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### In the Newsletter this Month

The summer woodfairs and meetings are over and now is the time to report some of the things we have seen. If you have not been to a show or woodfair before then do read the reports here. Although all woodfairs are different, they are a great place to network with other woodland owners and woodworkers, and to share ideas on ways in which you can manage your woodland, and things you can do with the wood that is produced. Likewise, you may not yet have either hosted, or been to, a SWOG meeting—if so, then please read the excellent and amusing article by Ray Perry on his experience of hosting a meeting at his own wood. Funny, witty and full of experiences I think many of us can recognize, if this doesn't make you want to either host or attend a SWOG meeting, then nothing will!

Autumn also produces a bounty in the woods and hedgerows, and it is often difficult to know how best to use the berries and fruits that are on offer at this time of year. For years I have been making wine from elderberries and blackberries, and have had varying degrees of success in making jams and preserves. I have put together an article on making jams and jellies, drawing heavily from my mistakes as well as from my more successful attempts. The key thing is to have a go—you don't know what you are missing until you taste wonderful natural fruit preserves made from berries that have grown wild and free in your own woodland.

Woodlands.co.uk have also produced a new book on how to manage your woodland for wildlife. This is not the prime objective for all SWOG members, but it is one of the things that many of us try to do while producing timber or firewood, charcoal or woodcraft products. A review of this publication is included—please have a look at it, download it, read it and learn from the excellent advice that is provided.

We also list all the events, courses and forthcoming SWOG meetings—please do try and support the SWOG meetings in your area and beyond. There is so much to be learned from experience, and it is wonderful just to spend some time in woods other than your own from time to time.

Sarah Walters ([sarah@swog.org.uk](mailto:sarah@swog.org.uk))

### Hedgerow Jams and Jellies

The onset of Autumn has brought with it an astonishing bounty of berries, just begging to be preserved and enjoyed throughout the winter ahead. Our wood has rather too much bramble, but this does produce benefits in the huge crop of blackberries on offer. In the past, I have attempted to preserve blackberries in the form of wine and by freezing. However apart from elderberry wine, I haven't really set about preserving anything else of the wonderful bounty of the hedgerow in the past.



My attempts at jam-making have also met with rather variable success. Last year's plum jam went well, and I made a passable crab-apple and rowan jelly, but other jams were less successful. However this year has been much better, and I'd like to pass on some of the tips for successful jam-making that I have learned the hard way!



*Jam making kit: Maslin pan, jelly bag and rack, funnel and of course, the jam jar!*

**Lesson One: Get a proper jam-making (maslin) pan.** It really makes a difference. One of the most important elements of making jams (or chutneys and other preserves) is getting the ingredients to simmer or boil but *without* caramelising the sugar. If you try and compromise by using an old pressure cooker or large saucepan, you will probably suffer as I did from the sugar on the bottom caramelising before the liquid has boiled off the top, leaving your preserves tasting bitter, and a lot of scrubbing to do to clean the pan. I got my maslin pan from Amazon for under 20 quid, and it has transformed the ease with which I can make jam, as it also incorporates a liquid volume scale, essential for calculating how much sugar to add.

**Lesson Two: Get a proper jelly bag and stand.** Last year I concocted a very tortuous method of extracting juice from fruit pulp by hanging a wine-straining bag from a garden chair with a clean bucket underneath. This year I got a jelly bag and stand (a few quid from Amazon) and this also made it much easier to extract juice. I simply boiled up the fruit in the evening and let it strain overnight. Then in the morning, all I had to do was add sugar (and pectin if needed), boil up, and ladle it into pots.

**Lesson Three: Get a book that teaches you the *principles* of jam-making rather than just giving you recipes.** That way you can turn odd mixtures of fruit, or odd quantities, into jams and jellies rather than slavishly following recipes. This has really helped me to be creative in the jams I have made. I've used *Making Jams and Preserves* by *Diana Sutton* published by The Good Life Press (who also publish other smallholding and self-sufficiency books)

[http://www.goodlifepress.co.uk/the\\_kitchen/making\\_jams\\_and\\_preserves](http://www.goodlifepress.co.uk/the_kitchen/making_jams_and_preserves)

This helps you to decide whether what you are making is high/medium/low pectin, and therefore how much sugar to add and whether you need to add pectin to set. It also gives you sugar quantities per litre/pint of juice, allowing you to adapt recipes easily to quantities you have available.

**Lesson Four: Seek out or plant some crab-apple trees!** Crab apple not only makes delicious jelly on its own, particularly when eaten with meat or sausages, but forms the basis of a lot of other jams and jellies, containing the natural pectin that is needed to set your preserves. We are so lucky in that we have a lot of crab apple trees in our woods, as well as one in our front garden at home.

