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In the Newsletter this Month

This newsletter is a few days late, thanks to major events in our own woods, but I hope that nonetheless it is welcome, and that you enjoy it. It is not often that you get the opportunity to make a big difference and change the landscape, but in the last fortnight this has come to us. Our own 11 acre ancient semi-natural woodland is sandwiched between farmland on either side, with a SSSI across the canal at the bottom of our wood. In the last couple of weeks, we have had an offer accepted to purchase another 9 acres of field adjacent to our wood (pictured left). This would link our wood with another coppice and hedgerow, a piece of land that is in higher-level stewardship, and thence to a wildlife reserve and SSSI. It will make our wood 20 acres instead of 11, and give us the opportunity to create a new woodland area from scratch. We hope, if all the legal niceties are completed and the purchase goes ahead, to plant some woodland

for coppice management, some wet woodland in the boggy area of the field, and create a wildlife lake with island and a wildflower meadow. All of this has led to a lot more time than I anticipated being taken up with meetings, phone calls and discussions. But we have finally banged in a stake to mark the new boundary. I guess it isn't often that a newsletter is late because a new wood is being born!

In this newsletter we share our own experience with wildflower meadows, as well as contributed articles on managing a woodland situated on a steep slope, on how the delay in a planning application led to changing perspectives on the use of a woodland, and information about forthcoming courses, grant funding, training and events.

Sarah Walters (sarah@swog.org.uk)

Wildflower Meadows—Our Experience

Wildflower meadow areas are a great asset to wildlife and biodiversity in woodland areas, whether you are looking to establish them in glades, at the margins, or in larger areas that are clear of trees. But they aren't always very easy to establish. Here is our experience of successes and failures in our own clearing.

Woods are not usually associated with wildflower meadows, but our wood has a large clearing comprising a damp area with some grassland and areas of bramble. One of the things we have been keen to do since we took ownership of the wood in 2007 is to improve the variety of wildflowers available, to provide nectar for insects and food-plants for larvae and caterpillars of different species of butterfly.

However we quickly found that establishing a wildflower meadow area is not sim-

ple. It is not just a case of buying some wildflower seed, chucking it down and seeing what grows. We have found that the preparation of the ground is absolutely key, and if you miss out or skimp on a step, the whole process can go wrong. Even if you think you have got it right, sometimes it just doesn't work, and you have to start again.

Wildflowers like soil that is low in fertility. This can often be a problem in a woodland area, where there is plentiful leaf litter to make the soil fertile. Our particular wood was also over-fertile thanks to a century of animal-grazing with sheep, pigs, horses and goats – all that nitrogen is not friendly to important native species.

You therefore need to impoverish the soil in some way. Ploughing is one way in which this can be done, but unfortunately

in a woodland, ploughing is not always the way to go, as it can damage tree roots. Therefore we had to settle for other ways of disturbing the soil. At first we tried to rake off the surface with a muck fork on the front of our tractor: That lasted only a short while before we broke the hydraulic ram. Obviously not a good idea. We then tried using a scuffle (sort of a heavy duty harrow) dragged behind the tractor, which disturbed the ground very well.



We then made the mistake of thinking that because we had grass already in the soil, all we had to do was plant wildflowers and the grass would come back on its own. Unfortunately this is not the case – you need to sow a grass and wildflower mix or one or two dominant species will take over. In our case we grew a lovely area of dock from seed already in the soil, and that batch of wildflower seed was wasted. The advice that we had was that this time we would either have to plough or spray to get rid of the dock, and because of the proximity of tree roots, spraying with Roundup was our only option.

This time we used a scuffle to prepare the area (less disturbance than ploughing) and finally planted a seed mix containing a mixture of grasses and wildflowers from Naturescape in Langar, near Nottingham. This company were very helpful in providing advice, and also grow vast quantities of native wildflower seed. Another key step was to roll the seed well in – fortunately we'd hired a road roller to make a gravel track, and were able to use that to roll in the seed. After a year, this mix had germinated and provided a reasonable mix of plants – different grasses, yellow rattle, campion, hemp-nettle, vetches, a few poppies, some wild pansies, and yarrow. We mowed it for the first time this spring but so far have been disappointed in the variety of the re-growth

– grass has become relatively dominant. This may be because the germination rate of yellow rattle, which suppresses grass growth, was initially quite poor.

We also had another area that was a back-filled trench from the insertion of a land-drain. This back-fill was much less fertile as it contained a mix of topsoil and subsoil, and a little roadstone. We planted the same mix as in the original area, and this autumn-planted mix grew really well, high-

lighting that a soil that has naturally low fertility is going to do best of all. This area grew a very wide variety of wildflowers including sorrel, rattle, cicely, poppies, mayweed, ox-eye daisy, yarrow, vetches, rattle, campion and hemp-nettle. This area has just been mown for the first time and is alive with butterflies and insects. It has been by far the most successful meadow area we have sown to date.

When mowing it is a good idea, if you can, to remove the mowings as otherwise this will mulch the soil and increase fertility. We were not able to do this.

Mowing is usually done in late spring or autumn (May-June or September) with the aim of knocking back the dominant species and also of spreading existing seed, but in the first year you can mow at other times if certain species are becoming dominant. A meadow with a predominance of spring plants will be mowed in September, and a meadow with a predominance of summer plants will be mowed in May-June.

This year three more areas have been prepared and seeded but have suffered from the drought conditions in the Midlands. Despite a lot of watering, the drought-tolerant species have thrived at the expense of others, and some areas have become overtaken by dock – the deep tap-root giving dock the advantage. Mowing earlier than we would normally do has knocked back the dock, and allowed some of the other species, including common

Oak Timber Framing Course 25 - 29 October 2010

This five day course is organised by Woodnet and Plumpton College at Flimwell.

