



In the Newsletter this Month

This is a shorter newsletter, because I have been ill for most of the month of October, including spending a spell in hospital. But there is still some useful news, and I hope a full newsletter service will be restored for December—a couple of articles are already underway.

Chalara fraxinea is the major news this month, after this devastating disease of ash trees was found outside the nursery and garden context in the wider landscape of East Anglia. We have written a report drawing together as many resources as possible to help you identify this disease in trees, and report it, to help with rapidly-developing efforts to ascertain how widespread this outbreak is, and thus to determine whether the policy is one of eradication or containment. A ban on ash tree imports has been implemented—but is this a case of too little too late? There is a lot of information available online from the Forestry Commission and others, as well as a smartphone app to help you identify and report any affected trees.

The autumn has brought a great crop of more friendly fungi in our woods, and we report a fungus foray with the experts from the local mycology group. Beautiful, mysterious, and essential components of the forest ecosystem, we illustrate some of the fungi in our woodlands. Do you have any pictures from your own woods that you can share with us?

A few organisations are releasing their training and course schedules for 2013 already—we've tried to give you links to the new courses, and highlight those taking place over the winter period. There is also a lot of other news from the forestry sector, including news of a new consultation survey from DEFRA in the wake of the Independent Forestry Panel report, and news of the postponement of the pilot badger cull in England until 2013.

If you have any stories from your woodland, please send them to us! Sarah@swog.org.uk!

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Chalara dieback of ash—a call to action for ALL woodland owners



Chalara dieback of ash (caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea*) is a disease that threatens the almost complete destruction of ash trees in the UK. This disease has been spreading Westwards across Europe since the early 1990's, and has more recently reached the Western coasts of Europe, where it has caused widespread destruction – up to 90% of ash trees in some parts of Denmark. The fungus *Chalara fraxinea* is the anamorph (the asexual stage) of the

fungus *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus*. The reason why this new species has emerged and has become invasive is not known. It is thought to have been present in European ash trees for over 30 years, but has only recently become damaging. A related species, *H. albidus*, has been around for a long time, and is relatively widespread in Britain, but is not thought to be harmful.

The disease was first noted in the UK in a nursery in Buckinghamshire early in 2012, as a result of imported saplings from the European continent. Although action was taken to

trace all saplings from the European nursery responsible for this outbreak, and to destroy them, a ban on ash imports was not enacted at that time. Affected trees were found in nurseries in a number of centres, including in Yorkshire, Surrey, Cambridge, Leicester, Durham and Glasgow. Over 100,000 affected imported saplings were destroyed, and a consultation launched on whether a ban on further imports of ash should be enacted – the consultation ended on 26th October. The disease has also spread to the Irish Republic, although no cases have been reported as yet in Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately, cases have now been found in the wider countryside, in mature trees away from nurseries and from imported stock. It is not known how these cases have arisen – all so far reported are on the East coast, and they may have resulted from spores carried on prevailing winds from the European continent. To date over 20 confirmed or suspected sites have been noted, mostly in Norfolk and Suffolk, but also in Kent. This includes two woods managed by the Woodland Trust.

There is an urgent need to find out how widespread this disease has become, so that an appropriate policy can be put in place to either attempt to eradicate the outbreak, or to move towards containment if it is already widespread.

The first action taken has been the announcement of an import ban on ash saplings, effective from 29th October. A task force has been set up headed by DEFRA's chief adviser, Professor Boyd, to draw up plans to deal with the disease, and more than 100 staff have been re-deployed from the Forestry Commission and FERA to work on the ground to contain or eradicate it.

At present there is no funding or compensation available to woodland owners who are required to fell ash trees (either affected or in buffer zones) and dispose of them in an approved manner, although this might change in coming weeks.

However the Forestry Commission are asking all woodland owners, and members of the public, to look out for and report signs of ash dieback. This is relatively difficult to do at this time of year, because the leaves are naturally dying back as a result of autumn, and ash is usually one of the first trees to lose its leaves. Nevertheless, there are symptoms you can look out for, even when the tree has lost its leaves.

The Forestry Commission have produced an excellent pictorial guide to help the public identify symptoms. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Symptoms_guide_Chalara_dieback_of_ash_2012.pdf/\\$FILE/Symptoms_guide_Chalara_dieback_of_ash_2012.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Symptoms_guide_Chalara_dieback_of_ash_2012.pdf/$FILE/Symptoms_guide_Chalara_dieback_of_ash_2012.pdf)

Key symptoms are the dieback of leaves, particularly at the top of mature trees and the dieback of shoots on saplings. However these are accompanied by lesions, or cankers on the bark, which are usually seen below or around affected shoots, and below affected leaf scars – these can be identified on trees that have already shed leaves for autumn. Dieback of the leaves also follows a characteristic pattern, with browning of the mid-rib or leaflet vein, then extending to the rachis (the main stem from which the leaflets branch). Leaves that are dying back for autumn retain the green in the leaflet vein. The wood and pith underlying the bark lesions are also heavily stained.