**Lesson Five: Don't forget to put a saucer in the fridge before you start boiling the jam.** I have found this to be by far the best way of deciding whether a jam has reached setting-point. I have a cold saucer ready. Then, you can get a feel for whether the jam is reaching setting point by using a wooden spoon to stir the mixture – you will see that the liquid changes from dripping off the spoon back into the pan to “glooping” back – it is starting to go a bit gelatinous and sticks to the spoon. Test it out by dripping a drop onto the cold saucer, waiting for 10 seconds, and then pushing the drop with your finger. If the surface wrinkles up nicely and the drop is going gelatinous then your jam is ready to set.

**Lesson Six: Start saving your used jam and chutney jars now for next year's harvest.** I never have enough!

### Woodheat seminars—still some October dates remaining!

These are *free* seminars for all of those interested in the business, environmental and cost issues surrounding heating with wood. They cover:

The Wood Fuel Resource – how much is available?

Modern day conversion of wood to heat

Woodfuel processing techniques

How you can benefit from Wood Fuel Standards

How to develop suitable business models

Dates are as follows

#### Buyers

Oct 7th Newbury, Berks  
Oct 14th Flimwell, E Sussex

#### Sellers

Oct 6th Lyndhurst Hants  
Oct 12th, Ashford, Kent

#### Contact

Jeanette Hawkins,  
Forestry Commission  
[jeanette.hawkins@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jeanette.hawkins@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

See also

[www.woodheatsolutions.eu](http://www.woodheatsolutions.eu)  
[www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk](http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk)

Further details are on:  
<http://tinyurl.com/3a6pgdt>

**Sarah's Hedgerow Jam Recipe** (adapted from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's recipe on <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2006/oct/21/recipes.foodanddrink>)

#### Ingredients

- At least 1kg of mixed hedgerow berries – you can use blackberries, elderberries, sloes, rosehips, hawthorn berries or rowan berries, in any combination, but my experience is that elderberries make a gloriously rich jam, and would suggest about 50-60% of your berries are elder!
- At least 1kg of crab apples – overall you will need at least 2kg of fruit or you won't really have enough juice to make much jam at the end of it. Aim to have about 50% of your fruit mixture as crab apples, or you might have trouble getting the jelly to set without adding extra pectin.
- At least 1.5kg of granulated sugar

Wash and remove the berries from the stalks using a fork, and roughly chop the crab-apples – I don't bother to peel them and don't remove the cores either, as these contain the pectin. Boil up the fruit, adding enough water to come about half-way up in the pan until the fruit is soft and mushy.

Then, put a jelly-bag on a hanger above a suitable-sized pan, and ladle or pour the fruit into the bag. If you want clear jelly, resist the temptation to squeeze it – leave it for a few hours or overnight instead to drip slowly into the pan, but cover with a tea towel or similar to keep the flies off.

In the morning, measure the juice, and place in the maslin pan. *Put a saucer in the fridge or freezer to cool down! Also, sterilise some jam jars and lids by scalding with boiling water or by putting them in the oven at low temperature.* Add about 750g sugar per litre of juice – less if you have a lot of apple, more if you have relatively more berries. Warm slowly and stir until the sugar has dissolved, and then bring to the boil. Use a spoon to skim off the scum as it develops. When the mixture seems to be sticking to your stirring spoon, test it using the cold saucer to see if it has reached the setting point. Once it has set, ladle into warm jam jars, put a circle of greaseproof paper on top, and put the lid on while still hot, so it can contract and form a good seal. If you can make it last that long, it will keep for about a year.

See also the woodlands.co.uk blog on Autumn Fruits <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/autumn-fruits/>

## A visit to an Unknown Wood—by Ray Perry

When I purchased Gaer View Wood some 7 years ago I was full of enthusiasm. I would spend every other weekend there demanding that it conformed to what I thought it should look like, and buying all sorts of equipment with little chance of knowing how these things could be used. I think the best example of this was a very expensive climbing rope, harness, and all the little metal bits that go with it..... still in the box, I'm afraid, although I did use it once when putting tiles on the roof.

The reality is very different. After the first few visits, I conceded that 7 acres needed a bit more than 3 months to sort out, and more importantly, I didn't really know what I was doing. So I stopped cutting paths, trimming off branches, and clearing tracks. Instead I lit campfires, cooked sausages, and chilled out. I felt much better for it. And our Labrador quickly learnt to come back to camp as soon as the sausages went in the pan (much more effective than a whistle).

And so for several years, I let nature take its course, and also my stress. It takes about 2 hours to dissipate 2 months of work stresses, which is not a bad return on my investment. I don't actually know where the stress goes, does it get absorbed by the trees? I did however get to know my wood a lot better, and we became good friends. I promised not to manically chop bits off it, and it accepted me as part of the wildlife. A partnership I think.

What is it about kids these days?. At the age of 12 or so, I was always searching out bits of woodland, streams and any forgotten piece of scrubland, where I would be setting up camp, and of course, lighting a campfire (sorry to the owner of that wasteland by the way, although the fire brigade did have it under control quite quickly). In fact I think it was in those days that I decided that people who own woods were very privileged, that they had a massive store of natural resources, and a place to play when-





ever they wanted. Pity some of them put up “Keep Out” signs, it made no difference to my trespassing, and added a sadness to the woodland. Anyway, what I was trying to say is that my kids don’t seem to get the same sense of excitement that I did when in the woods. Maybe it will grow on them, and maybe it’s my fault for waiting so long to give them the opportunity to do so, but really, I think it takes a lot to challenge the X Box for youngsters’ interests. Maybe they will grow into the fact that the wood is there, and it’s the best game in the world.

