



In the Newsletter this Month

I spoke too soon last month, saying Summer is here—and we promptly have the wettest June since records began, with spectacular floods affecting much of the country, including us here in the Midlands. If you have any photos of the flooding in your area, please do let us have them. I hope that all of you, and your trees, escaped any major damage.

There is relatively little news this month, with a lot of woodland and forestry policy awaiting the publication of the Independent Forestry Panel report on 4th July—this report will be covered in the next newsletter.

We have a report of a green woodworking and stool-making course that I attended in Leicestershire earlier in June, as well as a review of the Forestry Commission's guidance on management of deadwood. If you have attended a course and would like to write it up for the newsletter, please let me have a report. It would also be wonderful if you could review any useful books, reports, guidance or documents that you have read and found helpful for the newsletter.

Also, do you have any tools you couldn't do without? Or have you bought any new pieces of equipment recently that you would like to review? We'd be delighted to hear your views on things that might help other small woodland owners.

We are also very pleased to report that Phil Hopkinson, from Malvern Coppicing, won a silver-gilt medal at BBC Gardeners World Live for his show garden, featuring fencing, gates and garden structures made from sustainably-harvested wood. Phil is a long-standing member of SWOG, so we are very happy to congratulate him on this wonderful achievement.

Please keep the contributions coming! If you have any photos, please send them in to me.

Sarah Walters (sarah@swog.org.uk)

In this issue

- Green woodworking and Stool-making course
- Managing Deadwood—new Forestry Commission guidance
- Upcoming courses and events
- News for Small Woodland Owners
- Forthcoming SWOG Meetings
- Congratulations to Phil Hopkinson
- Woodfairs for 2012
- On the Blogs and woodlandsTV
- How to contribute to your newsletter
- On the SWOG Forum

Green Woodworking and Stool-making Course—by Sarah

I have had a go at wood-turning and green woodworking before, thanks to Peter Wood from Greenwood Days, who visited our own wood and gave us an introduction. I really enjoyed it, but knew I needed to know a bit more about how to make things from wood. After visiting the Greenwood Days open day in March, and having another go at turning, I signed up for a two-day course, learning how to make a rustic stool.

Peter has a great workshop set-up at Spring Wood just outside Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border, and we were sharing it with a bow-making course, as well as a group of young folk doing a woodland survival course run by a different company in a different part of the wood.

A warm welcome greeted me as I braved the drizzly and cold June day for a cup of tea and



to meet the other course participants – there were two girls who had come all the way from Essex for a birthday surprise, and another chap who was a joiner by trade, so should know a bit about woodwork already!

Peter started off by showing us how to select wood and split it using an axe and hammer – a real “when I nod my head, hiti it!” moment. We helped each other to cleave some ash to give us enough wood for three stool legs.

We were then shown how to use the side-axe to take these triangular or parallelogram-shaped pieces of wood down to something resembling a hexagonal cylinder by removing the corners. Making three stool legs was a great way to become familiar with the tools – the first was definitely harder than the second, and the third piece much more fluent. It is a definite advantage to have an objective like a stool in mind, as you also have to learn to match your pieces to each other and that is a great way to learn how to make something quite precise.

Next came the shave-horse and draw-knife, which I have used before. However Peter gave us all a good demonstration, and we set to, trying to produce a good, symmetrical and straight cylinder ready to put onto the pole lathe. There was a good range of draw-knife types to try, including my preferred Mike Abbot pattern one with down-swept handles. We were allowed to work at our own pace, but the demonstration of the pole-lathe came early, so that we could opt to draw-knife all our legs at once, or do one at a time, and then use the lathe – this option is very useful if you are using unfamiliar tools, and consequently using muscles that fatigue easily!

There were plenty of pole-lathes on offer, but I was particularly interested in one, because I had opted to buy it and take it home at the end of the course. Some were pole lathes operated by a springy pole, but this one had a bungee mechanism, which means it can be used on a hard floor, or in our case, on a patch of ground just outside our tractor shed, which has a concrete/roadstone surface. Peter showed us how to centre the piece, mount it on the lathe, adjust the lathe and get the piece cylindrical using a roughing-gouge. We were free to place as much or as little decoration as we wanted onto the legs,

and he worked with us so that what we produced was what we wanted, showing us which tools to use, and how to get the result we wanted (even if we weren't always capable of delivering that result!).

I chose to make three parallel grooves with the skew-chisel near the bottom of my stool legs. Peter pointed out that I needed to measure them from the top, not the bottom of the legs, as the bottom of the legs would be sawn off eventually to level the stool. I used a pen while turning the lathe to mark the positions of the grooves on the second and third leg, and



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>

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/whats-on>



then made the marks with the skew-chisel. Finally we were shown how to use a large, flat-chisel to produce a smooth surface.

Again, producing three identical pieces was a challenge, but a useful exercise in gaining familiarity with the tools and the lathe. Some of us went for Chippendale-style beading, others for a plain leg, and I went for an in-between approach – simple decoration, but needing some precision. We were definitely speeding up towards the end of the day!

