetherden, Nr Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3JY.

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

Devon county show

17th - 19th May 2012

Westpoint, Exeter

<http://www.devoncountyshow.co.uk/home>

Horse logging demonstration

27th May 2012

Scottish borders TBC

<http://www.bordersfestivalhorse.org/>

Roydon Woods Woodfair

Hampshire

27th May 2012

<http://www.hwt.org.uk/events.php/1836/roydon-woods-woodfair-and-local-produce-market>

Blackdown Hills Woodfair

7th July 2012

Park Farm near Wellington

<http://www.woodbiz.co.uk/freepage.asp?ID=9>

Great Yorkshire show

Harrogate

10th - 12th July 2012

<http://www.greatyorkshireshow.com/html/home/>

South Downs Woodfair

21st and 22nd July 2012

Queen Elizabeth Country park, South Downs National Park

<http://www.woodlandcrafts.co.uk/woodfair.html>

New Forest and Hampshire County Show

Brockenhurst, Hampshire

24th - 26th July 2012

<http://www.newforestshow.co.uk/index.htm>

National Forest Woodfair

26 and 27 August 2012

Beacon Hill Country Park, Leicestershire

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/woodfair>

Stock Gaylard Estate Oak Fair

Near Sturminster Newton, Dorset

Saturday 25th August 2012

<http://www.stockgaylard.com/oak-fair/oak-fair-at-stock-gaylard.html>

Festival of the Tree, Westonbirt

Treefest



25th - 27th August 2012

Venue - Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury Gloucestershire, GL8 8QS

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt>

Woodworks

1st and 2nd September 2012

Forest Centre and Millennium Country Park

Marston Mortaine

Bedfordshire

MK43 0PR

<http://www.marstonvale.org/woodworks/>

Lincolnshire Firewood fair and auction

Revesby Estate, Lincolnshire

2nd September 2012

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

Wychwood Forest Fair

Sunday 2nd September 2012

<http://www.wychwoodproject.org/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Wychwood/Events/Forest+Fair/>

APF 2012

Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire

13th - 15th Sept 2012

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

Wild about Wood

15th and 16th September 2012

Castle Howard Arboretum Trust, Kew

<http://www.wildaboutwood.org/>

Bentley Weald woodfair

21st - 23rd September 2012

Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, Halland, near Lewes, East Sussex

BN8 5AF

<http://www.bentley.org.uk/#/woodfair/4525168793>

Derbyshire County Council Woodland Festival

22nd and 23rd September 2012

Elvaston Castle Country Park, Borrowash Road, Elvaston, Derby. DE72 3EP

10am - 5pm

08 456 058 058

countrysideservice@derbyshire.gov.uk

Ickworth House Suffolk, woodfair

6th and 7th October 2012

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ickworth>

On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk and woodlandsTV



The latest from the woodlands.co.uk blogs and the latest videos from woodlandsTV are summarised here. Please visit the web site, view the videos, and read the blogs—there is a great deal of interesting stuff to get your teeth into.

Woodlands are more than just collections of trees ~ by Angus

“Perhaps the problem lies in our perceptions: for as long as most humans perceive a bunch of trees as being a woodland we won’t be motivated to try to recreate the other elements of the ecosystem that make a real forest, if indeed such re-creation is even possible over short periods.” - read more on the blog

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/woodlands-are-more-than-just-collections-of-trees/#more-10096>

Holly – a really useful tree ~ by Chris

Foraging on holly leaves? Apparently it is a useful wood for foraging, cotton bobbins and other things. Read more here.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/holly-a-really-useful-tree/#more-9852>

Call for entries for prestigious Small Woodlands award in the South West ~ by Patricia

We’ve mentioned it on our news pages, but here it is again—if you own a small woodland in the South West and think it is a good example of how small woods should be managed, you can enter for the RFS Small Woodlands award, sponsored by woodlands.co.uk

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/10618/>

Unseasonal weather ~ by Lewis

Well, quite! We have had drought in some parts of the UK (ours included), floods in others, the second warmest November on record, and daffodils flowering in December. Read more here

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/unseasonal-weather/>

The Robin ~ by Chris

We all love our robins, the archetypal Christmas bird. And they are doing rather well, which cannot be said for the other red-breasted birds seen in the UK, the lesser redpoll, the bullfinch and the linnet. Read more here.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/the-robin/>

Is land the “new gold” for investors? What might this mean for woodland owners ~ by Angus



Did you buy your wood as an investment? It is an attractive option as the economy continues to struggle. But what are the implications for management of many of our under-managed woodlands? Angus discusses this very thoughtfully.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/is-land-the-new-gold-for-investors-what-might-this-mean-for-woodland-owners/>

Managing hedgerows. ~ by Chris

Do you have hedges. If so, when do you cut them? “A simple shift to cutting back in winter rather than Autumn would result in a substantial increase in berry yield but a three year management program would seem to be best in terms of support-

ing wild life.” Read more here

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/managing-hedgerows/>

Aspects of The Storm of ’87. ~ by Richard

We all remember that storm—well actually, no, I was abroad at the time—but this is an interesting discussion of which trees were affected, which withstood the storm, and how they have re-grown.

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

[aspects-of-the-storm-of-87/](#)

Smile Meadow – a forest school ~ by Claire

Forest Schools—we have all heard of them, some of us are leaders or invite them into our woods. Claire tells us the story of her Forest School in Smile Meadow (what a lovely name!).