So, there I was, doing the minimum in the woods, but getting loads out of it. I felt a bit guilty actually, did nature not need any help at all? It probably didn’t in truth, it had managed for some time without my interventions. But the wood was my friend now, and I wanted to help it. Perhaps the path lay in increasing the biodiversity? I know that there are different areas in my wood, and the trees and shrubs are different in some areas, maybe I could help in this way?



It is amazing though, how tentative I have become. I’ve changed from wanting to “beat it into submission” to being probably over concerned about my interventions, but I did come to a conclusion of sorts, that I “would do something”. Now that’s a pretty decisive moment, especially as I did that whilst in the wood, where decisions are unwanted intruders (except maybe where to build the campfire today). And yet another decision was that “I don’t know what to do”.

So armed with these magnificently provocative decisions (!), I started to think about how to move forward.

Tracy Pepler had of course been there in the background, sending me the wonderful, and thought provoking Newsletters, which I did take time to read, and helped me to feel part of a family of fellow wood owners. I don’t know if that is the intention, but that’s the affect it was having on me. So where else to turn, but to her organisation. I volunteered to host a visit to my wood.

#### WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

I live my life to some very simple rules. One of them is that if you agree to do something, then you do it. I was committed to this visit, but had no idea what I was to do, or how I would facilitate it. And I suppose I wanted to have visitors (if there were any) enjoy themselves and feel it was worth the visit. I had given myself a project.

SWOG of course were amazingly helpful and arranged that there would be an “expert” attending as well..... Phew! That’s a relief. However, there was still a lot to sort out, basically I had nothing except a wood.

Ebay! that’s the place. That’s where I go as a first port of call whenever I need something. Maybe it’s therapeutic to work your way through thousands of ads deciding how you will distribute your wealth, anyways, I was looking for an old caravan, an essential piece of equipment for the wood, a base from which to serve tea. I ended up buying an old Landrover Discovery, - it seemed like more fun. Then a winch for it. Then a long jack, then a CB radio, some new tyres, and a tow rope. It still did not look like a caravan though, so back to Ebay.

Lesley, my wife, was now getting nervous, a bout of “ebaying” rarely helps solve any of her problems. Apparently the Disco smelled, was rusty, noisy and wallowed about a lot..... and your point is my dear?? Perfect I would say.

I did find an old caravan, and bought it without seeing it..... mistake. It was a bit rotten, in fact all the bits that could rot, had already done so. I did have a moment of insanity when I thought I would “do it up”, but that didn’t last long, stuff it. If it survived the journey to the wood, being towed by my smelly rusty Disco, then it would probably be ok. It did make it, just, with a few bits missing. If anyone found a rear window to a 40 yr old caravan on the A44 recently, could you keep it safe for me?

The caravan now sits sedately as befits her years in the middle of my wood, and I was able to have a practice run at making tea in her before the day of the visit. She behaved impeccably and I was very proud of her. Really must get the green paint out though.

#### Course Directory

##### Field Studies Council

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

##### 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

<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](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](http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Programme_tcm9-245883.pdf)

##### LIFE Courses

For the full range of courses from the Low Impact Living Initiative, please see

[http://www.lowimpact.org/venues\\_all\\_courses.htm](http://www.lowimpact.org/venues_all_courses.htm)

##### Wildlife Trusts

All 47 UK Wildlife Trusts run events of potential interest to woodland owners. For further details please see

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/index.php?section=events:autumn>

So to the visit.

GET OUT OF MY WAY!..... yes, I was going to be late arriving for my own meeting, everyone seemed to be intent on delaying me, and the Disco was wallowing more than I think it should really have been doing, but never mind. What a great delight to see so many people there already (well everyone else was there actually), and with some embarrassment I set off down the track towards the caravan. Quick, get the kettle on, maybe nobody will notice you were late.

Well here they all were, making their way down the track (ok, yes, it was still a bit overgrown, but gave the short walk a greater sense of adventure!). The kettle soon boiled (good job I had a practice run) and teas and coffees all round. Great, first phase complete.

Our expert for the day was Shane Logan. Shane worked for the National Trust, and previously for the Forestry Commission in Ireland, what Shane didn't know about woodland probably isn't worth knowing. After explaining to Shane that I had marked Route 1 (yes, I had more than one see) with white paint blobs, he took control. I brought up the rear in the mistaken belief that that would be a useful thing to do.

Route 1 (sounds very organized doesn't it) covered half of my wood and several different environs. Shane stopped at places to describe what he saw, and how the area could be managed better (cheek). He was brilliant. I could see what he was saying, but I had not seen it myself, I guess that's why we have experts. So the first learning was that I could create some larger "standards" from what looked like thick limbed bushes. Leaving the largest, and clearing the area around would help the standard to develop, and create some open space for undergrowth to develop. My hand twitched towards the chainsaw, now I had a use for it.

