

**Small Woodland Owners' Group**

**August 2016**



**Effortless extraction: horse logging**

**Butterflies – the big count**

**Woodfairs – discounted entry!**



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It's butterfly season - don't forget to take part in the Big Butterfly Count with Butterfly Conservation.

We will be swooping around the country over the next couple of months and look forward to seeing lots of you at Treefest at Westonbirt, the APF show near Stratford-upon-Avon and finally at Bentley in West Sussex.

The Small Woodland Owner's Group has been formed to aid the enjoyment, diversity and conservation of British woodlands. The company Woodlands.co.uk sponsors the group, so membership is completely free and events are

free of charge unless otherwise stated. SWOG is open to anyone interested in the management or the enjoyment of woodland.

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## SWOG COURSE LIST 2016



Courses are listed by location. You can search the lists by entering a key word.



## SWOG Course Listings

Anyone who buys a wood from Woodlands.co.uk is given £300 towards a woodland course to help towards owners' enjoyment and knowledge. These courses can encompass anything from basket-weaving, green woodworking or pole lathe turning, to chainsaw tuition and woodland management. Buyers are asked to write a short resumé of their course, noting how effective they

found it, and whether they would recommend it to others.

We are gradually incorporating all these valuable comments into a database listing which can be searched by area or course topic. We hope it will be useful to anyone searching for help and guidance in choosing a woodland course. View it on the SWOG website here:

[www.swog.org.uk/courses-4](http://www.swog.org.uk/courses-4)

## Big Butterfly Count 2016

Butterflies have flown down the sunlit corridors of our summer weather and back into the national consciousness in the last couple of weeks with the launch of the annual **Big Butterfly Count** by the charity Butterfly Conservation.

More than three-quarters of the UK's butterflies have declined in the last 40 years, with some common species, such as the Small Tortoiseshell, suffering significant slumps. There are some excellent resources on the website, including identification charts and apps for your phone. Those entertaining children over the summer might be interested in the apps as an alternative to Pokémon Go!

Woodland owners have an important part to play in encouraging butterfly populations in their woods.

## SWOG meeting Shropshire 13 August – a few places left!

Gerrit Groenewold is the owner of 18 acres of glorious Shropshire countryside. His wood, at Lilleshall near Telford, is historically significant and includes extensive limestone works, as well as a lake and, among thousands of trees, a few mature elms. The land was owned by the Dukes of Sutherland in the 19th century, who mined the limestone, creating both open cast and underground mines and installed a small railway to transport the stone to the nearby canal.

Gerrit acquired the wood five years ago and has since spent a great deal of time (and money) on making safe the stonework in the tunnels and limestone kilns. The terrain is undulating / steep. The existing tracks are maintained and new tracks were built to manage the woodland.

He is very kindly opening the woodland to SWOG members on 13 August at 11am and will provide a guided tour. It is a great opportunity to hear about Gerrit's experiences

The presence or otherwise of butterflies is a good indicator of biodiversity in a wood. Numbers have been declining especially among woodland specialists, but simply by creating scallops along rides, clearing overhanging vegetation along tracks and a identifying a few sunlit spaces, owners can help improve their chances. Butterflies need linked corridors of sunlight to flourish, feed and breed. There is specific advice for woodland owners on the **Butterfly Conservation website**.



*A Speckled Wood butterfly*



in restoring various parts of the site, learn about track building, community group involvement, woodland management plans and historical restoration works. He hopes to build connections between like-minded people in the area.

It's a beautiful part of the country and this unusual woodland is well worth a visit. We will confirm details nearer the time, but the Red House Inn pub is within walking distance or members are very welcome to bring packed lunches. If you would like to attend, please email [judith@swog.org.uk](mailto:judith@swog.org.uk).



PROMOTING THE WISE MANAGEMENT OF TREES AND WOODS

## RFS launches Wise About Woods one-day courses

The Royal Forestry Society (RFS) is launching an exciting new series of one-day training courses to support new and novice woodland owners and other enthusiasts who are looking to get to grips with the fundamentals of woodland management and conservation.

The courses are led by well-known experts in forestry practice and training and will be held at several locations around the country in September and October 2016. Two courses will take place at the RFS's Hockeridge Wood near Berkhamsted, and the others will take place at Lynford Arboretum, Thetford Forest, Norfolk and Lowther Estate, Cumbria.