It is aimed at those interested in learning how to construct an oak framed building. This is a practical hands-on course with participants working together to construct and erect an 8ft by 10ft frame with a roof. You will learn the main skills required to lay out the frame, mark and cut the joints, construct the roof, make the pegs, and erect the frame. The course uses hand tools with demonstration of the use of power tools and is held in the workshop at Flimwell.

Your tutors Chris Nutley and Will English of 'Sussex Oak Framers' will guide you through the week, teaching you the practical skills and explaining the stages in planning and managing a timber frame project.

The next 5 day course runs from Monday 25 October until Friday 29 October 2010

Course fee: £450

Venue: Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, Flimwell, East Sussex, TN5 7PR

Map:

www.maps.google.co.uk/maps?q=TN5+7PR&t=m

To book a place or for further details please
Tel: Plumpton College
01273 92052

Email:

pd@plumpton.ac.uk
www.woodnet.org.uk

Web:

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



sorrel, to come to the fore, and the grass to come through in some areas. Clearly these new areas will need a lot of work to get a variety of wildflowers established.

Wildflowers are also available as plugs, but we have found that the rabbits very quickly locate them and dig them up, as they are relatively isolated, small in number, and easy for them to find. Confronted with a whole meadow, they seem not to do as much damage when it is started from seed, rather than from plugs. Our experience is that each different area, despite being seeded with the same mix, develops its own character. The meadows will grow and develop over the years and seasons, and it will be interesting to follow their progress.

These are our tips for a good meadow:

1. Pick an area with impoverished soil or impoverish it by ploughing if you can.
2. Prepare well – mow, scuffle or rake, rotavate or plough if you can, and roll in the seed.
3. Plant a grass and flower mix, not just flowers, from a reputable supplier such as Naturescape. Use species mixes that suit the soil and environment (they will advise) and only use native wildflowers.
4. Prepare for it to go wrong! If it does, don't panic—learn from your experience and try again.
5. Enjoy the development of the meadow, even if it isn't as you visualised it when you started!

For more information:-

http://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.co.uk/documents/advice_wildflowers.pdf—a leaflet with lots of helpful information

<http://www.floralocale.org/default.asp>—Floralocale is a charity dedicated to preservation of native wildflowers. There is a huge amount of information available there as well as guidance on choosing suppliers

<http://www.naturescape.co.uk/> - Naturescape are a friendly and helpful supplier who can supply a wide range of native wildflower seed grown on their own farm in Nottinghamshire.

Our Woodland on Various Levels—by Steve Smith

Steve Smith has written a very interesting article about managing his wood in North Wales which is set on a steep slope



Heating our winter camp

Our woodland in North Wales is quite steep. It is set back from, and well above, the main road. It has mainly coniferous trees at the higher levels, with some good deciduous trees at lower levels.

The winter of 2009 and 2010 was the second we have been able to enjoy there. The first winter had many pleasant surprises. However we stayed relatively low. Now we have gone higher. The method is to drive in to the lower part, and then carry things that cannot be safely left in the woods to the higher parts. I can carry a stove in a box and our big tent together. Other things are fetched on another trip. There is plenty of work to do, but it has a surprising benefit.

When we purchased our woodland, we were not at all sure about the dead and broken trees we found at higher levels. Also there was a lot of rhododen-

dron in the way. But now the rhododendron has mostly been removed, we can get at the trees. And standing Sitka Spruce that died when about 13 years old makes excellent firewood. In the cold winter, heating was quite easy, unlike the previous winter, when we did not have access to much dry wood. Also the views from that part of the woods are really wonderful. We were there at the moment of 2010's birth, watching fireworks shooting up from distant farms.

Camping at the higher levels has made it much easier to work there. Slowly but surely order has started to appear out of chaos. To those who say that there is no wildlife in our coniferous woods, I can assure you otherwise. We have heard and seen quite a variety of birds and small mammals. They lie low and quiet when we move about. But stay still for long enough, and the animals become more sure of themselves and start to go about their normal way of life, despite our presence.

We also know that we have at least one mammalian predator. The first clue was frequent discoveries of heaps of feathers. However one day I came face to face with a polecat. This is well known to be a very able hunter. The presence of such a predator implies variety and quantity of prey, and that is an indicator of a healthy environment.



Preparing to winch the car on steep ground

When winter was dispelled by a gorgeous Spring we were once again able to enjoy our woodland in more bountiful times. A long dry spell provided an opportunity to take our vehicle up a steeper track. It lost grip on the steepest section, but last year I fitted a winch, and this made short work of the problem. Thus we have been able to get our car to a new high point, and to camp nearby at an intermediate height. Now that summer is here our camping method has changed. There is no longer much need for space heating, but the presence of insects calls for mosquito netting when we are asleep. Also the long days allow us to dispense with lamps almost entirely. We expect to show friends around the woods during these relatively easy times.

Changed Perspectives—Vivien Cruickshank

Planning applications can be the source of great frustration and delays. Vivien describes here how the delay involved in their planning application led to a re-evaluation, and changed perspectives, on the management of their wood.

We bought our wood about five years ago. Occasionally, we'd looked at the Woodland for sale website, but there was never any thing for sale in our neck of the woods, so to speak. We were coming back from doing some shopping, when we saw the sign, by the side of the road. We phoned the agent as soon as we got home, and were told that the sign had

only just gone up, and there were no written details of the woods yet. As soon as it was advertised, we printed the paper and hotfooted it to the wood. We decided very quickly that we wanted to buy it. Having phoned the agent and setting the ball in motion, we just had to wait. I think we went to the wood every day, climbing over the gate and walking round. It was hard to imagine that we would own it, even then. Eventually the sale was complete and we got the key. We could open the gate and drive in.