We crossed a wet area, an area that I thought would be better if I drained it, and had already started thinking about how my Disco could be used as a bulldozer. WRONG! Shane pointed out that if I did the opposite, and blocked up the drainage gulleys that existed, I could create a proper wetland environment, and increase biodiversity. Well what an excellent idea, and less work too! That's a second project then.

Further on Shane pointed out that there was a ridge, and on the ridge you could see some hawthorn..... Worked it out yet? Yes, it was an old hedge line, is was obvious, but I had not seen it in 7 years. Once that was in focus you could see that the land below that "feature" was less steeply sloping, and the trees were different. It was thought by Shane that that area could have been a field in the past, and had been left to naturalise many years ago. I was seeing my wood with different eyes.

Next we came to a key feature, an ancient oak. Actually it was on the border with my neighbours wood. Actually it is in my neighbours wood, but only just. We spent a little time at the oak, and Shane confirmed that it was indeed very old, 300 years probably. Saved from being cut down during the last clearing 20 years ago because it was too big, and too old, and fat. See there are advantages in old age! The old oak had always been a frequent place for me to visit, and is very special.

Back along the bottom edge of my wood (a bit boggy here, and about to be boggier) with views across the sheep fields and we headed back to the base camp for lunch.

During lunch (after making the tea) it was great to chat to the other wood owners, who were an incredible mixture of characters. There is something that they all had in common though, and that was a love of life in its basic form. We had photographers, retired people, young families, hippies (sorry Bob) and professional people. And we were all standing in the middle of a wood, drinking tea, and enjoying it.

After lunch we set off on Route 2. Problem is this is not marked, and after waving Shane off in a very vague direction left it to him to go and seek out something interesting.

This side of the wood has the largest trees and as such a very different nature to Route 1. And it contains, what Shane described as "a very large Badger set". Now this is a very interesting part of



#### Course Directory (continued)

##### Malvern Coppicing

Practical coppicing courses from SWOG member Phil Hopkinson.

<http://www.malverncoppicing.co.uk/coppicing%20courses.html>

##### Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events

The programmes for October and November can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2010/10/01/month/all/all/>

##### 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>

**Are you running  
an event or course  
at your wood?  
Please tell us about  
it and we can ad-  
vertise it here**

the wood, and the Badgers have been there for a very long time, many generations. There is an area of about a quarter acre that has been remodelled by the Badgers, and looks like a moonscape. There are signs that there is activity still going on, and we of course discussed the proposed cull of badgers ordered by the government. (Well, not in my wood matey!).

Further on, the wood is pretty uniform and the pace picked up to get back to base camp (actually I think the increasing number of brambles on the track distracted people from gathering in groups, sorry about that). Once again some clearing of the smaller trees would encourage undergrowth, but not too much, or the brambles would take over. Yea I can do that, is that project 3?

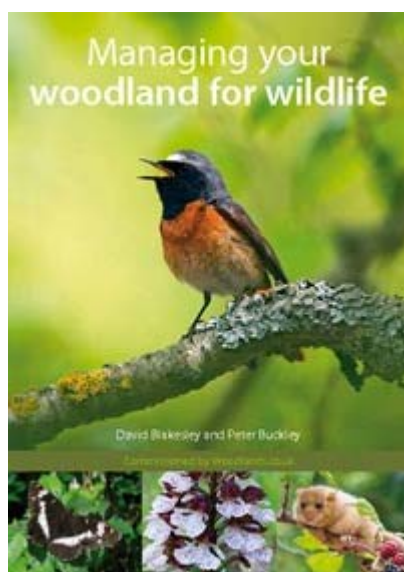
Back to base and another cup of tea, Shane answering the final questions from the group, and some fond farewells.

However, my day was not over. In the group, were the owners of two of the neighboring woods! .....Yes, and it had taken me until that day to meet them, but what a bonus. I spent an hour in Bob, Ali and Willows wood having a look at what they had been up to. MY GOSH! I cant tell you, let's just hope they decide to host a visit themselves, I don't want to spoil it. All I can say is that they had put considerably more effort into their wood than I have..... I mean..... A hot tub, incredible! What a lovely couple, and I would not have met them unless I had taken that decision weeks ago to do something about my lack of knowledge about my wood. You just never know what happens when you set something in motion!

Ray Perry

## Managing your Woodland for Wildlife—Book Review

***Managing your Woodland for Wildlife* by David Blakesley and Peter Buckley**  
(commissioned by woodlands.co.uk)



For some woodland owners, management for wildlife is the main objective, but most small woodland owners that I know also want to manage their woodland for wildlife, even if there are other main objectives such as firewood or timber production, or production of wood for traditional crafts. So whatever your objective, this little book is an excellent guide to managing the woods in sympathy with the local wildlife.