The Forestry Commission have written to all Woodland Management Grant holders to



Course Directory

Institute of Chartered Foresters

Forthcoming events are on

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

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>



ask them to check all their ash trees as a matter of urgency, as the disease is easier to recognise before the leaves have fallen. However all woodland owners, regardless of whether or not they receive a grant, are asked to check their trees, as are all members of the public, when they are out walking in woodlands or past any trees, including ornamental specimens.

All ash trees seem to be vulnerable – including *Fraxinus excelsior* and more exotic cultivars, so trees in parks and gardens also need to be checked. Young trees are particularly vulnerable too, and any trees planted in the last five years need careful checking.

A web site and mobile app has also been launched, enabling individuals to report any diseased or suspicious ash trees via their mobile phones. This is available as of today (29th October) for Android phones and iPhone. You can also upload a photo and report sightings via their web site, preferably using a GPS tag on the photo, if you are able. This is called ASHTAG.ORG <http://ashtag.org/> - please check this site, download the app, and check all ash trees, whether or not they are yours, and whether or not they are urban or rural.

This weekend, we checked our ash trees. We planted about 700 ash trees as part of the 5500 trees planted for our Betty's Wood project. We could not find any trace of bark lesions, although because of the exposed setting of some of these trees, many have already lost their leaves. More sheltered ash, both young and mature, in our main woodland shows no sign of dieback. But we must not be complacent, and will have to be very vigilant, through the winter and into spring.

ANY suspected trees can also be reported directly to

- Forestry Commission Plant Health Service; tel: 0131 314 6414; email: plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk;
- Forest Research Tree Health Diagnostic & Advisory Service; tel: 01420 23000; email: ddas.ah@forestry.gsi.gov.uk;
- Fera Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate; tel: 01904 465625; email: planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk.

Please also see the following sites for more information:

More information about Chalara dieback of Ash - <http://saveourwoods.co.uk/articles/news/alert-for-serious-disease-of-ash-trees-chalara-fraxinea/> - woodland owners need to stay vigilant for this very serious threat that has destroyed 90% of all ash trees in Denmark. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/AllByUNID/8B4D1D7D4204488180257A8D0036FED9>

A ban on ash imports from Europe is in force from Monday 29th October - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/oct/26/ash-dieback-imports-banned?newsfeed=true>

Chalara confirmed in Woodland Trust woods in Norfolk and Suffolk - <http://www.woodlandtrust.presscentre.com/News-Releases/Chalara-ash-dieback-confirmed-in-mature-Woodland-Trust-woodland-cb9.aspx> - the Woodland Trust are calling for an emergency summit to tackle this disease before it wipes out all ash in Great Britain.

All woodland owners need to be vigilant for this disease. The signs and symptoms of it, and what you should do about it, are on a FC information sheet here [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/pest-alert-ash-dieback-2012.pdf/\\$FILE/pest-alert-ash-dieback-2012.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/pest-alert-ash-dieback-2012.pdf/$FILE/pest-alert-ash-dieback-2012.pdf) - particularly important if you have recently planted ash (as we have done) of unknown provenance or from the European mainland, but all ash trees are vulnerable.

A risk assessment with a lot of information about the spread of Chalara dieback available from FERA <http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/plants/plantHealth/pestsDiseases/documents/chalaraFraxinea.pdf>

Good videos showing how to identify the pathogen are available on the ICF web site <http://www.charteredforesters.org/resources/multimedia/video-gallery/viewcategory/17/pests-diseases/>

SmallWoods are running a workshop on tree diseases in the UK at Cholmondeley Castle on Friday 7th December—contact info@heartwoods.co.uk for more information. Costs £10, definitely worth attending!

Images from Forestry Commission and FERA web sites under Open Government Licence.

A Fungus Foray



Clouded agaric *Clitocybe nebularis* under hawthorn

was involved. Our single general fungus foray consisted of a brief trip to some beech woodlands, followed by a much prolonged visit to a local pub – so I really felt in need of some expert guidance.

Without doubt, fungi are more important to woodlands than just something to look at in the autumn, and something perhaps to eat, if we are very confident in our identification. They are absolutely key in decay and nutrient cycling.

It is easy to see fungi associated with decay: rotten logs covered in saprobic fungi, and the smell of mould in damp woodlands.

Decay is not only accomplished by fungi – animals and bacteria have a role too – but they perform an essential role in the decay process.

And fungi are there all year round – it is just the fruiting bodies that become more prominent in autumn, as jelly moulds, bracket fungi, small toadstools and polypores growing on fallen branches, wood chippings and leaf mould.



Common Earthball

Although they are with us all year round, fungi come to prominence in the autumn, with their fruiting-bodies visible in the leaf litter and on logs and stumps around the woods. We were privileged in the last week to be taken on a fungus foray in our own woods by members of the West Midlands Natural History Society Fungus Group, so we could learn a little bit more about the fungi we have in the woods.

My own background includes a little bit of mycology, but many years ago – and the fungi we studied were very different, largely because it was medical mycology, rather than general mycology, that



Stereum sp on oak logs.