RFS Education Manager Ted Wilson says: 'The topics we are presenting in this first series are based on feedback from research we have completed in consultation with new woodland owners. We are delighted to work with esteemed and highly experienced forestry professionals who will lead each course. Our small group format will enable learning to be informal and personal, and highly rewarding. enjoyment from looking after trees and woods.'

*Pictured is forestry student Mauro Lanfranch from the University of Cumbria's National School of Forestry, one of the winners of the first RFS Viking Bursary.*



### Course 1: Essential guide to caring for your wood, Wednesday 21 September 2016

Instructor: Professor Julian Evans OBE FICFor  
Location: Ashley Green and RFS Hockeridge Wood, near Berkhamsted, Bucks

### Course 2: Getting to grips with conifer identification, Wednesday, 28 September 2016

Instructor: Matt Parratt  
Location: Lynford Arboretum, Thetford Forest, Norfolk

### Course 3: Essentials for measuring your trees Wednesday, 5 October 2016

Instructor: Mike Jones MICFor  
Location: Ashley Green and RFS Hockeridge Wood, near Berkhamsted, Bucks

### Course 4: Grading and measuring your timber, Wednesday, 12 October 2016

Instructor: Gavin Munro  
Location: Lowther Castle and Estate, near Penrith, Cumbria.

### Prices: RFS member £55, non-members £65

The courses are open to members and non-members, and will be a great starting point for anyone who wishes to learn more about caring for trees and woods. For more information and to book go to [www.rfs.org.uk/events](http://www.rfs.org.uk/events) and follow the training courses links.

### RFS Membership

Recently, new woodland owners who purchase their woods from Woodlands.co.uk have been given a free year-long subscription to the Royal Forestry Society. Membership includes a quarterly magazine, discounts on training, courses and conferences, as well as access to the members' area of the website.

If you would like to renew your membership, or even join for the first time, the rates are on the [RFS website here](http://www.rfs.org.uk).

# APF 2016

## APF Show 15-17 September 2016

APF celebrates its 21st birthday at the Ragley Estate, Alcester in Warwickshire in September. It not only showcases the very latest machines and technology being used in the industry, but also displays traditional woodland crafts and horse logging.

SWOG and Woodlands are delighted to be attending for the first time and hope to see many of you there. The Ragley Estate is just south of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire.

Tickets are £20 on the gate. **Advance tickets are discounted to £18** and groups of ten or more pay £16 each. They are available via the **APF website here**.



## Woodcraft Courses, Northumberland Centre for Greenwood Craft

In September 2015 Maurice Pyle and his team at Woodsmith moved into a new workshop at Kirkley Hall Farm, Northumberland. Part of Northumberland College, Kirkley Hall Farm's main function is the training of students of all ages in land-based skills such as farming and forestry. As Maurice says, 'There might be a bit more cow poo than we are used to, but they're a perfect partner for us I'd say'.

It's a large, light and inspiring indoor space with big double doors that give a great outdoor woody vibe. But at the same time its a comfortable space to learn woodcraft all year round. The autumn schedule of green woodworking courses is as follows.

**Wooden bowls and spoons** 15–16 October 2016 £190

**Tool sharpening** 21 October 2016 £90

**Green woodworking: an introduction**

22–23 October 2016 £190

**Axe workshop** 29 October 2016 £90

**Build your own pole lathe and learn to use it**

4–6 November (+7th if necessary) £395 (+95 for extra day)

**Bowls workshop** 12–13 November 2016 £210

**Certificate in greenwood craft** Jan–April 2017  
24 sessions £1,400

All courses are held at Kirkley Hall Farm, Northumberland. More details are available on the website, [www.woodsmithexperience.co.uk](http://www.woodsmithexperience.co.uk)



## Effortless extraction – horse logging in the woods



*Stuart Freeman, an experienced professional forester and tree surgeon in the Midlands, tells us about his work as a horse logger. Working in SSSI woodlands (Sites of special scientific interest), he came to realise that the environment could be better preserved by using horses rather than machines to extract felled trees.*

‘Horses have been employed to pull timber from the forests and woodlands of the United Kingdom for centuries. As recently as 1960, horse extraction accounted for 50% of the total national timber production and at that time 400 horses were employed in Forestry Commission woodlands alone. The decline of the working forest horse began after the Second World War as rising costs of labour and an increasing demand for home-grown timber led to the mechanisation of extraction to cut costs and increase production.