Lunch was provided for us – a good, nutritious soup with very tasty bread, as well as a never-ending supply of biscuits and tea, brewed on the open fire.

Finally, we all had three legs, and these were taken away to be seasoned in the kiln overnight, and we went our separate ways, to re-convene the next day

for preparation of the stool seat.

Peter provided us with pre-sawn oak or elm seat material, in a rough circle, and we selected our own pieces. I opted for a chunky piece of oak, since that is what I would normally use at our own wood. This was seasoned wood, and much harder to work than the green wood used for the legs.

First of all, we were shown how to use a spoke-shave to shape the seat into a proper circular shape, and to add a chamfer to the edge. Some opted for a gentle chamfer, others for a much more radical smoothing off of the edge. There were a great range of spoke-shaves available including modern Draper ones and some great vintage ones. The vintage was my preference, as I loved the wooden handles, but I had a go with a variety of different tools. Having got the edge sorted, we moved on to the surface, and were given a demonstration of both planning and use of a travisher. I opted for the planed surface, using a plane identical to my grandfather's, which I still own. It is a long time since I used a plane, and was pleased to see how it brought out the grain, and made a lovely, smooth, almost polished surface. I used the travisher to produce a rough finish on the underside. One participant joked "if you are looking at the underside of a stool, you have probably had too much to drink!"

Marking up the seat for drilling the holes was the next task, and we were shown how to use the divider to divide the seat into six – of course one-sixth of the circumference *should* be the same as the radius, but we needed to tweak things until it was exactly right. Then we selected three of the six lines we had drawn for the location of our legs.

We were shown how to create the right angle, and helped each other to make sure when we grabbed the brace and bit, we were drilling perpendicular in one plane and at the correct angle in the other plane. The brace and bit was a bit beyond a few of us when it came to drilling hard oak, so a cordless drill with a Forstner bit was available – but we started all the holes with the brace and bit.

Lunch was augmented on the second day by fish and chips – apparently the woodland survival course had ordered fish and chips for delivery and had a few portions left over – not exactly survival in the wild, but it was delicious, nonetheless!

After lunch, our legs were returned from the kiln, and we were shown how to use a tenon-cutter to get them to the exact correct size – this time all done with a cordless drill. Cheating? Not really, if it can get a great precision cut. Eventually, we may all be skilled enough to turn them down to the correct size on the lathe, but right now – a tenon-cutter does the job just fine.

We had to do this quickly, so that our stools could be glued together after lunch and leave time for the glue to set before levelling the stool. We were shown a quick and easy method of levelling the stool using wedges, so that we could saw the legs, confident that the stool would be level at the end.

And suddenly, there we were! We all had a stool that we could be proud of, and we were free to go home, or spend the afternoon honing our woodworking skills on other items – I chose to make a rounders bat. In the picture, our tutor Peter is holding my stool on the left, everybody else with their own stool and a thoroughly-deserved smile!

What was really good was the surprise on my husband's face when I took the finished stool home and showed him

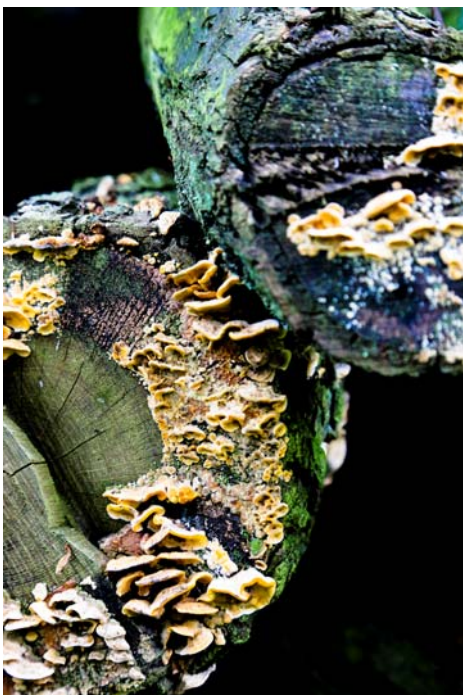
my work. “Did you really make that?!” he said. And, of course, now I have my own lathe, which means I can cut my own green wood and turn it into simple stool legs, or table legs, or rounders bats, or rolling pins, or dibbers, or bell-pulls, or tool handles. And I am going to do it! There will be more furniture made at Alvecote Wood, and I hope to do justice to some of the lovely pieces of oak that we have seasoning in our goat shed.

For the moment, the stool is in use in our living room, pictured here next to our log-burner - a fine tribute to our tutor, and to the course. I would thoroughly recommend this as an introduction to green woodworking. It takes you through all the elements you need, gives you practice, and best of all, you come home with a sound, useable piece of furniture. Peter is a great tutor, very encouraging, and extremely skilled – he



has won the log to chair leg challenge at wood-fairs on more than one occasion! There are a wide range of other courses on offer, including making a Windsor-style chair, rustic furniture, coracle-making, bow-making, willow-weaving and tool-sharpening. The course cost £170 including materials. If you want to learn, in a lovely woodland setting, this is a great place to do it. See www.greenwooddays.co.uk for more details.