What we may be less aware of are the fungi associated with root systems of trees – the mycorrhizal fungi. These form networks of small fibres, intimately associated with the small roots, and sometimes much larger than the main root system of a tree. These mycorrhizal fungi assist with the processing and uptake of nutrients by the tree. In fact, there is often a single mycorrhizal system serving large groups of trees, sometimes of several species. Most of the time, they are unseen and unheard, but do an absolutely vital job for the trees. They have evolved symbiotically, deriving benefit from the trees (in the form of sugars) and providing benefit to them (in the form of mineral nutrients). But every year, these mycorrhizal

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

<http://smallwoods.org.uk/courses-events/courses-calendar/>

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 November 2012 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2012/11/01/month/all/all/1>

Bat Conservation Trust

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

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

zal fungi produce the familiar fruiting bodies of the forest floor: chanterelles, ceps, fly agaric and other autumn toadstools.

So, what did we find in our woods?

Well, quite a lot more than we were expecting.



Trametes versicolor (Turkey tail)

First of all, there were a lot of fungi on our fallen logs and log piles (some of which are waiting for our wood-drying shed to be complete, and are starting to decay in the meantime).

Trametes versicolor (turkey-tail) looks exactly like its name, growing on a whole clump of oak logs waiting to go into our new shed. There were others here too (*Stereum sp*) – growing in wonderful wavy lines of orange and yellow along the splits in the bark.

Sulphur tuft fungi (*Hypholoma fasciculare*) were present too – a particularly good display being present on a tree that had fallen before we bought our woods, due to rotting of the roots from waterlogging. This log is amazing, covered with lichens and moss as well as fungi in the autumn. The underside of the gills are often a beautiful sulphur-yellow colour, although not always. But they formed the most elegant groups.

There were also a lot of mycena fungi (Bonnet fungi) growing on smaller logs and in cavities on the larger logs. These varied in size, colour and shape, but were extremely beautiful and delicate. Some of these were also growing on an old pile of wood chippings.

Another wonderful fallen oak log is covered with spectacular orange fungi (which I couldn't identify) every year, and this year is no exception – these beautiful fruiting bodies are spectacular, bright and enticing.

As for living trees, there were relatively few fungi growing on them, but we found a splendid specimen of chicken-of-the-woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) on one of our wonderful hollow old oak trees. Associated with dead or dying wood, this is quite common on oak trees that have a dead centre. The tree itself is very healthy, and provides brilliant habitat for woodpeckers and owls, but with deadwood in the centre, it is an ideal place for this fungus to grow. This fungus is supposed to be edible and taste like chicken, but I have not tried it.

Another wonderful hollow tree yielded the Beefsteak fungus (*Fistulina hepatica*), growing right up inside the hollow trunk. Again, a lovely healthy tree but with a completely hollow trunk. Again, this fungus is associated with decaying wood, and obviously relishes the environment in this hollow tree. It apparently causes brown lines or marks in the oak wood, and is thus very prized by people making decorative wooden furniture or items from oak wood, because of the lines and patterns it produces.

On the woodland floor, there were some spectacular specimens of shaggy parasol mush-



Mycena fungi (bonnet) on log

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. <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/

rooms (*Chlorophyllum locodes*), although the common parasol mushrooms (*Macrolepiota procera*) that we had so many of last year seemed to be absent this year. The main differentiating features are the shaggier cap and the gills that turn pink with handling and bruising, both features of the shaggy parasol. The latter can cause tummy upsets, although both are said to be edible – I've only eaten the common parasol mushroom.



Hypholoma fasciculare (Sulphur tuft) on a mossy log

edge of the path were some earthballs (*Scleroderma citrinum*) (similar to puffballs but with a much thinner outer shell containing the spores).

We also had some complete or semi-complete fungal rings or fairy-rings in and among the undergrowth – including a wonderful ring of clouded agaric (*Clitocybe nebularis*), and an additional patch of huge fruiting bodies near our ditch under a patch of hawthorns.

Also dotted around here and there were lots of deceiver fungi (*Laccaria laccata*) whose appearance varies quite a lot, as well as the false chanterelle (*Hygrophoropsis aruanticus*).

The smooth and greasy-feeling buttercup (*Rhodocollybia butyracea*) was also in abundance. And growing right by the

We only have one mature birch tree in the woods, but were delighted to see our first ever fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), the classic red and white toadstool of fairy tales, nearby. We hope that as we get more birch trees in Betty's Wood, this fungus will become more widespread. This is another mycorrhizal fungus, and we hope its presence in the soil will benefit our sapling birch trees.

There were a number of rust, spot and other smaller fungi too, including a small patch of ergot (very poisonous) near our orchard, growing on some of our grasses. And some spectacular jelly-ear fungus (*Auricularia auricular-judae*) growing on a discarded stick. This is associated with elder, and since we have a lot of elder in our woods, it is not surprising to find this fungus on the many dead elder sticks and stems that we have lying around.