Woodland management is slowly increasing across the country as more and more people realise their value as a productive resource, whether it be for wood fuel, charcoal, coppice products, sawn timber – or just recreation. While mechanised systems have reduced the direct costs of forestry operations, the potential damage that mechanisation can inflict on the

woodland resource and environment has become an important issue.

### **True horse power**

Horses, however, are light, quiet and manoeuvrable. Their use minimises damage to the woodland floor; produces no exhaust or noise pollution; compaction, ruts and damage are minimised, which helps encourage natural regeneration.

Working in SSSI woodlands, I came to realise that mechanised extraction was simply not an option on such sensitive sites. I enrolled on two courses ran by the British Horse Loggers, and achieved a high level of training to become a qualified horse logger.

I own two horses, a locally bred 14.2 cob called Breeze and the lumberjack Rosso and Queenie, a 16.3 French Comtois. They are both trained to work in all aspects of horse extraction and we operate a range of implements. A swingle tree is the basic tool that helps drag timber; the timber arch is a two-wheeled machine that lifts one end of the timber, reducing friction and increasing the amount of timber one horse can pull. We also use an eight-wheeled forwarder which enables one horse to pull approximately a tonne of timber depending

## Effortless extraction - horse-logging in the woods

on terrain. One horse can usually extract between 7-15 tonnes of timber a day, depending on the terrain.'

### Horse logging contacts

We have featured horse loggers in previous issues of the newsletter and have only ever heard positive reports from owners who have used them in their woodlands. We would love to hear from horse loggers around the country so we can compile a nationwide list, as well as recommendations from owners.



In the past we have featured work by Frankie Woodgate [www.weald-woodscapes.co.uk](http://www.weald-woodscapes.co.uk); Dan Gould [www.lyndwoodforestry.com](http://www.lyndwoodforestry.com) Mike Pritchard of **True Horse Power** works in the north-west.

British Horse Loggers can also supply a list of members: [www.britishhorseloggers.org](http://www.britishhorseloggers.org)

Contact Stuart on 01509 233392 mobile 07547 978172 or find **Total Tree Services** on Facebook. His email address is [j.mcdonagh231@btinternet.com](mailto:j.mcdonagh231@btinternet.com).



### Forest Charter: a unique opportunity for small woodland owners

More than 50 organisations, co-ordinated by the Woodland Trust, are leading UK society in a call for a charter that will ensure that people and trees can stand stronger together in the future. This charter, strengthened by support from all corners of society, will provide guidelines and principles for policy, decision-makers, businesses, communities and individuals.

SWOG is pleased to be supporting a consultation, hosted by Sylva Foundation, that will enable woodland owners and custodians across the UK to help define the 2017 Charter for Trees, Woods and People.



**Charter**  
for Trees, Woods  
and People

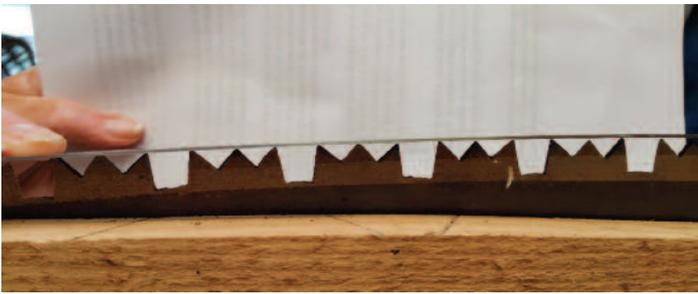
This consultation is the only activity specifically aimed at ensuring the views of woodland owners or are reflected in the charter.