Managing Deadwood—Forestry Commission Practice Guide



A lot of woodland owners may experience an urge to “tidy up” their woods – the gardener in all of us starts nagging whenever we see something untidy. But up to a fifth of woodland species in the UK depend on dead or dying wood – so states this guide, which aims to help managers and owners develop a strategic approach to deadwood, and working with the natural processes of windthrow and decay.

Deadwood can take a number of forms – veteran trees, standing dead trees, windthrown trees, fallen deadwood, and stumps. All have their own value, and their own characteristics. It can be standing, fallen, or even valuable in ponds and streams, where several species are dependent upon it.

Deadwood is created by decay either from the inside out (usually fungal) or outside in (usually mechanical). Management of deadwood habitat should aim to create a variety of deadwood in varying stages of decay. Although every wood

is different, the aim should be to have about 20 cubic metres of deadwood per hectare, distributed unevenly through each management unit – for a small woodland of 1 to 2 hec-

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 July 2012 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2012/07/01/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

tares, this is likely to mean throughout the whole woodland. Where possible, deadwood should be placed in areas of highest ecological value, and this report gives you the tools to assess the ecological value of your stands, or woodland, based upon current levels of deadwood, continuity of deadwood habitats over time, ecological connectivity and the history of management to promote deadwood (usually minimum intervention management).



The report then gives various management options depending on ecological value of a woodland or stand – this includes interventions such as identification of future veteran trees with haloing (removal of younger trees nearby, particularly conifers), restoration of pollards, killing and leaving *in situ* of non-native trees, leaving trees with high ecological value *in situ* rather than felling, designating stands as nature reserves and managing by minimum intervention, and working with adjacent woodland and other land-owners to manage veteran trees, thus improving connectivity of habitat.

The key is to work with natural processes and to aim to provide future deadwood in various stages of decay – for example by giving future veterans room to grow, providing wood piles and stacks, artificially injuring trees to create new deadwood habitat.



The report deals with safety concerns, including risks to people working on site and visitors – clearly this will affect a small woodland owner to different degrees depending on the level of public access to your site, and its proximity to rights of way. Where possible, deadwood should be retained on the site, and measures can be taken to reduce risk, for example, reducing the height of a dead or dying standing tree close to paths to reduce the risk of it falling on the path. Deadwood on the floor may need to be made safe too, for example by allowing bramble to grow around it to deter access – it all depends on the level of public access.

Finally, there is a section on balancing risk of diseases using deadwood as a portal of entry – this is rarely the case, but there are a few cases of which you need to be aware – notably Dutch Elm disease.

Overall, this is a useful guide. Although it is clearly aimed at owners of larger woodlands that are divided into separate stands and managed on a commercial basis, it can provide some suggestions for the small woodland owner on how to avoid that urge to tidy up – and on how to maximise deadwood habitat of high value in a small woodland. The most important message is that it is important to work with adjacent landowners too, so that deadwood habitat is placed in the best part of a larger woodland which may have stands of different types in different ownership, as well as providing the best connectivity between sites. The guide can be downloaded free from [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCPG020.pdf/\\$FILE/FCPG020.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCPG020.pdf/$FILE/FCPG020.pdf)

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 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/

Upcoming Courses and Events

Courses from Native Hands

Midsummer greetings!
There's quite a bit to tell you about, so please scroll down to read about the three events coming up...

The last coiled grass baskets workshop was fully booked, so if you were one of the people on the waiting list who didn't make it, or if you came but want to learn more about the technique and about harvesting materials yourself, come and join us for a mellow day in dappled woodland shade doing just that, at Wapsbourne Farm near Lewes. You'll learn how, when, where and what to harvest in a sustainable way; how to process the materials and you'll get to make a small basket to take home with you. Marvellous. Oh, and tea and cake round the fire as usual.

Here's the link to all the details including how to book a place. Numbers are limited and only a few spaces are left. Saturday 30th June 10.30am-4.30pm, £45 per person. <https://www.facebook.com/events/316650011712832/>

Also coming up next month is a two-day 'wild' pottery course over consecutive Saturdays (July 21st and July 28th), Wapsbourne Farm, near Lewes. Make hand built pottery in beautiful woodland using locally dug 'raw' Sussex clay, and try out using clay that we'll dig on the day. Learn how to find and select clay in the landscape, how to collect it and make it usable. Experiment with making and adding inclusions which will strengthen our pots enough for them to be fired in an open fire on the second day.