Armillaria mellea (Honey Fungus) on a dead stump



Shaggy Parasol under a hawthorn

Finally, we uncovered the mystery of a dying tree. Before mending our boundary fence a couple of years ago, we decided that a crab apple tree near the boundary looked to be in poor health. We decided to fell it, rather than risk it falling onto the new fence, and also into our neighbouring farmer's field. After two years, it has suddenly developed a flush of honey fungus (*Armillaria mellea*) on the stump – the reason why the poor old tree was in such poor shape. This is a parasite, rather than a friendly fungus, and it has killed the tree. Now fruiting, getting ready to move on to another victim. A spectacular fruiting body, but not one you want to see too often. Thankfully, now we know what this fungus looks like, we can be vigilant for it, and fell affected trees before they become dangerous.

Our overall impression was that, when walking round with a group of enthusiasts, you see a lot more than you do on your own, even if you are taking time and being careful to spot things. A walk the day before made me think there were few fungi present – but I was wrong. Just like with other things – butterflies, moths, dragonflies, birds and wildflowers – being ac-



Jelly-ear on a twig

accompanied by a group of experts and enthusiasts means you get a lot more out of your trip, and you learn a lot more about your woods too. We didn't find anything rare, but we found the fungi that should be there, and were reassured that the woods show a healthy diversity of fungi. One day we will become more expert in identifying them, but for the moment, it is wonderful to enjoy their beauty, and know they are performing essential jobs in recycling the nutrients in the woodland, and helping the trees to benefit from them.

Note: The Latin names of fungi change very regularly and I'm sorry if some of them are incorrect, out of date, or different from the names many of you know them

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – Forest Schools/Delivering the Curriculum Outdoors, a full range of courses for those working with children in their woods, plus other courses for 2012

<http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/page/training-courses>

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/bishops-wood-centre.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>

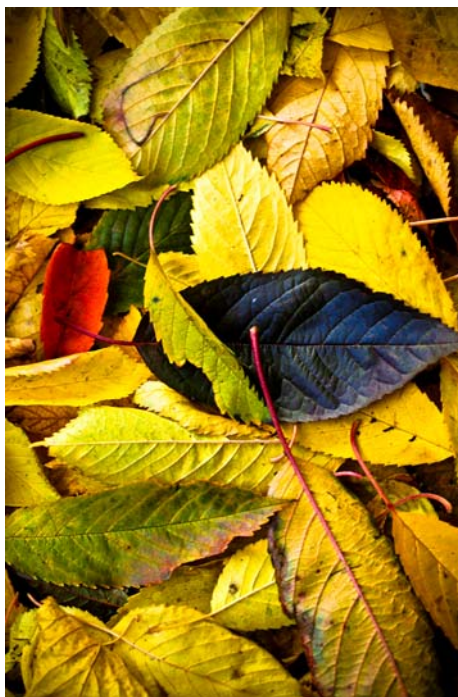
News for small woodland owners

Forestry Commission experts explain why leaves change colour in Autumn

Simon Toomer, the Forestry Commission's Director at Westonbirt Arboretum, explains the science behind changing leaf colour:

"Different chemicals in leaves control the colours we see. During summer the leaves are packed with green chlorophyll, which harnesses energy from sunlight to combine water and CO2 to create sugars (plant food).

"However, once the tree shuts down as it prepares for winter, the chlorophyll breaks down and other coloured chemicals take over. Carotenoids (which give carrots their colour), anthocyanins and tannins give the instantly recognisable colours of autumn, making leaves appear yellow, red and gold.



"Because of the less than glorious summer we have experienced in the UK this year, we expect to see prolonged autumn colour well into November due to the mild, damp weather conditions and no shortage of water."

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/AllByUNID/4997AEEEF7C7037780257A69003B8BB7>

Pip Howard blogs about the pros and cons of providing car parking for public access to woodland

"We must accept that large scale new urban fringe planting may become regarded by local policy makers as accelerating unsocial behaviour unless realistic attention is given to the cost of policing by way of a warden or ranger. Public access for all will suffer due to the costs needed for necessary policing. And we might also have to expect that alongside the FC cuts, considerable amounts of unsavoury rubbish will appear more frequently in the English countryside. It is not the sign of a new phenomenon, merely the visible reality of what budget cuts to

the FC workforce means.

Forest rangers are one of the oldest land management professions, with an important yet often hidden role. To further promote woodlands for all, we cannot allow this vital element of woodland management to disappear completely, as the consequences will become upsettingly obvious very quickly indeed."

A thoughtful discussion around the implications of more urban fringe planting, and the potential impact of cuts in forestry staff.

<http://www.forestcomms.org/profiles/blogs/footpaths-yes-car-parks-no-the-unsavoury-consequences-of-public>

Pip Howard also blogs about the way in which consultation over forestry (and other issues) is managed in England

Are we doing well, or not so well...?