More than two-thirds of woodlands are held in private hands, so it is vital that the voices of woodland owners and custodians, like yours, are captured. Gabriel Hemery, the chief executive of Sylva has written more about it in a blog, **Woodland ownership in the 21st century**. He explains how important small woodland owners are in effecting woodland management to support wildlife and to produce more home-grown timber. The survey really does take only five minutes! To take part, visit: [sylva.org.uk/myforest/charter](http://sylva.org.uk/myforest/charter)

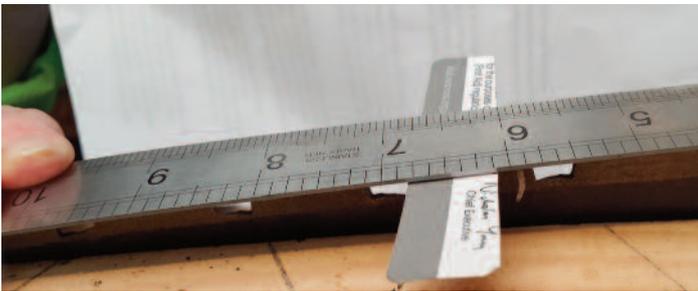
## What to look for in a cross-cut saw

*Gavin Philips, the craftsman behind **Shed Therapy**, provides guidance for green woodworkers.*

### Vertical alignment



*Lay a steel ruler along the top of the teeth.*



*A short tooth will admit a card or feeler gauge between its tip and the ruler*

First, check that teeth line up both vertically and horizontally. No teeth should be out of joint. To check the vertical alignment, fix the saw so the teeth point upward. Lay a flexible straight edge, such as a steel ruler along the top of the teeth. Every tooth should touch the straight edge. Are some teeth higher than others? Often you can just see with the naked eye that some teeth are too short. For greater refinement, try passing a feeler gauge, card, or paper between any short teeth and the straight edge.

It is vital that all the teeth are in line so that they will all touch the bottom of the kerf-cut (the width of the saw blade's cut) and can work equally. Any tooth longer than its neighbours will make the saw jump as it enters the kerf, which will slow your rhythm. A long tooth gets blunt quickly.

### Horizontal alignment

Leave the teeth pointing upward and sight along the line of the saw. Notice how every alternate tooth is set to either right or left. As far as your eye can see, are all the teeth set the same amount? Sometimes one is very obviously out of line. Now place your straight edge flat against the teeth and parallel to the saw-plate. Does the straight-edge wobble on any tooth? If so, that tooth is set too far. If a tooth is not set far enough you can pass a feeler gauge, A4 paper or cigarette paper between straight-edge and that tooth. You can also lay the saw flat and run your finger slowly (and carefully!) along the tooth line. Sometimes you can just feel when one tooth is really proud of its neighbours.

### Rectifying the alignment

If any teeth are out of line, you must get it filed so the teeth are sharp, in-joint and all set the same amount. If it is new, you could try returning it to the maker or vendor to remedy the defects.

Alternatively attend a filing class or find an experienced saw doctor.



*Get a feeler gauge between the straight-edge and one tooth.*

### Saw-filing class with Shed Therapy

*Gavin is one of very few saw doctors in the UK. He also runs filing classes. The next is 8 and 9 Oct 2016 run by saw-tutor Duncan Hill at the **Shed Therapy** workshops in Dalbeattie, Scotland. See his website [www.shedtherapy.com](http://www.shedtherapy.com) for more details.*

*Bob the Bodger has sent in some photos of his activities. He's based in Shropshire and is a keen member of the West Midlands branch of the Association of Polelathes Turners & Greenwood Workers.*

We've been busy sorting out our next coupe.

The badgers have been active digging up tree bee nests, rather like small bumble bees. The hive in one of the coupes is active at last.

Corrinne has had to clear up a large oak sub crown that fell. We've used some to make crude stools/settles for the wood after cleaving.

Fungi abound due to the rain. We've had to have a dangerous ash felled elsewhere. Sadly, the Dryad's Saddle seems to have consumed the heart wood.

Bob, Corine and the rest of the Bodgers will be working and demonstrating their crafts at a number of events during August, including the Blists Hill Steam Fair on 20-21 August and the Shrewsbury Steam Fair 28-29 August.



### Expansion for Dangstein Conservancy

Dangstein Conservancy provides an alternative, viable and sustainable model for small woodlands at Rogate in the South Downs National Park. They involve the local community, run woodland and bushcraft courses and support a forest school, while ensuring that the woodland is managed sustainably. They want to expand their operations to ensure training in traditional woodland skills and crafts can continue to be practiced in small woods and would appreciate letters in support of their application.