The book is written in an authoritative manner, and there are technical terms, but these are explained, so that owners new to woodland management can take them on board. There are also useful references provided at the end of the book.

The book also follows a logical sequence that woodland owners might follow in managing their woodlands: first, identify your woodland type. This introduces the National Vegetation Classification for woodlands, and how you can decide what type of woods you have (although our woodland doesn't really fit any of those categories!).

Once you have identified your woodland type, you need to become familiar with the woodland and its wildlife and plants – know what is there before you decide how to enhance and protect it. Plants that indicate both ancient and recent woodland are listed, and there are lists of important woodland butterflies, birds, amphibians, fungi, lichens, reptiles and mammals. Survey methods are discussed should you wish to undertake more formal surveys of your woods, and the issue of special protection of bats and some species of birds is discussed.

So, once you know what is there, how can you best manage the woodland to protect and enhance the wildlife that is there? Silvicultural systems of different types are discussed including wood pasture, clear felling, uniform shelterwood, group selection and individual selection as well as *laissez-faire*. The objective of all systems is to create open space to allow plants, insects and animals to flourish in the additional light that is created, as well as permitting natural regeneration of the woodland. Again, this section is pretty technical, but there are practical guides here, such as the decision tree and table detailing the work commitment for different systems – important if you only have limited time available to spend in your woodland. These excellent practical guides

### South and West Wales Wildlife Trusts events

The programme of events for South and West Wales Wildlife Trust is available at

[http://www.welshwildlife.org/Events\\_en.link](http://www.welshwildlife.org/Events_en.link)

### Cardiff Naturalists

The Cardiff Naturalists' Society programme for Autumn/Winter 2010/2011 is now available at

<http://www.cardiffnaturalists.org.uk/htmlfiles/programme.htm>

### Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Is running a course on moths and butterflies from on Monday evenings from 4th October until 6th December. For further details please see

<http://www.warwickshire-wildlife-trust.org.uk/home/events/adult-workshops.aspx>

### Kent Wildlife Trust

Programme of events for Winter 2010/2011 is now available at

<http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/pdfs/events-leaflet/Events%20Diary%20Winter%202010.pdf>

### Courses from Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Includes Hedgerow Management and Winter Birds. Details from

<http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/whats-on/?date=0&type=course&location=0&x=11&y=21>

### Sussex Wildlife Trust

winter course diary is at

[http://www.sussexwt.org.uk/events/courses\\_diary/index.htm](http://www.sussexwt.org.uk/events/courses_diary/index.htm)



will really help you make management decisions that are right for both you and your woodland.

Improvements for wildlife are dealt with in the next section. Creation of open space in glades and rides provides the vital woodland edge and margins that form habitat of most of the woodland species. The advantages and disadvantages of bramble and bracken, and whether or when to manage it, are also discussed. Grazing systems, including the use of conservation grazing, and management of veteran trees and deadwood are important issues given attention, with strategies suggested for different woodland types – what is right in ancient woodland may not be ideal in plantations or on more recent sites.

It is often tempting to introduce species into woodland for the purpose of improving bio-diversity, but this is not always appropriate, particularly in ancient woodland. Whether to introduce new plants, what to introduce and how to do it are all discussed. There is also advice about bird nesting boxes and bat boxes. Management of existing ponds as well as creation of new ponds can also add to biodiversity, and there is sound advice here on how to do it. The final chapter deals with climate change, collection and propagation of local seed, and construction of wildlife corridors through connectivity and ecological networks.

Overall, there is a lot of information in this book, and you will probably want to read some sections several times. For a new woodland owner who may seem daunted by the task ahead, this book might in itself seem daunting. However it breaks things down into manageable sections, and allows you to approach wildlife management in a logical sequence—approach it with that mindset and you will find it invaluable. Don't feel you have to do everything in here – it is a guide to best practice, and raises awareness of the issues; it is not a “must do” minimum. It is a really useful book for experienced and novice owners alike – have a look, read it, consult the sources of advice that the authors suggest, and you will be able to make a real difference to the wildlife in your woodland.

Download a pdf at <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/owning-a-wood/books.php#managing-your-woodland-for-wildlife> or purchase from [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) for £10.50 plus p&p.

## National Forest Woodfair—30th August 2010

**National Forest Woodfair, Beacon Hill Park, Leicestershire – 30th August 2010**

This is the first time that we have attended this annual woodfair in Leicestershire, but it was well worth the trip. Beacon Hill Park is a great venue, sitting on top of a hill with lovely views over the surrounding countryside and woodlands.

There were a lot of attractions on offer at this show. As expected, there were a lot of craft stalls, with craftsmen and women both demonstrating and selling their wares. There were demonstrations of pole-lathe turning, wood-carving, basket-weaving, pyrography, coopering, furniture-making and chainsaw carving, with craft sales stalls both in the field and a large crafts marquee. If you have the slightest interest in crafts involving wood in all their forms, then this is a great place to go and get inspiration and new ideas. Don't forget to take your money, though, because the items on offer are both high-quality and very, very tempting...!