On day two, we'll fire the pots in an open fire, foraging some of the fuel from the woods. It's an exciting process to take part in and magical to witness clay being transformed by fire. In the afternoon, we'll have a go at fire-making using percussive and friction methods while we keep an eye on our pots and wait for them to cool enough so they can be taken home at the end of the day. You never know exactly how your pots will turn out so it's always a thrill. We'll also have time set aside for connecting to the beautiful surroundings, making the day a nourishing as well as a learning experience. Here's a link to all the details, including booking info. Each day runs 10.30am-4.30pm and the two-day course costs £90. <https://www.facebook.com/events/132150443571005/>

Also, at the wonderful Fabrica Gallery in Brighton, there's an interesting basketry installation exhibition by Annemarie O'Sullivan in July, and as part of the event, I'll be offering two half-day workshops, making baskets from English rush (similar to the 'reed mace' day later in the year- see this link <https://www.facebook.com/events/324059904293280/>). These workshops at Fabrica are scheduled for Weds 8th and 15th July. Please contact Fabrica direct for details and to make a booking- here's a link to their website <http://fabrica.org.uk/exhibitions/>

If you haven't already visited the Facebook page, where you can see photos and posting about all Native Hands' activities, as well as post your comments etc, here's a link to that. Please do visit and 'like' us- it's a great way to keep informed of what's going on. https://www.facebook.com/native.hands.uk?ref=tn_tnmn



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 Green Woodworking, Permaculture and Bushcraft.

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>

Courses from BBC TV Presenter Kate Humble

New courses on BBC TV Springwatch presenter Kate Humble's farm near Monmouth include tree care and hedge-laying as well as courses for smallholders. If you are interested in permaculture, smallholding and woodland and countryside management, these courses look interesting. See <http://www.humblebynature.com/whats-on/>

Courses in Exmoor National Park

Exmoor National Park courses – include plant ID, map reading and navigation, fungi ID and First Aid. Courses are free to Exmoor volunteers, otherwise the fee varies with each course. Details are on <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/org/1714181862?s=8945522>

Photography course with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Learn the basics of photography with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust at the Wolseley Centre on 14th and 21st July. This is a two-day course run by David Rees, and costs £40 for the two days. See <http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/article/what-s-on-next/view/improve-your-photography-wolseley-centre>

Wildlife walks and courses in Derbyshire with Debbie Alston

Debbie is an experienced wildlife and conservation professional working in the Derbyshire area, and now offering courses in the Derbyshire and Peak District area. Courses include Nature Walks, Wildlife Walks, Wildflower and Grass Identification, Butterfly Identification, Mammal Watching and Summer Tree Identification. Many of these courses are free, low-cost or have reduced fees for people on reduced incomes and specific benefits. See <http://www.debbiealston.co.uk/courses.html>

Photography Courses at Alvecote Wood

Due to exceptional demand, an additional date for our Macro photography course has been added on 1st September. Learn how to capture the beauty of nature close-up with Sarah, who has had photographs featured on BBC Springwatch and in The Guardian. This one-day course only costs £20 per person. There is also an introductory photography day being held on 7th October—there are still a few places available for each of these courses so please book soon if you would like to come. Details on www.alvecotewood.co.uk



Introduction to Hedgelaying Course

Introduction to Hedgelaying course from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, 18th November just £30pp. Places limited so book now! - 07971 046820

Hedgelaying Course at Epping Forest from FSC

A two-day course on the fundamentals of hedge-laying from Field Studies Council at their Epping Forest Centre for £98. 22nd and 23rd November. Details on <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/courses/2012/ef/hedgelaying-34959.aspx>

Winter Courses from The Sustainability Centre

That time of year will come round very quickly, so it is time to think about what you need to learn and sign up for courses. The Sustainability Centre in East Meon, Hampshire, offers several courses of interest to woodland owners, including an OCN in Sustainable Woodland Management, Hurdle-making, Coppicing, Winter twig ID, and Introduction to Permaculture and Permaculture Design. There are also courses on Tree Identification, Butterfly ID, Wildflower ID and Mammal Tracking. Details on http://www.sustainability-centre.org/courses_adult.php

Courses from the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust on Jersey

There are a wide range of available courses from these experts in integrated wildlife conservation. This includes a PG Dip in Endangered Species Recovery, and courses in Inte-

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.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.

FloraLocale run a wide range of courses of interest to woodland owners www.floralocale.org

grated Species Conservation and Management. The courses are aimed at professionals, but may well be of interest if you manage your woodland for wildlife conservation. <http://www.durrell.org/Training/Courses/>

Family Courses at the Greenwood Centre

The Greenwood Centre has a wide range of family-oriented courses operating during the long school holiday. These include green woodworking, elder bracelet making, willow basketry, longbow making, fire skills, elf and fairy houses,



camp-making and other courses for children and adults. Later in the year, there are also OCN accredited Forest School Leader courses, OCN in Woodland Management and OCN in Coppicing. See <http://smallwoods.org.uk/courses-events/courses-calendar/>

Harper Adams University College

This College, based in Shropshire, offers a one-day course in Sustainable Woodland Management for woodland owners, land managers and farmers. <http://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/short-courses/151/sustainable-woodland-management>

Courses in Permaculture from Patrick Whitefield

These courses continue to get excellent feedback from friends who have participated. If you want to manage your wood sustainably, using the principles of permaculture, then there are a variety of courses on offer in 2012. A course on reading the landscape will also be run in 2013. See <http://www.patrickwhitefield.co.uk/diary.htm>

Bee Awareness Workshops from Brigit Strawbridge

There are still a few places available on the 15th July workshop. Come and learn all about wild bees and honeybees, what they do for nature, and how you can best take care of them.