The wood comprises Larch, Chestnut Coppice, Birch, Scots Pine, a few Norway Spruce, a smattering of Hazel and

Find a course

The Wildlife Trusts

http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=events&search_month=6&search_year=2010

Institute of Chartered Foresters

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

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

For BTCV Short Courses

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

For BTCV long courses please see

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

Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)

To download the short course brochure visit

http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/CAT_Shortcourses_2010.pdf

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

To download the short course brochure, please visit

http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Programme_tcm9-245883.pdf

Low Impact Living Initiative

A course on small woodland management

http://www.lowimpact.org/course_outline_woodland_management.htm

about five Oaks. The soil is sand on iron-stone and pretty acidic.

Unfortunately, there isn't much diversity when it comes to wild flowers, Bluebells, Wood Sorrel, Wood Sage, Foxgloves, and loads of Bracken.

It is said that when moving to a new garden, you should wait a year and see the seasons round, before doing anything. Apart from cutting firewood to feed the Rayburn and woodstove, we left it pretty well alone. We bought books and started reading up on what we could do to manage the wood. We made an appointment with someone from the Forestry Commission. We also put in a permitted development application for a shed. We submitted a five year plan for the wood, which was to thin out the Birch, leave the Larch to mature another few years, coppice the Chestnut, and fell the pines with a view to planting broad leaved trees. The whole plan looked quite daunting, and I wondered if the shed application was such a good idea.

The Permitted Development application mysteriously turned into a full planning application, even though we didn't pay for that, and the form



we used was never questioned. We met with a considerable amount of resistance from local residents and the Council. Even though we put up a good fight, we were eventually turned down. By this time, I was seriously thinking of pulling in a caravan, and a large tin of dark green paint, or alternatively, a container, as a neighbouring owner had done. I was still pretty annoyed at the Council's refusal to treat the application as Permitted Development, so we decided to go to appeal. I didn't have any hopes that the final decision would be any different. More writing, and another woodland visit from the inspector and a representative from the Council. During the visit, the Council representative told the inspector that if we dried any wood, it

must be done off site. The inspector said that was ridiculous.

After waiting a few months more, we finally got the letter. I really was surprised to see that we had been granted permission. It had taken well over a year, with the council, never sticking to the time scale. We got it really, on a technicality. The letter simply said that we had applied for Permitted Development and the Council have to reply within twenty eight days. If they don't, you can go ahead and build. As they had not replied for three months, then permission was automatic. On top of that there were no stipulations.

I think it was at this point that my perspectives changed. By this time, I had realised what a huge task it would be to carry out all this work, and to be honest I didn't have my heart in it.

We arranged for another visit from the

Forestry Commission and saw a different person this time. When we discussed the original plan, he didn't think the work needed carrying out and was of the opinion that it should be

managed with a view to protecting wildlife and not being too tidy.

We have some bees in the wood and joined the local beekeepers association last year. We make small amounts of charcoal, just enough for the family barbeques and of course there is the endless supply of firewood we will need for the winter.

Find a course (continued)

Malvern Coppicing

Practical coppicing courses from SWOG member Phil Hopkinson.

www.malverncoppicing.co.uk/coppicing%20courses.html

Small Woods Association

Run a wide range of woodland-related courses at their Greenwood Centre

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

Yorwoods

Run courses for foresters and woodland owners in the Yorkshire area

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

Ben Law

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

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

Native Hands are

running some interesting workshops in the next few months: Sept: Friday 24th fire-making; foraging (food & medicine)

Oct: Sunday 17th basketry with hedgerow plants

More details here

<http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/native-hands-2010-programme-1.pdf>

SWOG event – Woodland Management and Tree Identification at Ravenshill Woodland Reserve, Malvern—11th July 2010

by Elaine Hodgson



As relative newcomers to the world of woodlands – and the proud guardians of a very small (1.6 acre) very young (15-20 years) wood with a very inappropriate name (Lapwing Wood)– Nigel and I were a little apprehensive about our first SWOG meeting. We had visions of a group of highly expert and professional ‘woodkeepers’ with acres of land and enough knowledge to go on Mastermind with ‘Woodland Management’ as their specialist subject. We are lucky to get the answer to ‘where did Robin Hood live?’ in Trivial Pursuit!

We need not have worried. We arrived at the meeting in Ravensill Woodland Reserve and soon realised what a great bunch of friendly like minded people you wood owners are. I think we probably would have won the prize for the smallest wood – but we soon realised that the old adage is true – size doesn’t matter. We were warmly welcomed by Trevor and Phil in the car park and coffee was the first item on the day’s agenda. This was great. We all (about 16 of us) sat around the camp fire and enjoyed morning coffee or tea whilst hearing about the plans for the day. We all introduced ourselves and it quickly became apparent that we were a good cross section of wood owners - all new to SWOG meetings - some local, some from as far away as Devon and Yorkshire. Woods varied in size and type – some near the owners and some a great distance away. Everyone was there to meet others, learn from each other and generally have a good time.

The morning session was led by Trevor and Phil and was an introduction to the history, make-up and management of the Raven-

shill Woodland Reserve. Trevor owns 32 acres of the 50 acre nature reserve and manages all of it with the help of many volunteers and other woodland groups. The woodland has public access and is also used for school and other similar groups to enable them to experience the many opportunities a woodland has to offer – from coppicing to building, positioning and monitoring nesting boxes. Trevor gave us a guided tour of many different areas and wildlife habitats within the wood and we were shown rare species of plants and trees as well as being reminded about the life of the more common varieties.