"Consultation is corrupt in England. Referral to case study always includes those 'handpicked' by thinktanks, which concentrate solely on economic success and which cannot work in the English landscape, because they were designed for another. Consultation is now an industry in itself and is thus heavily manipulated." Strong opinions indeed—but do you agree?

http://www.forestcomms.org/profiles/blogs/pong?xg_source=activity

App for reporting invasive plant species

What do you do if you spot an invasive species as you are walking around the town or countryside, or your own woodland? Now there is an easy way of reporting these invasive aliens, using a web site, and associated apps for Android and iPhone. Developed by the University of Bristol, this app comes with photos and descriptions, allowing you to identify these alien plants quickly and allows you to upload a photo tagged with your location. Citizen science in action.

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

Grasslands Trust goes into liquidation

"It is with enormous regret that the Trustees of The Grasslands Trust have decided to place the charity into liquidation. This is due to a combination of factors: the unexpected collapse of our plans to purchase a farm in Herefordshire late last year, a decline in unrestricted income essential to support running costs and difficulties securing matched funding for projects. Despite a concerted effort by staff to generate emergency funds and cut costs, The Grasslands Trust is unable to continue trading lawfully.



This is an immensely sad time given what the charity has achieved in the ten years of its existence. We would like to extend an enormous thank you to all our staff, supporters, funders, volunteers, partners and friends who have helped us since 2002."

The Grasslands Trust have produced a lovely report into the status of species-rich grasslands and the impact and effectiveness (or lack of) of stewardship schemes in protecting this habitat. It is free to download while the web site remains active—worth visiting before it is too late!

http://www.grasslands-trust.org/sites/glands.whitefusehub.com/files/files/Natures%20Tapestry%2028pp%20Final_LR-small.pdf

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

ICF Launches new chain of custody scheme for ash to help contain spread of Chalara dieback

The ICF have launched a chain of custody scheme that allows all ash seedlings and saplings to be traced, which should assist in control of Chalara dieback of ash. This scheme came into being before the announcement of the ash import ban at the end of October, but should still be helpful in tracing provenance of native ash seedlings.

<http://www.charteredforesters.org/resources/multimedia/news-and-features/news/item/127-icf-hosts-meeting-of-major-forestry-players-in-battle-against-disease-imports/>

Children don't need wrapping in cotton wool!

FC Scotland message to European Forest Pedagogics Congress. Children need to be allowed to get outside, get dirty, play, learn to assess risks, and develop their outdoor skills.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPRByCountryLang/4ED54691716C404380257A8C002CBA18>

Survey from Natural England – My Environment Project

Following from the Natural Environment White Paper, the Government has asked Natural England to deliver a service called My Environment, which “*will help people find all the information they need in one place to make it easier to explore, understand, enjoy, and protect the natural environment in England.*”

They are asking for input via a survey to help them shape the service, and deliver what people want. It is a short survey.

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/advice/myenvironment/default.aspx>

Do you own a woodland next to a river or other water-course?

Guidance on your rights and responsibilities are here—what you are allowed to do, what you must not do, and your responsibilities to keep water courses clear and free from pollution. All in this downloadable guide. <http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/flho0912bwup-e-e.pdf>

New FC Grants and Regulations update

A new online application scheme is now available for grants and felling licences. There is a clarification on use of a Woodland Planning Grant to apply for a Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant. There is a winter moratorium on felling of larch if you are in Zone 1 (phytophthora control zone) to prevent the further spread of the disease. Check if you are in one of these zones.

Because the current Rural Development Plan for England is expiring in 2013 and we are transitioning to a new programme, there are new deadlines for receipt and approval of Forestry Commission management grants. The FC have stated that ALL payments under the new programme from 2014 onwards will require a woodland management plan. So, be prepared and draw up a plan if you are planning to submit a grant application under the new scheme, when it is announced.

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Email-Alert-121023.pdf/\\$FILE/Email-Alert-121023.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Email-Alert-121023.pdf/$FILE/Email-Alert-121023.pdf)

Headline results from Forest Survey

The headline results from the recent online Forest Survey for England is now on the Sylva Foundation web site. There is also notification of a December conference at Oxford University—Sarah Walters, the SWOG Newsletter Editor is one of the speakers at this conference.

See <http://www.sylva.org.uk/blog/headline-results-from-british-woodlands-survey-2012/>

UK Forestry Facts and Figures

Published by FC on 26th September, this gives details of forestry and woodlands in the UK. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCFS212.pdf/\\$FILE/FCFS212.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCFS212.pdf/$FILE/FCFS212.pdf) The UK re-

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

<http://tinyurl.com/69176s7>

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 hurdlemaking 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

mains the least wooded country in the EU, by a very large margin. It also remains a major importer of wood and wood products, although UK production of wood and wood products, and employment in the forestry and forestry products industries continues to rise. The majority of this increase is in softwood and its products. New planting also reached a record level in 2011, with 12.7 thousand hectares being planted, the majority of this being in Scotland with only 2.6 thousand hectares planted in England and 0.6 thousand in Wales.

The proportion of the population in all age groups visiting woodlands fell in 2011.