<http://www.beestrawbridge.blogspot.co.uk/p/workshops.html>

DEFRA Hedgerow Survey Methodology Course

Surrey Wildlife Trust is offering a course on 17th July at Nower Wood in Leatherhead. Learn about the history and structure of hedgerows and how they can be surveyed using the standard DEFRA methodology

<http://www.surreywildlifetrust.org/whatson/1402?title=Hedgerows>

News for small woodland owners

New ELS Criteria outlined by Natural England

The new options for Entry Level Stewardship, subject to EU approval, are available for new applications from January 2013, and four of these are also available to existing agreements amended after January 2013. The five new options available to new applicants are designed to produce improved environmental outcomes and are described in detail on the Natural England web site. Stewardship arrangements may be helpful to woodland owners managing woodland on farm sites, or who have other types of land, including farmland included in their land holding. The options available are

- Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds
- Supplement to add wildflowers to buffer strips and field corners on cultivated land

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. They also run online ecology courses.

www.acornecology.co.uk

Forest Garden Show-elstrode

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

www.forestgarden.info

- Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds
- Legume- and herb-rich swards
- Small scale hedgerow restoration (inside and outside the SDA)

See <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/mesme.aspx> for more information

ICF Conference Presentations available for download online.

The Institute of Chartered Foresters conference “Future Forestry”, held in May 2012, and reviewed in the June edition of this newsletter, now have the presentations made at the conference available online for people to download and read. See <http://www.charteredforesters.org/default.asp?page=168>

Invasive plant tracker app available

The University of Bristol and Natural History Museum have teamed up to produce an app to allow rapid tracking of three invasive plant species of particular concern— Floating Pennywort, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. The app is currently available for iOS and Android operating systems, and allows rapid reporting of these plants to be transmitted directly to the Biological Records Centre. Records are verifiable, since they include a photograph, and this is valuable in planning interventions.

See <http://planttracker.naturelocator.org/>

Nitrogen from air pollution responsible for decline in native wild flowers

Many of our most important wild flowers are being crowded out at the expense of a few species such as nettle and cow parsley due to the fertilising effects of nitrogen from vehicle exhausts. Affected plants include the important foodplant for butterflies, birds-foot trefoil (pictured right, with the dingy skipper butterfly which depends upon it), and harebells.



<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/wild-flowers-are-overpowered-by-exhaust-fumes-7866766.html>

BigBarn – a marketplace for local food, products and services.

This is a new web site aiming to create a local marketplace for food, products and services, so that people can buy from independent local retailers and producers. It aims to connect people who want to buy to their local sellers. The site includes ability to list firewood, arts and crafts, and courses, so may be of help to small woodland owners wishing to sell their produce. See <http://www.bigbarn.co.uk/>

New FC Research Report

“Understanding Carbon and Greenhouse Gas Balance of Forests in Britain” is now available online. This report looks at the global carbon cycle and the role played by woodlands, and the UK forests in particular. It looks at carbon fluxes in forests as they grow, and the impact of different types of woodland management upon them. The report is available on <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B>

FC Publishes Woodland Area, Planting and Re-stocking Statistics

The latest version of the UK woodland area, planting and re-stocking statistics have been published by the Forestry Commission. The key findings are

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/>

Permaculture Courses from Patrick Whitefield, including how to read the landscape

http://www.patrickwhitefield.co.uk/reading_the_landscape_info.htm

The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2012 is estimated to be 3.08 million hectares. This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK, 10% in England, 15% in Wales, 18% in Scotland and 7% in Northern Ireland.

Of the total UK woodland area, 0.87 million hectares is owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in Great Britain) or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland).

The total certified woodland area in the UK at 31 March 2012 is 1.36 million hectares, including all Forestry Commission/Forest Service woodland. Overall, 44% of the UK woodland area is certified.

Thirteen thousand hectares of new woodland were created in the UK in 2011-12, mostly with broadleaved species.

Twelve thousand hectares of woodland were restocked in the UK in 2011-12, mostly with conifers.

The full report is available on [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/area2012.pdf/\\$FILE/area2012.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/area2012.pdf/$FILE/area2012.pdf)

More details of increased grant for woodland creation from Forestry Commission

In the June Newsletter, we reported that the money available for woodland creation grants has been increased. This scheme now provides increased payment per hectare for woodland creation, and details of the new payments and how to apply have been posted on the Forestry Commission web site.