I learnt that dormice live in trees (I had no idea – always thought they had



nests much nearer ground level!). We discovered what makes good habitats for all kinds of wildlife and listened to the not too distant barking of muntjac deer. We also heard the call of some young buzzards begging mum and dad for food – but being made to fend for themselves. (I’m sure they’ll be fine....)

I think we now understand a bit more about coppicing too, thanks to Phil. I was grateful to him for answering my

Upcoming Courses and Events (continued)

Monkton Wyld Court

<http://www.monktonwyldcourt.co.uk/> - run a series of workshops and courses, including hedgelaying, moth nights, and wild food in autumn.

<http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/> - run courses with a particular focus on food and the environment and the permaculture system.

Field Studies Council

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

The Field Studies Council run a wide range of courses for interest and enjoyment and professional development at their centres all over the country. Visit their web site to see upcoming courses of interest

Floralocale

Floralocale run a wide range of courses and events relating to the conservation of British native wildflowers. See the leaflet for further details on http://www.floralocale.org/do_download.asp?did=24195

OCN Level 3 Course

Along the lines of Forest Schools, from Circle of Life Rediscovery

<http://www.circleofliferediscovery.com/adultfacilitationprogram.me.htm>

SWOG Meeting at Ravenshill Wood — continued



question ‘what’s the difference between coppicing and cutting a tree down?’ without laughing. I think I get it now! Nigel was able to have a really good chat about chainsaws and what to buy (are all men obsessed by chainsaws?) and yes – he has done a course so when his new toy arrives he will be able to use it safely and remain intact.

We had a splendid lunch around the open fire provided by Phil’s friend Rae. I was absolutely bowled over by the campsite facilities and washing up station all constructed from wood (of course) as well as the various tools and woodland equipment in evidence – such as the pole lathe.

The afternoon session was tree identification led by Dr Simon Roberts – a real expert in the field (or the wood, I should say). Also an expert in cooking over an open fire – see the picture above! I was pleased to realise

that I was not the only one to get my sessile and pedunculate oaks mixed up (!!!) and I now know what a Turkey oak is too.

The day was rounded off by Phil’s demonstration of some tools including a drawknife and a great one for splitting a branch - I’m sure it has a technical term. There was much discussion about types of axes, billhooks, splitting mauls, wood grenades and the like and I’m quite sure Nigel was not the only one who came away with an equipment wish list.

Thanks again to all for such a brilliant day. We took on board lots of information and advice – we learned a great deal – and most of all we realised that our small wood is just as special as the 50 acres of Ravenshill.

For information on Phil Hopkinson’s woodland, and his coppicing courses please see



Wetland Wood Planting in Sussex - Searching for Sites to Restore a Lost Habitat

Imagine a woodland with a meandering river running through it. Where a tree has fallen, the stream diverts to run around it, forming a miniature waterfall as the water cascades down the fallen tree trunk. In patches of sunlight where the lie of the land forms dry islands, bluebells carpet the ground. Where the land levels out and the stream spreads to form a marsh, yel-

low flag iris and other flowering wetland plants form dense patches of green and colour in the shady woodland.

Dragonflies flit from glade to glade, and otters feed from a pool where the river has been dammed by a tree. A pollinated seed of the rare black poplar tree falls to the ground and finds pur-

Upcoming Courses and Events (continued)

Advance Notice: APF Show at Cannock Chase

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

Confor will be holding this biennial show at Cannock Chase 23-25th September. This large arboricultural and forestry meeting will have demonstrations and competitions including the Husqvarna World Pole-Climbing Championships and the European Chainsaw Carving Championships, a very large trade exhibition with 250 exhibitors, sales stands and lots of advice.

Cranfield University Environment Open Day

Cranfield University have an Open Day for prospective students of environmental subjects on 2nd September.

<http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/sas/aboutus/events/environmentopen-day/index.html>

Dormouse Workshop-Ashford, Kent—

Monday 2nd August

http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/HfD2010-Hedgerow-Survey-Workshop3_Kent.pdf



chase in the bare mud. As a young seedling tree starts to grow, we realise that here at last, might be the first known example of a black poplar regenerating naturally in the UK for centuries.

This is an image you are unlikely to see very often in Sussex. We don't know yet exactly how much ancient floodplain woodland we have left in Sussex, but it is very little, and what we have is incredibly fragmented. It is an incredibly dynamic habitat which is always being changed by the natural river and woodland processes which occur within it, such as the force of the winter flood flows which knock down the trees and scour out new stream channels.

The Sussex Wetland Landscape Project (SWLP) is looking for landowners who would like to restore some of this incredible wildlife habitat. We are looking for riverside sites which flood regularly,

where it may be possible to re-plant floodplain woodland for the future. The planting of trees there should not destroy any existing habitats of interest such as floodplain meadows or sites of archaeological importance, but should be areas where the planting of trees will benefit local wildlife, and preferably provide a link between other disconnected hedgerows, shaws and woodlands.

Funding is available to cover the costs of any woodland planting. If you think you may have a suitable site, please contact the SWLP Officer on 01273 497555 or fransouthgate@sussexwt.org.uk. For more information on black poplars and wet woodlands visit our website www.sussexotters.org



Forthcoming Events—The National Forest WoodFair

Photographs by Christopher Beech; © the National Forest Company

If you're looking for a great day out as the perfect end to the summer holidays, get along to the National Forest Wood Fair at Beacon Hill Country Park, Leicestershire, on August Bank Holiday Monday (30 August).

Now in its sixth year, the Fair will be bigger than ever, with more car parking and over 100 exhibitors and demonstrators.