The British public value SSSI and would be willing to pay more for its upkeep

A study published in July 2012 shows that the British public, when asked to place a value on the services provided by SSSI using the "willingness to pay" principle, showed that they would be willing to pay £956 million annually to secure the current level of benefits provided by SSSI and a further £769 million if all sites were in favourable condition. Currently, the management costs of these areas run at £111 million. The public would be willing to pay more for good management of these sites. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212041612000095>

Badger Cull in England postponed until 2013

The reason given was that unexpectedly large numbers of badgers were found following a survey in the proposed pilot cull areas, calling into question the cost-effectiveness of the cull. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/oct/22/badger-cull-plans-major-setback> - see also discussion on the forum <http://www.swog.org.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=9&t=1340>

Tree Council calling for your hedgerow harvest recipes

What do you make from the produce of your woodlands and hedgerows? If you have a good recipe, you can upload it here, as well as take advantage of the great recipes already there....sloe gin chocolate anyone?

<http://www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk/recipe-categories/submit-your-recipe>

<http://www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk/hedge-recipes>

RFS Wants a Time Log – can you help?

We are on the lookout for a disc of timber approximately 2 inches deep and around 200 years old. Can anyone help!

In the past we have borrowed a 'time log' from the FC which we have used as an educational resource on stands – indicating key historic dates relating to the tree growth rings. However, we would like to develop this idea further as an RFS educational resource which could be made more readily available. Not only would we include the key historic dates but we will also mark out the biological/scientific points of interest on the disc.

If you have just such a timber disc you can spare, please let us know at education@rfs.org.uk And if you know anyone who would be able to polish and mark it up for us too that would be a bonus!

Woodland Trust think England is becoming deforested

Without specific initiatives, like the Jubilee Woods, the tendency is for England to lose, rather than gain forest cover – so say the Woodland Trust, who think England needs to up its game in terms of woodland creation.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.presscentre.com/News-Releases/Is-England-becoming-deforested-c81.aspx>

Forest Research News Autumn 2012 now available online

Includes articles on use of green infrastructure to relieve urban heat stress, Welsh peat-

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

lands, understanding forests and CO2 and more. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FR_News_Autumn_2012.pdf/\\$FILE/FR_News_Autumn_2012.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FR_News_Autumn_2012.pdf/$FILE/FR_News_Autumn_2012.pdf)

Ecotype - from Forest Research Ecologists

Autumn newsletter is now online, with articles on sustainable woodland management and ground flora, ecological site classification version 3, and impacts and monitoring of wild boar [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Ecotype55.pdf/\\$FILE/Ecotype55.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Ecotype55.pdf/$FILE/Ecotype55.pdf)

Growing Places Newsletter from Forestry Commission – Economic and Social Research Newsletter

Autumn 2012 edition now available. Includes the Independent Forestry Panel report, woodland-related social enterprises, land management, ecosystem services and other articles. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/growing_places10.pdf/\\$FILE/growing_places10.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/growing_places10.pdf/$FILE/growing_places10.pdf)

DECC New Renewable Heat Incentive Consultation – Proposals for Domestic Scheme

Details on the DECC web site – you can download the consultation documents and supporting documents and respond to the consultation on the scheme via this web page. This is important, particularly because of the inclusion of biomass boiler systems in the scheme, and the potential impact on woodlands.

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/rhi_domestic/rhi_domestic.aspx

Reminder about RFS Excellence in Forestry Awards 2013

Experts are looking to find the best woodlands - large or small - in a region which stretches from Worcestershire to Cumbria to act as local beacons of good practice. At stake are £1000 top prizes and £500 second prizes in each of five different categories.

Also being sought are the most inspirational projects involving nurseries, schools or other educational organisations which increase young people's understanding and appreciation of the environmental, social and economic potential of trees, woodlands and forests and of the link between trees and everyday wood products.

The Royal Forestry Society (RFS) Excellence in Forestry Awards rotate around the country. For 2013 the RFS has linked up with Forestry Commission England to offer an urban forestry category for the first time, alongside four other woodland awards, each recognising good practice – Multipurpose (Duke of Cornwall Award), Community, Silviculture and Small Woodlands (up to 20ha, sponsored by woodlands.co.uk).

Entries must be received by 4 March 2013, and judging will be held in May and June 2013. The woodland awards will be presented at an event during July.

Further details and entry forms are available by following the RFS Excellence in Forestry 2013 links at www.rfs.org.uk or contact Competition Co-ordinator Trefor Thompson at rfscompetition@boyns.net or call him on 01824 704230.