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/community-woodland-use/smile-meadow-a-forest-school/>

The holly leaf miner : *Phytomyza ilicis* ~ by Chris

Learn about this little fly and the marks it leaves on our holly trees.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/the-holly-leaf-miner-phytomyza-ilicis/>

Cooking and eating woodlice (pillbugs) – a real bushcraft experience ~ by Angus

They taste like little shrimps, apparently, and really rather delicious. There is a blog and also a video

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/cooking-and-eating-woodlice-pillbugs-a-real-bushcraft-experience/#more-11060>

[experience/#more-11060](#)

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/2011/12/how-to-cook-wood-lice-bushcraft-skills/>

Eating squirrels ~ by WoodlandsTV

In this first video, Sean Collins discusses the destructive nature of the grey squirrel on our native red squirrel and our

trees and branches. There are a lot of quite passionate comments here, definitely worth reading.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/2011/12/eating-squirrels/>

Skinning a squirrel ~ by WoodlandsTV

In the second video, Sean goes about preparing a squirrel for cooking.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/2011/12/skinning-a-squirrel/>

Moving logs by bike trailer ~

by mikepepler

Mike shows us how to move 50kg of logs using a trailer bike. Obviously only suited to the super-fit among us, unless, like Mike, you have a battery-powered bike to help you.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/2012/01/moving-logs-by-trailer-bike/>



Thank you for your contributions—please keep them coming!

Thank you to everybody who has contributed to this massive edition of the Newsletter after the Christmas break. We rely on your contributions to make this an interesting read for everybody. We didn't get any entries for the winter photography competition, but we would love for you to send us any photos of your wood. Do you have events in your wood? Can you write them up for the newsletter? Have you got expertise in an particular area of wildlife, or woodland management, or any woodcrafts? Have you come up with an ingenious solution to a problem? Have you been on any courses? Would you be prepared to write about them for the newsletter? We often feature courses in the Newsletter, but it would be lovely to get the perspective of somebody who has been on these courses. Do you share your woodland with other owners? If so, how do you co-operate in the management of the woodland, or do you each go your own way? Does anybody have experience of wildlife crime on their site? How did you deal with it? Have you got any good books about woodlands or woodland management recently? If so, would you like to share them by reviewing them for newsletter readers?

If you can help by writing just a little bit for this newsletter, we would be very grateful. Please contact sarah@swog.org.uk for further details or with your contributions.



Newsletter - February 2012

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

Contact us:-

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www.swog.org.uk

Small Woodland Owners' Group Forum

On the SWOG Forum—December and January

It has been a very busy couple of months on the forum, so this section is a bit longer than normal. Please feel free to join the forum, and join in the discussions. Here is a flavor of the most recent threads.

Happybonzo has a lot of (cherry) laurel and was wondering what to do with it. Apparently it is very good wood for burning, makes great charcoal, but is also an invasive weed. It was planted to give cover to pheasants, but can get out of hand, and you can get a Forestry Commission grant to eradicate it. The next bit of discussion was how to eradicate it! Ecoplugs? Glyphosate in holes? Burning? Lots of suggestions on the forum.

SimonFisher asked about alkylate petrol for chainsaws, as the regular unleaded often gives the operator headaches. Is it any good? Some folk do use it and shared their experience. It is three times the price of unleaded, but when used professionally by **TreeWorksUK**, the reduced fumes seem to be of benefit to some users, and the fuel also doesn't go off as quickly as regular two-stroke. Whether or not it is more environmentally friendly is another issue. Join the discussion!

An old thread on showers was revived by **van77** and various means of having a hot shower while working in the woods were discussed, ranging from watering cans to pressure water sprayers, and even a bucket of hot water, soap and a sponge.

Ben1 is looking for a woodland to rent for a week in September for he and his brother to camp in, do bushcrafts and make things. Can you help? Check the forum...

Van77 is looking to share the purchase of a small plot of woodland in the Hampshire or West Sussex area. If you can help, please look on the forum.

Rod Taylor asked if anybody knows a way to deter badgers from scent marking in inconvenient places, like the middle of paths! Any ideas?

Skund wants some input on whether or not to plant sweet chestnut in a new woodland. Are they really susceptible to disease and therefore not advisable? It seems they are susceptible to some diseases if put in the

wrong kind of soil. Do you have experience of establishing sweet chestnut woodland? If so, please help on the forum.

Skund also asked for advice in general about planting new woodland, which species to go for, and how to establish fruit and nut trees as well as mixed woodland. If you have any advice, please visit the forum.

Cordless electric chainsaws. They are toys, right? Well, no, not according to **Bellhurst** who has taken the plunge and bought a cheap and cheerful Chinese one. Others, including **greyman** have invested in the Makita 18v range. It seems they do a particular job well—cutting small logs. As with any tool, there are ups and downs to their use. Have you used one? Did you like it? Contribute on the forum.

SimonFisher asked about the Clarke Forest Log Jack—did anybody use one? It turns out lots of people use lots of different methods to make logging easier when coppicing. It turned out to be a good piece of kit. Read more on the forum.

RichardFawcett is looking for 7 year old chestnut to coppice on the Surrey/Sussex border. Can you help?

Miles asked what we use as a cross-cutting jig? Lots of different pieces of kit out there were recommended.

Chainsaw lube—which ones, and how much do they cost? **Pderx** was asking the question, and again, lots of suggestions, and a discussion of the different ways in chainsaws do, or do not, regulate oil flow. See the forum for more detail. In another thread, **happybonzo** asked if you can use used engine oil as chain lube? The general consensus is no!

MattFletcher is looking for a woodland outside London to rent to run bushcraft courses in Bucks, Berks or Middx. Can you help?

Bat raised the thorny issue of boundaries. It seems the Land Registry maps are not always that accurate...

Max asked for ideas for constructing a less muddy track around his site—brash mats, hardcore, woodchip? Any suggestions?