Don't miss the lumberjack displays by the New Forest and South East Axemen.

They went down a storm last year, with log chop races and board climbs – they even invited members of the crowd to join in, with guys and girls hauling at either end of a cross cut saw.

Hear the throttles of the chainsaw carving, as skilled craftsmen buzz and feather massive chunks of timber into works of art, some of which will feature in the charity auction for Tree Aid at the end of the day.

New for this year is the 'log to leg' race! It'll be ready, steady, go in Bodgers' Corner, as half a dozen pole lathe turners

Final months of funding for foresters in the South East - Lantra

The land-based sector skills council, Lantra, has reminded foresters in the South East to make the most of their opportunities for training and skills development before the £2.1 million pot of money expires in March 2011.

LandSkills South East is part of the Rural Development Programme for England. It has provided a wide variety of courses including chainsaw training, courses on resource efficiency, wood fuel opportunities for charcoal and biomass, sustainable forestry practices, conservation management, effective marketing, and tree and woodland ecosystems.

For more information, contact LandSkills South East: 0845 278 8800; LandSkillsSE@lantra.co.uk or visit www.lantra.co.uk/LandSkills.

Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events

There are no events in August. RFS Divisional Events for September are listed on <http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2010/09/01/month/all/all/1>

The National Forest WoodFair (continued)



race to turn a log into a leg in the shortest time possible. The shavings will be flying and the pole lathes pumping! One of the most popular attractions at the National Forest Wood Fair is the horse logging, and this year the team will be joined by Bruno, an Ardennes horse from Warwickshire, who has recently been hauling timber in Jackson's Bank in The National Forest. Visitors can also find out how to make a coracle, see willow weaving, wood-carving and pyrography. Kids can have a go at the climbing wall, eco art and other ranger led activities. Goldilocks and the Three Bears will put a new twist on last year's One Oak



to see the Three Bears' Cottage take shape, all constructed from one oak tree that grew in the Forest. A section of the cottage will be constructed using green oak framing, oak

cladding and oak floorboards. The domestic scene will be completed as each element is created on site and added during the day: a mantelpiece, table and chairs, picture frames, the log pile by the fire - and a bowl and spoon. The Three Bears will take their places, having been carved on site, and Goldilocks herself will be available to talk to the visitors.

Alongside the craftspeople, folklore and traditional activities, the 21st century face of forestry will also be strongly represented. As The National Forest matures, there are thinnings to use and other products from its hundreds of woodlands. Visit the stalls of companies making a living in the Forest and get advice on woodfuel and other ways to make the most of the Forest.

'Last year's Fair broke all records,' said Sophie Churchill, Chief Executive of the National Forest Company. 'Over 5,500 people came to what is now the region's premier country event. It gives us a great opportunity to show how The National Forest is developing and all that it offers to local people and to visitors. You can find out

how the foresters work to look after the Forest, where to walk and cycle, all the marvellous things to see and do in and around the Forest, how the growth and planting of the Forest is improving conditions for wildlife and how local communities can get involved in looking after the woodlands on their doorstep.' Sessions in the Talks Tent will entertain visitors with tales of the Forest from the Wild Man of the Woods, the latest research into some of the bugs and pests that can trouble the trees and stories of the Bronze Age hill fort and nature conservation work on Beacon Hill itself – the site of the Wood Fair.

A new Park & Ride service will operate this year, enabling visitors to leave their cars at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, and travel by bus – free of charge – to

Forest Research

The URL for Forest Research is now

[http://
www.forestry.gov.uk/
forestresearch](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestresearch)

The latest edition of the FR Newsletter can be downloaded at

[http://
www.forestry.gov.uk/
pdf/
FR_News_Jun10.pdf/
\\$FILE/
FR_News_Jun10.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FR_News_Jun10.pdf/$FILE/FR_News_Jun10.pdf)

Trees in society

Forest Research's Social and Economic Research Group has published a free short report on its research into the effect that trees and woodlands have on people.

'Trees and forests in British society: ten years of social science' covers woodlands and well-being, accessibility and diversity, community development, and governance and economics.

Download from [www.forestry.gov.uk/
fr/INFD-6XCHTR](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6XCHTR)

The National Forest WoodFair (continued)



the Fair. The service will run from 9.30am-6pm.

The National Forest Wood Fair is organised jointly by the National Forest Company and Leicestershire County Council and is supported by *emda*.

It is held at Beacon Hill Country Park and will run from 10am – 5pm on Bank Holiday Monday 30 August. Entry costs adults £7, concessions £4 and a family ticket £15 (for two adults and three children).

Beacon Hill Country Park lies within the ancient Forest of Charnwood and is close to the attractive village of Woodhouse Eaves, just five minutes drive from Junctions 22 or 23 of the M1. The Country Park, owned and

managed by Leicestershire County Council, with its craggy summit and panoramic views, is just one of the many visitor attractions across the three counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire that make up The National Forest.

For further information see www.leics.gov.uk/woodfair or www.nationalforest.org



Courses from Coppicewood College in Pembrokeshire



6 month Woodland Skills Course.

Once again, Starting at the end of September we will be running our unique 6 month woodland skills course. The course runs for 2 days a week, throughout the coppicing season, until the end of March.

In our beautiful, peaceful woodlands in Pembrokeshire where Chainsaws are rarely heard, students attending the course will learn how to safely handle and maintain a wonderful selection of Traditional hand tools such as axes, crosscut saws, bill hooks, side axes, hatchets and draw knives which they will use to cut, sort and process the coppiced wood from next seasons plot.

This course is a great opportunity to get involved with the regeneration and conservation of a previously neglected woodland bringing it back to life through coppicing and replanting.