In addition, there were opportunities to have a go at things, particularly the use of a pole-lathe, at the Leicestershire County Council marquee, with priority given to children and it was great to see so many of them taking up this offer and enjoying it too.

There were also a lot of forestry-related stalls, including a number of stalls with vintage tools, modern tools including an Alaskan saw-mill, safety equipment, wood-burning stoves, large equipment demonstrations, forestry contractor services, woodfuel suppliers and suppliers of trees for planting. There were also demonstrations from people offering courses including SWOG's own Phil Hopkinson from Malvern Coppicing. There were large marquees featuring the work of the National Forest, Leicestershire County Council, and the Forestry Commission.

Most entertaining, though, were the shows in the larger arena areas on site. The Axemen of the New Forest put on a brilliantly-entertaining performance of skilled and rapid axe-work, that in-



### Courses

#### Underwoodsman Ltd

John Waller near Sevenoaks runs a whole range of interesting courses including

Chair-Making  
2nd to 9th October

Hand Tool Maintenance  
6th November

Hedge-Laying  
20-21st November

Coppicing, Layering and Tree-felling with hand tools  
15th-16th January

Reading the Woodland Landscape  
29th January

Willow Husbandry  
11th February

Baskets and Willow  
11/12/13th February

Green Woodwork Day  
7th May

Four Day Green Woodwork Workshop  
13-16th May

For further details please see

[http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/courses\\_in\\_detail.html](http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/courses_in_detail.html)

Contact  
01892 740303 (eves)  
07788 748618

#### Native Hands

Native Hands run a range of courses including basketry with hedge-row plants on 17th October. Their flyers is available at

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

cluded “races” to cut a log in the smallest number of axe strikes, and a demonstration of climbing a vertical trunk to cut off the top of a tree using nothing but wooden planks and axe-cut grooves in which to place them. There was also chainsaw carving, with a child’s chair being cut from a single piece. The presenters made the whole thing great fun, and we thoroughly enjoyed the display.

The Green Man also appeared, keeping the children entertained with poetry, prose performances and song, and there was almost non-stop music from live bands and performers in the food area. The falconry demonstration was also really impressive – you would not want to argue with the golden eagle as it lined up its prey and swooped!

We were also tremendously impressed by the horse-logging demonstration. The ease with which the beautiful, powerful, huge horse could drag a big log up the slope and return for another one was very impressive, and demonstrated the great benefit of this traditional forestry art.

And finally, the food area! Actually, this wasn’t finally – it was the first thing you came to on arrival, and very difficult to walk past or leave. What was really nice was to see so much locally-



produced high quality food on offer from Leicestershire and adjacent counties. Everything was available, from Melton Mowbray (and other) pies, through rare breed sausages and meat, to local confectionery, cheeses, beer and fruit. We came away loaded with food and drink, after a really enjoyable day.

If you are interested in woods, woodland skills, woodcrafts and small-scale forestry, this is an excellent wood-fair, with plenty to do for children and the family, and we are definitely looking forward to going again next year.



## Association of Professional Foresters Show—23-26th September

The Association of Professional Foresters’ Show (APF Show) at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire only happens every two years. It is an absolutely huge event, taking place over several days, and spreading out over a vast area of Cannock Chase forest. I have been to woodfairs and trade fairs before, but this is really something else!

Lots of woodfairs feature woodsman skills events, but this Show draws in world-leading professionals and the standard of skills on offer defies belief. This year the Show featured the Husqvarna World 25m Pole Climbing Championships, the Stihl Timbersports Event, the European Chainsaw Carving Championships and the UK Axe-Throwing Championships, as well as numerous other demonstrations. If you think you can climb a tree, throw an axe, use a chainsaw or chop a log—think again! These guys do it for a living and they are mind-bogglingly good.

The exhibition area is also of gigantic proportions. Like Gaul, and almost on the same scale, it is divided into three main sections: The trade stands and demonstration stages, where “smaller” equipment is on show, and there are retail outlets offering show discounts on important woodsman and foresters’ equipment; then there is an absolutely vast area where huge equipment is being demonstrated, including machines that take a tree and convert it into either wood-chip or split firewood in seconds; finally, there is a smaller area of woodcrafts and traditional skills. One of the really good things about the way the large equipment demonstrations are organised is that they are located in and among the trees themselves, showing things working in context, rather than in a field, where huge equipment looks out of place. Among the trees, it is appropriate in scale and you can really see how it can be used.

So, how did we get on? Well, we arrived mid-morning, and splashed through the mud to the main entrance. Almost immediately upon arrival we were seduced into watching the pole-climbing



### Reminder: Final months of Lantra funding for foresters in the South East

The land-based sector skills council, Lantra, has reminded foresters in the South East that the £2.1 million pot of money for training expenses in March 2011.

For more information, contact LandSkills South East: 0845 278 8800; [LandSkillsSE@lantra.co.uk](mailto:LandSkillsSE@lantra.co.uk) or visit [www.lantra.co.uk/LandSkills](http://www.lantra.co.uk/LandSkills).