<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6dcegu>

Asian Longhorn Beetle outbreak zone extended in Kent

After the discovery of an affected tree near the northern boundary of the affected zone, the affected area has been extended, as well as the felling area. If you are in the area, or close by, details are on the Forestry Commission web site <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/A1634F9F116F1E0B80257A1D0045CB39>

www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/A1634F9F116F1E0B80257A1D0045CB39

Report aims to break down barriers over tree planting in Scotland

The Woodland Expansion Advisory Group has issued a new report looking at tree planting in Scotland. In particular it looks at how planting must take place in a much more inclusive and integrated way to avoid conflict with other land uses, including farming. See <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/D762B3358E25EC8180257A23002CBB6D>

[D762B3358E25EC8180257A23002CBB6D](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/D762B3358E25EC8180257A23002CBB6D)

Rare Fungus found on restored heathland in East Anglia

The rare nail fungus has been found on heathland at Thetford Forest, which is managed by the Forestry Commission. It was discovered on pony dung from ponies used in heathland and grassland management in the forest, and which have fed on unimproved grass using organic management. See <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/BF706E1EAAB7DF3A80257A2800296270>

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/BF706E1EAAB7DF3A80257A2800296270>

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.

<http://www.woodlandskills.com/#/courses/4530829941>

Abbots Living Wood offers a range of green woodworking courses

http://www.livingwood.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)

Winners of Scotland's Finest Woodlands announced

Winners of awards for community woodlands, new native woodlands, best timber and the schools awards can be found on <http://www.sfwa.co.uk/>

Sustainable forestry strong in England

In the 2012-13 Forestry Commission Corporate Plan, new figures show sustainable forestry is strong.

“The overall picture is great news for us. Protection of our woods and forests is strong with miniscule amounts of illegal felling. The general public are very much our eyes and ears on the ground and we are always heartened at the public's willingness to report suspected illegal activity and we are developing an online system to make this quicker, easier and more accurate.

“We see domestic timber supplies increasing while imports shrink and a growing woodfuel network all of which boosts the local green economy. Commitments to restore and recreate conservation habitats from private and public plantations are being met while we see the overall area of woodland expanding.

“The Forestry Commission remains a leader as a significant land manager in the care of the England's best wildlife conservation sites - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – with 99.6% in target condition.

The plan can be seen on <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/AllByUNID/86DF06749F2B447A80257A29004732D4> with corporate plan on [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCE-CorporatePlan-2012_13.pdf/\\$FILE/FCE-CorporatePlan-2012_13.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCE-CorporatePlan-2012_13.pdf/$FILE/FCE-CorporatePlan-2012_13.pdf)

Public ready to rise up again if Government revives plans to sell of public forest estate.

With the report from the Independent Forestry Panel due on 4th July, there is a strong indication that there will be a renewed public outcry if the plan to sell of the public forest estate is revived.

<http://saveourwoods.co.uk/our-forests/public-ready-to-rise-up-again-if-government-fails-them-over-public-woods-forests/>

Independent Forestry Panel Report due on 4th July

The much-awaited report of the Independent Forestry Panel, which has been examining the future of forests in England since 2011, is due on 4th July. It has been reported in the national press that this report is likely to recommend the retention of forests in the public ownership, and make recommendations over the management of all woodlands in England, as well as recommendations on the role of the Forestry Commission. However it may take until 2013 for the Government to respond to this report. There is a very good blog from the Chief Exec of Sussex Wildlife Trust on this report and its implications - <http://tonywhitbread.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/we-await-report-of-independent-forest.html>

Report from National Ecosystem Assessment published

The final report was published in June 2012. It is available as a synthesis of key findings, and separate technical chapters and chapters for each ecosystem type. It is a very detailed and technical document.



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.bulworthypject.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

Mark Fisher Art

Woodland-based art days for all abilities

www.markfisherart.co.uk

An interesting finding is that about 12% of the UK is wooded – and 12.7% is tarmac or buildings—so we have more tarmac than woodland. But within urban areas, over 50% of urban areas are actually green – parks or public spaces. Added to this, 18% of urban land comprises gardens. Urban land is 10% of England, 2% of Scotland and 4% of Wales. A more detailed assessment of this report will be in the next newsletter. The reports can be downloaded from <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/Resources/tabid/82/Default.aspx>

Stuff to do with your kids in the woods this summer

If you are short of ideas of things to do in the woods with your children over the summer holidays, there are a great deal of ideas, activities and materials available from the Woodland Trust and Nature Detectives <http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/summer/>

RFS Excellence in Forestry Winners for 2012

Judging in the main categories in this year's Royal Forestry Society Excellence in Forestry competition in South West England is now over. Tim Sawyer and Chris Marrow completed their inspections in mid-May. The 2012 winners are:

Duke of Cornwall (Multipurpose) - First: Combe Sydenham; Second: Clinton Estate

Silviculture - First: Duchy of Cornwall; Second: Miserden Estate

Community - First: Friends of Oakfrith Wood; Second: Neroche Partnership; Certificate: Broadford Arboretum

Small Woodlands - First: Coombeshead Farm; Second: Warren House Woods; Certificates: Russels Farm and Higher Minicleve Woods

The judges discretionary prize, the **Sylva Cup**, went to John Greenshields, of Park Farm, Wellington, Somerset for his widely acclaimed work with the Blackdowns and East Devon Woodland Association's 'Working Our Woodlands' project. The main presentations will take place at Westonbirt National Arboretum on 5 July.