As the course progresses there students will gain experience in other traditional skills such as Hedge laying, Charcoal Making, Green woodworking, Carving and Willow Weaving. The instructors will also guide the stu-

dents as they work on a personal Craft project of their choice, using the materials harvested through the coppicing process. Previous personal projects have included shave horses, chairs and stools.

As well as practical experience, our knowledgeable tutors constantly regale students with facts of flora and fauna, providing them with an ever growing knowledge store of the interesting tree, plant, animal and insect species in our woods. Basic tree biology and species recognition are also taught during the course.

Who is the course for?

Woodland owners and farmers or their staff
Park rangers

Self employed crafts people.

Unemployed people and school leavers looking for alternative employment opportunities.

- Anyone with an interest in traditional rural skills using hand tools.
- Anyone interested in reducing their carbon footprint, preserving the natural environment and improving habitat.

Courses from Coppicewood College (continued)

The full course fee is £1740.00. There may be some grant funding available and we are able to negotiate payment plans with students. Affordable accommodation can also be arranged if necessary.

Short Courses

Running alongside the 6 month course will be the following short courses:

Introduction to Coppicing

Starts: Monday 25th October 2010

Duration: 4 days.

Cost: £160.00.

This course will show you how to take a neglected woodland and transform it into a productive coppice with wildlife benefits. We will demonstrate how to cut a coppice plot safely with appropriate hand tools and you will learn to know different trees and understand their value.

Festive Weaving

Start Date: 4th December 2010.

Duration: 1 days.

Cost: £25.00 plus materials.

A chance to experiment with willow and hedgerow materials and learn some basic weaving techniques, you will be able to make and take home your own festive object.

Hedgelaying

Start Date: 14th February 2011.

Duration: 4 days.

Cost: £160.00.

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

Green Woodworking

Start Dates: 14th March 2011 and 6th June 2011

Duration: 4 days.

Cost: £160.00 plus materials.

This is a craft course which demonstrates how to use coppiced wood rather than timber bought from the sawmill. You will learn how to split and shape green wood



using special tools, a cleaving break and shave horse. The understanding of the basic skills can then lead to simple furniture making or producing your own gate or carving a spoon. The mysteries of traditional craft work can be revealed in this course.

Weave a Garden Plant Support

Start Date: 16th April 2011.

Duration: 5 hours. 10.30 – 3.30

Cost: £20.00 plus materials.

More weaving wizardry from our very own Babera Goodwin. A day in the woods not to be missed by keen gardeners.

Make a Shavehorse

Start Date: 30th April 2011.

Duration: 3 days.

Cost: £160.00 plus materials.

Learn how to build this invaluable green woodworking tool, which you can then take home and start using immediately.

Scything for Beginners

Start Date: Every Saturday in June 2011.

Duration: 1 days.

Cost: £40.00.

Compare an Austrian Scythe and its various blades to a Traditional English scythe and learn the appropriate techniques for your preference. Our Instructor Bruce uses an Austrian

scythe to manage a 4 acre Forest Garden and two lawns. He highly recommends this method for efficiency, satisfaction and good exercise. Most importantly this method is truly sustainable.

Applications for these courses are welcome from anyone 16 and over.

For Further information or to book a place on any of these courses, Contact Bruce Slark on 01239 881394, email bslark@aol.com or visit www.coppicewoodcollege.co.uk



BTCV Sussex Land-Based Operations Courses in Sussex

Practical Environmental Training in Sussex — September 2010

Courses delivered by BTCV in partnership with Plump-ton and Chichester Colleges

Work-based Land-based Operations Level 1 Diploma with machinery training

This introductory package, including training and 'industry ticket' assessment for brushcutter or chipper, is run from our centres in **Ninfield**, **Plashett Wood**, near Lewes and **Eartham** near Chichester. Topics covered may include, (subject to seasons):

- Health and Safety
- Using and Maintaining Tools
- Tree-planting
- Hedge-laying
- Brushcutter and chipper operation
- Habitat Maintenance

Work-based Environmental Conservation Level 2 Diploma with machinery training

This package runs from our centres in **Ninfield** and **Ear-**

tham (near Chichester) and includes training and assessment for an industry competence 'ticket' such as chipper or brushcutter.

Topics covered may include, (subject to seasons):

- Habitat Management Work
- Plant/Animal/Habitat Surveying
- Fencing and Footpath Construction
- Charcoal Burning
- Woodland Skills
- Hand tool and Machinery Maintenance

Training for both of these courses takes place on two full days a week, in the form of practical work at various sites in Sussex, with some classroom sessions.

Basic Chainsaw training and ticket assessment is available as a separate short course on successful completion of one of the Diploma package.

To receive an information pack, application form or book a place on our August information days contact Sue Meyer:

tel: 01403 730572, email s.meyer@btcv.org.uk

Course fees apply

Woodlands of Herefordshire Course 2010-2011

14 profusely illustrated and information rich evening sessions as well as 3 field outings spring & early summer 2011.

Place: Bunch of Carrots, Hampton Bishop, SO550380.

Time & dates: 7.30 – 9 pm every Tuesday starting **September 28th**

Autumn term 8 sessions: September 28th weekly until November 23rd.

Spring term 6 sessions: February 1st 2011 weekly until March 8th

Three field outings spring and early summer 2011

Cost £160.

Course outline

Autumn term:

The county's woodland origins from ice age to Domesday. Forests, chases, woods and parks in Medieval Herefordshire, current state of knowledge. Woods, trees and wood pasture: their management and uses in the Tudor period. Products of woods 1600 - 1830 especially in the iron, leather and cider industries. County woods in the Victorian era: changing markets, landscape and game. Herefordshire woodlands in the 20th century: impact of world wars and state intervention. Changes in the type and extent of the county's woodland over the

last 100 years. Development of conservation policy and the concept of 'ancient woodland'.