ARG- UK (Amphibian and Reptile Group) New Online Recording System

You can now record casual sightings or amphibians or reptiles, as well as results of surveys online at the ARG new portal. If you see an amphibian or reptile, please record it here <http://www.arguk.org/recording>

New Forestry Survey online from DEFRA

Help shape the future of forestry in the wake of the Independent Forestry Panel report – the second round of surveys is now available from DEFRA. Your chance to have your say on how forestry can be supported, and how a future Forest Services organisation could operate and what the priorities might be.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FORESTS2>

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.living-wood.co.uk/green_wood_work_courses.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)

Courses and Events

One-day meeting to discuss British Woodlands Survey at Oxford University

The conference will cost only £25 for whole day and will include some great speakers, as well as a contribution from the SWOG Newsletter Editor, Sarah. Conference will take place on 11th December 2012. http://www.oxforduniversitystores.co.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?modid=1&prodid=5487&deptid=122&compid=1&prodvarid=0&catid=1703



From Smallwoods – the Greenwood Centre

Courses include coppicing, first aid, introduction to forest schools and tree diseases

<http://smallwoods.org.uk/courses-events/courses-calendar/>

From the Sustainability Centre

Sustainable woodland management, permaculture, festive willow craft, winter tree ID

http://www.sustainability-centre.org/courses_adult_detail.php?id=50

From Assington Mill

Traditional woodland management, 13th November. Other courses run at Assington Mill include Hedgelaying, and courses on keeping pigs, goats, sheep and chickens.

<http://www.assingtonmill.com/courses/coppicing-traditional-woodland-management>

From Woodland Skills Centre

Coppicing course – 18th November and 17th March. Other courses include bushcraft and woodland living. Details on <http://www.woodlandskills.com/#/learn-coppicing/4530848900>

Practical workshops in Cumbria

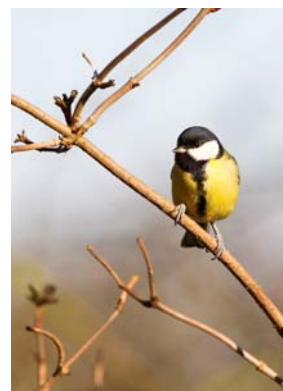
Some workshops are planned for 2013 to demonstrate how even small woodlands can be managed to their potential. These workshops will demonstrate equipment that can be used in small and difficult to access areas, and show how even shelter belts can be sustainably managed. Details on Forestry Commission web site <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/1D99FB8EBAE05D3E80257A76002B1ED9>

FSC have winter and autumn courses running in many locations

Epping Forest has Hedgelaying and winter tree ID courses, as well as woodland photography. Flatford Mill has winter birdwatching. Margam has coastal birdwatching. 2013 programmes available for all the FSC Centres on <http://www.field-studies-council.org/centres.aspx>

BTO Professional Bird Survey Techniques Courses

November 2012 and February 2013 in Stirling and Norfolk respectively. A two day professional certificated course. Details on <http://www.bto.org/news-events/training/professional-courses> Details of residential bird surveying courses, bird-



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

Mark Fisher Art

Woodland-based art days for all abilities

www.markfisherart.co.uk

watching courses and bird identification courses for 2013 are now also online at <http://www.bto.org/news-events/training/training-programme>

The Mammal Society - Brochure for 2013

Training courses from the Mammal Society now released for 2013 in their new brochure. Courses include dormouse ecology, badgers, pine martens, mammal survey methods, camera trapping, small mustelids and mammal photography

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



Tree Diseases—A Growing Concern for Woodland Owners/Managers

A workshop, organised by Heartwoods, and supported by the Forestry Commission, Smallwoods, FERA, DEFRA and the Rural Development Programme for the West Midlands, is to be held on Friday 7th December at Cholmondeley Estate and Gardens. This will cover important emerging threats including *Phytophthora ramorum*, red band needle blight, oak declines, bleeding cankers and *Chalara* dieback of ash. There will be both indoor presentations and outdoor walks to see trees and plants threatened by diseases. It costs £10 including lunch and refreshments.

It is very important for all woodland owners to be up to speed on tree diseases and this would be an excellent way of learning about them from the real experts. It is aimed at woodland owners and managers within the Northern Marches region, although open to anybody, particularly those with woodlands in the Midlands.

Contact the Heartwoods office on 01952 435860 or email info@heartwoods.co.uk for more information

Contributions Gratefully Received

This newsletter is YOUR newsletter, not Sarah's blog (*Editor: I already have one of those!*), so we would very much welcome your contributions to it. I have just received two excellent contributions for the Christmas newsletter—but we can always do with more! You don't have to write a lot—nor do you have to be a literary genius. But what we WOULD like is some of your enthusiasm for your woods, and the things you do there, to come over to others. Have you recently staged an event at your woods? Have you recently come across a solution to a problem and would like to share it with others? Do you run any courses in your woods?

Or have you attended something elsewhere—a woodfair, a SWOG meeting, a woodland management or crafts course? Are you creative? Do you write poetry or music based on your woods—you are welcome to share links to videos and write something about your work.

And we would LOVE your photographs—of your wood, people enjoying the woods, people working in the woods, the wildlife, the trees, the plants....really, anything!

Or do you have a professional skill you'd like to describe and pass on? Or have you bought any really bling new kit recently, and would like to review it for the Newsletter. Book reviews are also very much welcomed—if you read something you loved, or alternatively something you thought was a waste of money, then let us know and pass it on.

If you are running any future events in your woods, and would like to drum up support, please tell us—we'll feature it in the newsletter for you.