Many SWOG members will know of their

work, or have attended their courses in the South Downs National Park. (to read about Rich's course on roundwood timber framing, see the **SWOG website here**). To learn more, please visit the **Dangstein Conservancy** website or their **Facebook page**.



## Woodlands blogs and TV

*Click on the titles to be taken to the full blogs or videos on the [Woodlands.co.uk](http://Woodlands.co.uk) website.*

### TV

#### **Building a treehouse in the woodlands**

Mike Hartley breathes, lives and builds a dream tree house – and explains the engineering and craftsmanship involved.



#### **How to work a mobile sawmill**

Iain and Adrian talking us through the various stages of the mobile milling process. We see the team safely setting up and using their equipment to mill selected timbers. We also hear about the range of benefits of using this small-scale system, including that it enables the focus to be on individual trees as opposed to blanket clearance and so promotes a mixed age woodland, allowing for natural regeneration of trees.

### Woodlands blogs

#### **2nd Eden Valley Scout Camp**

The scouts set off for a Cumbrian woodland and had a fantastic time, learning to carve spoons, camp, and fight off spiders.

#### **Why did we go down to the woods today?**

Forest school practitioners use woodlands to support children and young adults who find traditional learning environments challenging - with amazing results.

#### **Sheds in woods**

Dick offers practical tips for siting and constructing a woodland shed.

#### **What does Brexit mean for UK woodlands?**

Angus ponders the impact of Brexit on

woodland ownership, and wonders whether it will encourage us to value what we have and do more with our woodlands.

#### **Counting butterflies**

Lewis discusses the effects of weather patterns on butterfly populations.

#### **Pollution, bees and foraging**

Lewis explains how pollution can interact with the volatile oils in plants to degrade them, making scents less powerful. Bees therefore have difficulty finding flowers to pollinate.





*Woodlands.co.uk and SWOG will be at Westonbirt, APF and Bentley.*

## Wilderness Gathering

18–21 August 2016  
Bush Farm, West Knoyle, Wilts  
[www.wildernessgathering.co.uk/](http://www.wildernessgathering.co.uk/)

## South Downs Show and Hampshire Woodfair

20–21 August 2016  
Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Hampshire  
[www.southdownsshow.co.uk](http://www.southdownsshow.co.uk)

## Treefest at Westonbirt Arboretum

27–29 August 2016 Tetbury, Gloucestershire  
[www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

## Stock Gaylard Oak Fair

27–28 August 2016  
Sturminster Newton, Dorset  
[www.stockgaylard.com](http://www.stockgaylard.com)

## Wychwood Forest Fair

4 September 2016 Charlbury, Oxfordshire  
[www.wychwoodproject.org](http://www.wychwoodproject.org)

## APF Exhibition

15–17 September 2016  
Ragley Estate, Warwickshire  
[www.apfexhibition.co.uk](http://www.apfexhibition.co.uk)

## Bentley Weald Woodfair

23–25 September 2016 Lewes, East Sussex  
[www.bentley.org.uk/events](http://www.bentley.org.uk/events)

## Surrey Hills Wood Fair

1–2 October 2016 Birtley Estate, Bramley  
[www.surreyhills.org](http://www.surreyhills.org)

## Peebles Wood Market

22–23 October 2016 Tweed Green & Community Hall, Peebles, Scottish Borders  
[www.forest-festival.com/wood-market](http://www.forest-festival.com/wood-market)

## Grown in Britain Week

10–16 October 2016 Various locations  
[www.growninbritain.org](http://www.growninbritain.org)

## Royal Forestry Society Conference

1 November 2016 Making Woodlands Pay  
[www.rfs.org.uk/events](http://www.rfs.org.uk/events)



## Bentley Weald Woodfair – discount tickets

23–25 September 2016 Lewes, East Sussex

The Bentley Woodfair, the annual celebration of woodlands, timber and related crafts, is almost upon us. Once again we can offer a discount to SWOG members. Entry is usually £12 on the day, but we can offer a special discount to SWOG members. Simply **download the voucher** from this link and present it on the gate to secure entrance for a bargain £10. More details are on the **Bentley website here**.