...and featuring the newly updated 2010 Herefordshire ancient woodland inventory

Spring term:

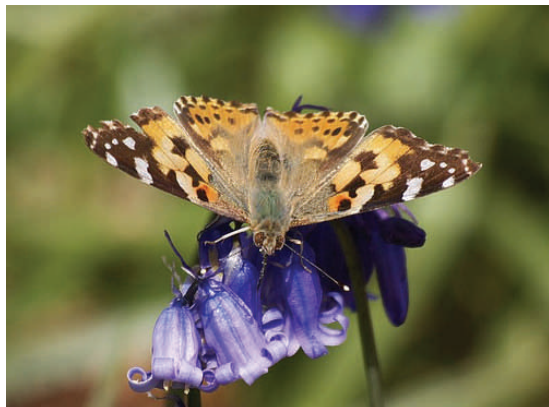
Soils and vegetation types in the Herefordshire woodland. Indicator species, invertebrates, birds and mammals of woodland. Woodland survey and monitoring in the digital age: how to use GIS and GPS. Management plans, grant schemes, contemporary silviculture and economics. Restoring damaged woodland: case studies. Future of the county's woodlands in an era of climate change & population overload: Wood pasture, parkland and veteran trees of the county. County projects and initiatives.

Contact David Lovelace david@tilia.org.uk 01544 318138.

Further details www.bosci.net/course.html

Forthcoming SWOG Events

Registering your woodland. 4th September, Flimwell, East Sussex



This workshop will guide you through the land registration process. This is an essential pre-requisite if you want to claim a woodland grant. The Land Registry want all land registered by 2012. By the end of the session we aim that you will have the forms completed. The event will also provide an overview of the available woodland grants available.

Contact Steve Wheatley to book: Telephone 01580 879958

or Email swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org
10:00 to 13:00

Woodland Enterprise Centre, Flimwell, TN5 7PR

SWOG Meeting in Hampshire - Saturday 16 October



Topics will include:

Coppicing neglected hazel

Thinning trees to help them grow

How to develop a glade

Each topic will be interactive, very practical but safe, with participants themselves deciding what to cut/remove. Later in the day participants will return to see the impact of their decisions, as trees will be cut down during the day itself, as a discussion point and for learning.

Further information will follow.

There are photos of Julian's wood on www.patulabooks.co.uk so do visit.

Introduction to Bushcraft day 11th September 2010

Andy Noble of [Natures Craft](http://www.naturescraft.co.uk) is running an introduction to bushcraft day at Lords Wood near Alton in Hampshire later this year. This is being offered to SWOG members at a considerable discount, (£20 instead of £70) to cover their costs. Numbers will be limited to 10 so book early to avoid disappointment.

Run by Andy Noble, of [Natures Craft](http://www.naturescraft.co.uk) (<http://www.naturescraft.co.uk>) you will spend the day based in a woodland bushcraft camp where you will be shown and practice a variety of bushcraft skills:

See <http://www.swog.org.uk/news/introduction-to-bushcraft-day/#more-638> for more information

Please email rich@swog.org.uk to book a place on a first come first served basis.

Westonbirt Festival of the Tree. 27- 30th August 2010

The SWOG team will be there, so if you are going, please drop in and have a chat. More details are on the Woodfairs website

<http://www.woodfairs.co.uk/south-west/#FestivalTree>

Practical Woodland Photography Workshop—Alvecote Wood, 5th September 2010



Have you ever taken photographs of your woodlands, or the wildlife within it, only to be disappointed that the results don't really show what you wanted them to show? This introductory workshop will suit anybody with a digital camera. Based in an 11 acre oak woodland in North Warwickshire, this day-long workshop will cover both technical and artistic elements of photography, with the aim of helping you to achieve the

Forthcoming Events—continued

results that you want. All you need is a digital camera and a willingness to learn.

The course will cost £15 per participant, excluding meals and drinks. If the weather is good, a camp-fire can be provided, and wild camping (no facilities) may be available overnight. For further information please contact sarah@pragmasis.com

Coppice Week at Ashdown Forest—11th to 15th August

There are still places available on some of the courses offered at the Coppice week in Ashdown Forest. <http://www.swog.org.uk/events/coppice-week-at-ashdown-forest/> or download the flyer from http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Coppice-Week-course-fliers_Sav2.pdf

Free Family Arts Day at Brede High Wood—Saturday 21st August from the Woodland Trust

<http://www.swog.org.uk/news/free-family-arts-day/>

Bodgefest! - Saturday 4th September

Dunnottar Bodge Group invite family and friends to a picnic in the woods. A chance to find out about woodland crafts, get a little hands-on perhaps, see local artists work and sit back round the camp fire and enjoy live music and children's entertainments

<http://www.swog.org.uk/news/bodgefest-2010-saturday-4th-september/>

Surrey Hills Woodfair—8/9 October 2010

Further details on <http://www.swog.org.uk/events/surrey-hills-woodfair/>

Other News



myForest – Online woodland management website

The Sylva Foundation has launched a new web-based service that aims to support the mapping and sustainable management of woodlands, and provides a platform for marketing products from local woodlands. MyForest offers:

Online woodland account and management planning facility

Woodland owners or agents can sign up to create a free woodland management planning account. A simple Geographical Information System (GIS) based on Google maps and aerial photography enables users to

map the boundaries of their woodlands and individual compartments. Inventory information can then be entered relating to each compartment.