Please send any contributions to sarah@swog.org.uk



On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk

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.

John Seymour's 'The Lore of the Land' ~ by Angus

Angus reviews a wonderful new book about self-sufficiency and living with the land in a harmonious way. Advocating a return to small scale management, reduction in units of management, and is full of practical "how to" explanations and pictures. A great book for anybody who prefers doing to theory.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/john-seymours-the-lore-of-the-land/>

Having a stag party in a woodland – making spoons ~ by David Alty

A very alternative way to spend a stag party by making spoons

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/having-a-stag-party-in-a-woodland-making-spoons/>



British hedges (in woodlands, gardens and farms) ~ by Angus

We love our hedges – but what about their past and future. Attitudes have changed, from subsidies to grub them up towards conservation and regeneration. Read all about it here.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/british-hedges-in-woodlands-gardens-and-farms/>

The Great Storm of 87 ~ by Lewis

Do you remember it? What was the impact in your area or your woodland? Lewis recalls the storm, the aftermath and also what has happened since by way of restoration and regeneration.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/the-great-storm-of-87/>



Durham Badgers – and friends ~ by Graham Temby

Graham writes about the Durham County Badger Group and their activities – very topical in the light of recent controversies. They also provide lots of activities and educational material for adults and children. Find out more.

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

Guides to Tree and Woodland Flower ID

Woodlands.co.uk have free online guides to identification of trees and woodland wildflowers. If you would like to learn how to identify common woodland trees and important woodland wildflowers, please have a look at the web site, and at the Woodlands.co.uk smartphone app (<http://tom.woodlands.co.uk/about-us/apps/>)

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/tree-identification/> and <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-flowers/>

Videos—Chalara dieback of ash

Not on woodlandsTV, but still a very important video for everybody to watch and learn from—the ICF has produced a video demonstrating the main symptoms and signs of Chalara dieback of ash. Essential viewing if you are going out and about inspecting your ash trees.

<http://www.charteredforesters.org/resources/multimedia/video-gallery/viewvideo/24/pests-diseases/chalara-fraxinea-life-cycle-and-symptoms/>

On the SWOG Forum

Newsletter - November 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

First of all, we welcomed **countryboy** to the forum, with a woodland in Hertfordshire—if you are nearby and would like to get in touch, have a look at the forum.

Ratcatcher also joined the forum—still looking for his ideal wood. We also welcomed our first Irish member **whatisstheatnow** from Tipperary. Any more Irish woodland owners would be very welcome. **Alex** also joined us—a farmer from North Wales who has a small larch plantation and heats the farmhouse entirely with wood. **StanP535** also joined—he has an HND in woodland management and arboriculture, and is hoping to help our members on the forum in future. A big welcome to everybody who joined us in October.

Fuzzy-feltbloke is in the Solihull/Warwickshire area and is looking to purchase hazel stakes and binders for hedge-laying courses, preferably from local sources. Can you help?

Following Kevin McLeod's TV series on his woodland hut, the issue of caravans and whether you are allowed to keep them at the woods, and if so how many, and what permission you need has surfaced again. Another planning postcode lottery.

Terry is looking for advice on how he can earn an income from his woodland using low-impact activities and is open to suggestions. If you have earned income from your woods, and have an idea how he can do the same, please visit the forum. Lots of suggestions so far.

Covert ops is looking for a small woodland or copse in Staffordshire where he can hold Airsoft games—like paintball but low impact. Can you help?

Fissidens is the county recorder for mosses and liverworts in Sussex. He is looking for woodland owners to allow him to survey in their woods and build up a picture of local

species. Can you help?

Splodger asks how you can identify the possibility that bats are roosting in dead trees or holes in trees, particularly now the season for clearing dead trees, and dealing with tree safety issues is upon us. Can you help?

Cinimod has found a new app for the horse chestnut leafwatch project and posted the link on the forum—thank you! <http://www.conkertreescience.org.uk/>

Domeyhead has recently bought woodland in Pengaer, Cerdigion and is looking to make contact with neighbouring owners—can you help?

Oldclaypaws is looking for advice on how to create a woodland timber cabin using timber sourced from his own woodland. If you have any practical advice to offer, or have undertaken a similar project, please see the forum.

The badger cull—and its abandonment for this year—drew a lot of discussion, some of it heated. SWOG takes no specific point of view on this, but individual members understandably have strong opinions. Contribute to the debate on the forum.

Alex asked whether we put up signs saying “Private—Keep Out” on our woodlands. Well, what do you do? And why?

The Barrowers started a discussion around the relative intensity and variety of autumn colours—what is it like near you?

A discussion thread has been started for the Chalara dieback of ash—keep watching, as the latest will be posted there.

Simon Fisher asked about the wood-drying oven seen on Tales from the Wild Wood—can you help?

Hornbeam-mad is looking for a wood-fired stove with a hob/oven. Can you help?

Next Newsletter: December 2012

Contributions for the November Newsletter need to be with me by Sunday 25th November. Please send contributions to sarah@swog.org.uk. Thank you.