### The National Trust

Hedgelaying workshop and dry stone walling workshops are now available from the National Trust in North Devon

Contact telephone: 01598 763402

email: [northdevon@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:northdevon@nationaltrust.org.uk)

### Final Chance at the Oak Timber Framing Course.

As a special offer to coincide with the Bentley Woodfair, Woodnet and Plumpton College are offering a reduced price on the five day Oak Timber Framing course which runs from 25-29 October at Flimwell, East Sussex.

Pay £400 if you book by 30 September.

See [www.woodnet.org.uk/events](http://www.woodnet.org.uk/events) or phone 01273 892052.



championship heats. The guys were outstanding! The really good ones almost danced up the poles in times around the 10 second mark, and you had to marvel at their grace and fitness. There were also some serious chainsaws on display at the Stihl Timbersports stage – powered by motorcycle engines and making around 60 horsepower, and cutting through huge trees like a knife through butter.

Having seen the men in action, we decided to look at some chainsaws for me. I have arthritis in my hands, which makes starting a chainsaw difficult, as well as holding a heavy saw for long periods of time. However the new Stihl carving chainsaw (MS192C-E) seemed to be really suitable. Not only is it light, at around 3.3kg, but the Ergo-Start is ridiculously easy to use – I really could start it with two fingers. The cordless chainsaws that we tried were by comparison under-powered and really quite heavy once the batteries were in place. So it looks like I'll be getting a little chainsaw to help with snedding, cross-cutting and firewood cutting. And, in due course, to have a go at carving.



We also liked the Alaskan Sawmill demonstration, and Stephen was delighted to see that they produce a small Alaskan Sawmill allowing him to cut planks up to 16-18 inches wide from a small tree or large branch with his existing chainsaw. So, another piece of equipment is heading our way, ready to process some of the timber from coppicing and thinning this winter. After lunch we stopped off to watch some of the chainsaw carving. To say these guys are talented is an understatement. The works of art they were creating was beyond belief—the stag and angel pictured here were carved with chainsaws.

We then headed back to the woodcrafts area where we bought a Storm Kettle – suitable for use in the field while we are planting our new woodland this winter. The chap on the stand was really friendly, making us a cup of tea in one of his kettles, before taking our order. At an exhibition dedicated to the professional, with huge corporate enterprises hosting mega-events and demonstrations, this was a refreshing reminder that woods can bind the small and large, amateur and professional together. It was near here, while making enquiries about tree protection fencing for our soon-to-be-created woodland, that we had a rather bizarre encounter with a gentleman from North Wales, judging by his accent, who clearly doesn't like trees: quite what he was doing at a Forestry Show rather bemused both us and the trade stand owner! "Too many trees!" he declared. "They keep planting them but they don't cut them down!" Clearly he *does* like cutting them down, and eventually he wandered off to buy a chainsaw, leaving us all shaking our heads.

We also paid a visit to the Forestry Commission marquee, where we picked up a very useful little booklet that might appeal to new woodland owners, and discussed our woodland creation grant application with the Regional Officer – keeping our fingers crossed that we can get it in, and approved, in time! The Forestry Commission were also running a full series of seminars during the days of the show, but we had no chance to attend these if we were going to see all the things we needed to at the trade exhibition.

Finally, via a brief visit to a trade tent to buy chainsaw gloves and lined rigger gloves for the winter, we hit the army surplus store, where we bought camouflage jackets for wildlife watching and photography, as well as some camo material to make a bird hide (actually it was a camo duvet cover, but will do the job). And a big knife—a sort of Crocodile Dundee knife—which we think might be useful for all manner of woodland tasks in the coming winter.

We ended up spending all day at the show and feeling we still had only seen a fraction of what was on offer. It is no wonder that many visitors come and make a weekend of their visit. Although the show is for professional foresters, there is a lot there for small woodland owners too: Not all the machines are huge, and there are examples of small firewood processors that work from the power take-off of a compact tractor, as well as manual and hydraulic log-splitters, sawbenches, smaller tools and chainsaws, axes, slashers and billhooks. However it is great to see the larger perspective on woodland and forest management, and those massive machines that can do the job



### Courses at Moyleci Environment Centre

Remaining courses in November and December

**Introduction to Permaculture:** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November

**Hedgelaying:** Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December

For further details please see

<http://tinyurl.com/38r4d96>

### Biocensus

Biocensus run courses of interest to woodland owners at their centre in Gloucestershire and will shortly be running courses in the Lake District. These courses include

Wildlife and the Law:  
An Introduction to UK  
Wildlife Legislation

An Introduction to  
Badger Ecology and  
Management

An Introduction to Bat  
Ecology and Manage-  
ment

An Introduction to  
Wildlife Population  
Monitoring

Phase One Habitat Sur-  
vey: The Basics and  
Beyond

The Identification of  
Common Grassland  
Plants

Bat identification using  
Bat Detectors

For further information  
please see  
<http://www.biocensus.co.uk/training.asp>

## Bentley Woodfair and SWOG Fleeces Offer —17th-19th September

The Bentley Woodfair went ahead on the weekend of 17th, 18th and 19th of September-another dry event, though not quite as warm and sunny as it was last year. SWOG was there as evidenced by the random pictures, (thanks Greyman, yours were the ones that came out well!).