The myForest management plan is available as a PDF document that can be saved, emailed or printed. The plan is based on the Forestry Commission England's management planning template, ensuring the myForest management plan is compatible with the EWGS woodland planning grant requirements.

Free promotion of your business to the local woodchain

Forestry businesses are able to create a free account, and then detail their location on the business directory map. Many businesses have signed up in the South East to promote their products and services, these include woodland contractors, sawmills, woodfuel merchants etc. Users of myForest are then able to search for business by category in their region.

Web-maps of woodlands, products and businesses

Owners or their agents can make woodlands 'visible' on the 'Woodland Resource' map. If they are visible potential customers can contact owners/agents to enquire about woodland products. The woodland owner remains anonymous until they decide to respond to any expression of interest.

On the 'Wood Market' map, account holders can market timber and wood either as standing trees, roadside lots, or processed products.

More details are available on the SWOG website

http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/myForest_Historic_House_Magazine.pdf

Or visit www.myforest.org.uk

Other News—continued

The Forestry Commission SE Region Newsletter is available on [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/eng-se-woodlandnews-aug10.pdf/\\$FILE/eng-se-woodlandnews-aug10.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/eng-se-woodlandnews-aug10.pdf/$FILE/eng-se-woodlandnews-aug10.pdf)

Four Winds Lease Runs Out

The Four Winds Inspiration Centre is unfortunately having to close. The lease on their 'Woodyard' in Inverleith Park is ending and the Edinburgh council needs the land back. Established in 1998, the Environmental Education & Craft based Charity, is a grass roots organisation, working for the benefit of present and future generations. They have been providing a platform for positive community action & interaction in relation to important social and environmental issues. If you had considered joining one of their courses, but never got round to it, now is the time to get in touch!

Further details about the group and the remaining courses can be found on their website

<http://www.fourwindsedinburgh.org.uk/index.html>

More Trees, More Good – Woodland Trust campaign

This new campaign from the Woodland Trust aims to double the number of native woods and trees in the UK, in order to maximise the benefits to both people and the changing climate. The campaign offers a range of support so that individuals and organisations such as schools and community groups can plant their own trees. Learn more at www.MoreTreesMoreGood.org.uk.

Grow your own furniture

Not just making it, but growing it. Lots of interesting information and ideas can be found on <http://www.grown-furniture.co.uk/index.html>

Wood Focus

New e-zine about wood and wood technology
<http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/launch.aspx?refer-ral=other&refresh=Z0a7kH4103dG&PBID=fbae1871-c743-4007-8bfd-cebbf814470d&skip=>

From the Blogs on woodlands.co.uk

Sudden Oak Death -

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/trees/sudden-oak-death/#more-2938> – an update on this disease in larch, and efforts being made to eradicate it.

Clay Pigeon Shooting -



<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/clay-pigeon-shooting-for-the-first-time->

[shotgun-coaching/#more-2950](http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/shotgun-coaching/#more-2950) – Angus shares his personal experience of a clay-pigeon shooting course.

Laurel Removal -

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/conservation/laurel-removal/#more-2920> – Chris reports on a method developed through personal experience of removing non-native laurel from woodland.

The European Red List –

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/wildlife/european-red-list/#more-2247> - update on insect species that are on the threatened list in Europe from Chris

Excluded from School, but not Woodlands –

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/community-woodland-use/excluded-from-school-but-not-from-woodlands/#more-2432> Angus reports how community forests are helping young people to gain practical experience and qualifications.

How to create a level spot for camping –

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/creating-a-campsite/#more-2853> - Rob reports how to camp in your woods when it is located on a slope.

Newsletter - August 2010

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

From the Forum—What have we been doing this month?

Rich has been struggling to keep deer out of his coppice and many suggestions have been made to help including use of lion dung!

Richard King has been thinning scots pine—the problem of a hung-up canopy was ultimately solved by having lunch whereupon it fell of its own accord.

Darren has been flattening bracken using a weighted pallet, and **Adam** has been fitting bat-boxes.

Camping has been indulged by several members, with **Tracy** and **Sarah** both camping in their respective woods. **Sarah** held a barbecue and camping night for 28 friends, which was greatly enjoyed.

Sarah has been chasing cows! Three cows escaped from a nearby farm and over the course of a week sought refuge in various combinations in her wood. They seemed

quite determined to avoid capture and appeared to like her woods although **Sarah** wasn't so sure about these unscheduled visitors.

Woodbodger has been discussing the relative merits of chain-saw mills, and methods of sharpening chains with other members.

There has also been quite an emotive discussion on the subject of **squirrel control**—whether, and how it should be done.

There has also been a discussion about a great article by the **Grumpy Old Forester**, reprinted from the *Quarterly Journal of Forestry*, asking what we really should be doing to manage our forests and trees. <http://www.swog.org.uk/articles/what-are-we-doing-by-grumpy-old-forester/>

On the Web

Coppice.co.uk

A web site with a lot of information about coppice management—trees, methods, products, biodiversity, wildlife and much more. With videos and advice about coppicing methods and cultivation of specific tree species.

http://www.coppice.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1

Woodlandstv.co.uk

Watch videos of practical forestry operations. The latest videos added to this site are

Native Field Maple
Tanglewood
Wild Clematis or Old Man's Beard
Urban Forestry
Through and Through Quarter Sawn
Woodland Memorials
Douglas Fir
Fuel from Your Woodlands
Valuing Trees

For more information and to view videos see

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos?page=2#latest-films>

Woodfairs.co.uk

Woodfairs are a great place to meet people who love everything to do with woods and woodlands—from owning and managing them, to products that you can make and sell, to arts and crafts and activities that you can enjoy. The Woodfairs web site lists all forthcoming events by region.

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