RFS Continuous Cover Forestry Group Site Visit

The Continuous Cover Forestry Group (CCFG) invites RFS members to join them on two technical site visits to Morton Hall and then Thoresby Estate, Notts on 20 June. Contact the CCFG if you would like to tag along: www.ccfg.org.uk.

New Report from Woodlands.co.uk—Trees or Food?

A very interesting analysis of tree planting in the UK has been published by Woodlands.co.uk, in particular looking at whether we should be pursuing a policy of almost unrestricted tree-planting without looking at the potential consequences on agricultural productivity and sensitive habitats. While there are strong arguments for planting trees in urban settings, woods established on farmland without any other form of habitat connectivity will take land out of food production without significantly affecting biodiversity until the wood becomes mature, a process that may take decades.

Woods established on uplands may adversely affect rare and endangered upland habitats. The report looks at a targeted approach to planting, favouring better management of existing ancient woodlands, restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites, and planting to extend existing woods and restore connections between fragmented pieces of woodland (such as the planting pictured above), rather than planting in isolation. It also examines the relative merits of planting in the UK versus the tropics for carbon sequestration.



<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Woodlands.co.uk-TreesOrFoodReport-23May12.pdf>

Glow Worm Survey

If you have seen any glow-worms in your wood, the UK Glow Worm Survey would be grateful if you could report them online at <http://www.glowworms.org.uk/>

Canal and River Trust takes over from British Waterways

A new charity has taken over the role of managing British Canals and Rivers following the transfer of the role from British Waterways. The charity formally comes into existence on 12th July, and you can make a donation after that time. The new web site is previewed at <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/>, and this site gives great information about how you can get involved, volunteer, visit waterways locally, and take great photographs of your local waterways.



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 at the Bulworthy Project—August 11th



Pete and Anna at the Bulworthy project have kindly offered to host a meeting at their site in Devon. Full details to follow, but it is likely to be in August possibly the 11th, to register an interest, please email tracy@woodlands.co.uk

This would be a great meeting to attend if you're interested in charcoal-making,

Check out the website for more details of the project or interested in attending their one-day charcoal-making courses. www.bulworthyproject.org.uk

Congratulations to Phil Hopkinson

Congratulations are due to Phil Hopkinson from Malvern Coppicing, a longstanding member of SWOG, who won a Silver Gilt medal at Gardeners World Live for his show garden, featuring wooden structures made from sustainably-managed wood harvested from his Malvern woodland. The garden featured an ash pale gate, rustic fencing, a round timber wooden building and a building made from larch poles and western red cedar cladding. His show garden also won best in category at the Malvern Spring Show.

There is a full report and photos on http://www.malverncoppicing.co.uk/latest_news.html

Woodfairs in 2012

Woodfairs are underway, so here are the dates for your diaries. More information is available on woodfairs.co.uk

Woodfairs in Scotland

Peebles Wood Market

21st and 22nd October 2012

Tweed Valley

[http://](http://www.peebleswoodmarket.co.uk/)

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

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/>

The Arb and Forestry Event

13- 14th July 2012

Shipbourne, Kent

<http://www.frjonesandson.co.uk/show/>

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 Muse-



um, Halland, near Lewes, East Sussex
BN8 5AF

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

European Woodworking Show

Saturday 22 September 10am-5pm

Sunday 23 September 10am-4pm

at Cressing Temple Barns, Nr Braintree, Essex

www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu

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>

Surrey Hills woodfair

6th and 7th October

Birtley House, Bramley, Guildford, GU5 0LB

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



On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk and woodlandsTV

These are the latest blogs from Woodlands.co.uk and videos on woodlandsTV. Please have a look and comment upon them, as they make very interesting reading.

Deer populations – the muntjac menace ~ by Angus

These little deer, introduced from China, can be a major menace for wildlife. Hard to spot, successful at breeding, hard to control and destructive of woodland flora, what can be done to combat their spread, and the damage they cause?

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/deer-populations-the-muntjac-menace/>

Yurts, Yurtmakers and camping in a yurt ~ by Angus

Invented by the Mongols over 700 years ago, yurts were formerly a portable residence for nomadic peoples. Now these



structures are being built in the UK, and are proving popular and durable residences. Find out more about how they are constructed.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/yurts-yurtmakers-and-camping-in-a-yurt/>

Chelsea, urban gardens and ecosystem services. ~ by Lewis

One of the gold-medal winning gardens at the recent Chelsea Flower

Show had wildlife at its heart. Read here about how you can manage your garden for the maximum benefit of wildlife.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/chelsea-urban-gardens-and-ecosystem-services/>

Which woodland course should I go on? – survey of courses on chainsaws and woodland management. ~ by Angus

A very important blog post—how do you choose a course, and which ones are highly rated? This is a review of a survey of woodland owners looking at chainsaw and woodland management courses they have attended.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/which-woodland-course-should-i-go-on-survey-of-courses-on-chainsaws-and-woodland-management/>

Whittling: wood carving keeps the mind sharp ~ by David, Dan and Patricia.

Whittling is easy, cheap, enjoyable and results in useful products—what better hobby to have? This blog post talks you through making a spoon, and a butter-spread knife. Really great stuff.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/whittling-wood-carving-keeps-the-mind-sharp/>

Buying a woodland with your SIPP. ~ by Nick H

Do you buy a woodland as an investment—increasingly, it seems, this is an option for those with Self Invested Pension Schemes. Nick talks us through his experience with this form of woodland ownership.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/buying-a-woodland-with-your-sipp/>

Finishing a Tenon with chisel and plane ~



by WoodlandsTV

A video about how to finish a tenon with chisel and plane.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/2012/06/finishing-a-tenon-with-chisel-and-plane/>

GoPro HD Eucalyptus Tree Surgery ~ by WoodlandsTV

Ever wondered what it is like to be a tree-surgeon? This video is the first in a series of films following a tree surgeon as he works on a eucalyptus tree in a suburban garden. Not for the faint-hearted is the warning!

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/2012/06/gopro-hd-eucalyptus-tree-surgery/>

Contributions Welcome!

We very much value your contributions to the SWOG Newsletter—please keep them coming!

We would love to have more of your photos, book reviews, equipment reviews, tales of days spent in your woodlands, reviews of courses or meetings you have attended, and creative writing too.

Do you run events in your own woods? Tell us about them, and we can mention them in the SWOG Newsletter. Have you attended any courses or events recently? Please report your experiences to us as we would love to have information about the wide range of courses and events that go on all the time. We would absolutely love your photographs too—photos of your woods, your trees, your wildlife, and people enjoying themselves in the woods, as well as any photos from woodfairs, from courses you have attended and your equipment.

Do you have any suggestions? It is your newsletter, so please tell us what you would like to see.

Please send contributions to sarah@swog.org.uk. Thank you.



On the SWOG Forum

Newsletter - July 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:-

Web site:

rich@swog.org.uk

Newsletter editor

sarah@swog.org.uk

All other enquiries

tracy@woodlands.co.uk

www.swog.org.uk

We hope you are enjoying the new forum, with the additional facilities it brings to users. Here are the pick of posts from the last month.

Sparrowhatchforestry kindly posted a link to a new film from FERA about *Phytophthora ramorum*. Very useful and essential viewing for all woodland owners.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDN7eQann2k>

Oldclaypaws asked how we stopped deer nibbling in our coppice. Ahh..if only we had the answer to that one! Nevertheless, lots of useful tips were forthcoming, including the use of brash, copparding (cutting a little bit higher to deter browsing), individual fencing around stools, and getting a bigger freezer for venison.

Emma S asked how to combat mosquitoes—the answer is apparently Avon Skin So Soft Woodland Glade *Editor's note: I can't find this on the Avon web site or catalogue and fear it may be discontinued!*

Paulorna asked whether there were any planning issues around the construction of a tree house. Provided it is obviously a temporary structure, and not a shed in a tree, it seems there aren't any. Are we wrong? Let us know on the forum!

Meadowcopse posted a favourable review of the charcoal making courses run by **Bulworthy project**. Please post reviews of any courses you have attended on the forum!

West country charcoal tell us they will be at the Blackdown Hills Woodfair again this year—come along and say hello!

Oldclaypaws also asked how to deal with extensive tall bramble—another question to which we wish we had an answer. Lots of suggestions from pulling, brushcutting and using a tractor with rotary slasher.

Neil asked about a problem with his conifers dying off at the tip. It didn't seem to fit the description of any diseases, and **Stephen1** seemed to think this was weather damage. Now you can post photos, identification of issues with trees will be easier to share.

Meadowcopse posted a link to an article in

the Telegraph regarding a new disease of ash brought into the UK from Dutch nursery stock.

Tracy asked if any of us have otters in their wood—if you do, please get in touch for an article planned on the woodlands.co.uk web site.

The forum welcomed **oldclaypaws**, **billhooker**, **paulorna** and **sparrowhatchforestry** this month—if you have just joined us, please write an introduction about you and your wood.

Bingoben is a contractor on the Welsh Borders offering scrub clearance services and low impact timber extraction. Details on the forum

Belpotter is looking for a woodland to hire for laser tag in the Midlands area. Details are on the forum.

Emma S is looking for chestnut hurdles—can you help? Details on the forum.

CrispinRogers asked why the angle of tilt is different between Oregon and Stihl chains (for chainsaws). Can you help?

Finally, **oldclaypaws** asked about low impact removal of big trees, which sparked off quite a debate around the premise that the wood needed thinning. Standard advice seems to be to manage a woodland as an entity to thin, produce rides and clearings and a variety of habitats. However, as **Stephen1** pointed out, with a small woodland, this can reduce the size of important old wood habitats to the point of non-resilience, and the need to see the woodland in the context of the surrounding countryside. This extended into a debate on the role of humans in managing natural ecosystems generally. There are a lot of opinions there worth looking at—we all approach woodland management with a slightly different bias—but it is definitely worth a read to see how management can be interpreted, and to make the most of the expertise of forum members, which is quite considerable.

Please take time to visit the forum and contribute to the topics there! It is great to see so many new members joining, and so much discussion going on.