Thank you also to everyone who helped on the stall and provided interesting items to show people what we get up to in our woodlands. We generated a lot of interest and signed up some very enthusiastic new members, some with woods, some without or looking to buy. The honey was a 'sell out' and enticed a lot of busy bees into the tent, along with the charcoal, carved mushrooms and some sandblasted oak roots. We also had David Brown enthusing one and all with his expert knowledge of woodland archaeology. Martin Garwood provided information and a display of woodland reptiles and Luke Ellis attracted a lot of interest and a few potential commissions with his woodcarving demonstration.



We also sold quite a few SWOG fleeces (pictured right). These are in forest green with two zip pockets and the SWOG logo. We have a few left so if you weren't able to get to the show and would like one please email [rich@swog.org.uk](mailto:rich@swog.org.uk). They are available in Medium and Large at £12 each plus £4.50 p&p, and include a free t-shirt. cheques payable to Ownwood Ltd. They will also be available at the next couple of meetings if you are coming along. See <http://www.swog.org.uk/news/swog-fleeces-with-free-t-shirt-offer/> for more details. If anyone has any pictures from Bentley Woodfair they would like to share, please forward them on to me and I can upload them to the web site.

Rich

## Nature's Craft Bushcraft Day—15th September

Andy Noble and his co instructor Paul from Nature's Craft put on a great bushcraft day for SWOG members. Held at Lords Wood in Hampshire, the day was a nice mix of practical skills and the sharing of knowledge and ideas.

We learnt firestarting skills, using a special 'firestick' and steel. This works much the same as a flint in a lighter, giving off a hot spark, which, if landed on a suitable piece of tinder can ignite and start your fire. Various tinders were tried including the bark from western red cedar, birch, bullrush as well as more common household items which can easily be carried into the wilderness like cotton wool.

Creating shelter for survival is one of the most fundamental skills of bushcraft. We were shown how to create a snug shelter which when covered in bracken, leaves or other natural materials will provide a rudimentary if not luxurious shelter.

This was a freestanding 'A' frame type, once the insulation is on the idea is that it acts like a natural 'duvet', trapping warm air within the shelter.





Another method is to make a 'lean to' arrangement. These don't trap heat so well, but it is possible to light a full length fire next to it and make a reflector out of logs to keep you snug all night!

With fire and shelter sorted, food was our next concern! This time of year there is plenty of potential sources if you know where to look. Wood sorrel, blackberries, crab apples and as the weather has been so damp recently, fungi. This is a field where you really do need to know what you are doing.

Although many fungi are edible, there are many which aren't and some are deadly poisonous, like the Death Cap for instance. This shaggy parasol (below) is apparently quite tasty, however be warned, not everyone reacts the same way to eating fungi. Once you are 100% certain you have identified an edible variety, the rule is to try it out in very small quantities, you may just be someone who is more sensitive to it than others and just because a book tells you it is edible, don't rule out an allergic reaction.

We wound up the day (forgive the pun!) with a look at cordage and how to make them with natural materials such as nettle, bramble and deer sinew. Individual threads can be twisted into strands to make a tough cord, this would have been a very important and time consuming task to perform before the days of seemingly unlimited amounts of nylon cords and ropes.

Andy has a wide cross section of other skills and showed us some of the craft work he has produced ranging from bowl and spoon carving to birch bark containers and flint tipped arrows.

In all a very enjoyable and worthwhile day. You can find out more about Natures Craft and the courses they run from their web site at <http://www.naturescraft.co.uk/index.htm>



*On the left, the deadly Death Cap, on the right the more palatable Shaggy Parasol*



## Chainsaw Joys by Malcom Stamp

I have long lusted after owning a Stihl 066 chainsaw but the price tag that comes out at over £1000 including bar brought on my allergy and would bring on the wrath of my much better half. I have watched saws come and go on Ebay but they still seemed to go at over £450 and there was no knowing what abuse they had been put to and they were still over my budget. I hatched a plan: I had managed a couple of little deals that gave me a little spare cash (outside of the normal budget) and decided I would go for a spares or repair saw which should come in my price range and at least I would know it had been abused. I "won" a 066 saw on Ebay for £260 that was not working. I gave it immediately to my neighbour, a mechanic, to have a look at. The report back was it seemed ok, loads of compression, he had cleaned the carb twice but he but he couldn't make it start.

I next took it to a little local firm who came recommended: "Yes no problem we will have a look at it." A couple of days later I was passing by and so called in on the off chance: "Oh right, it is actually next on the list, we are just about to have a look at it". A week later I called in again as I was passing, obviously My previous visit was forgotten as I was told "Oh right, yours is next on the list we are just about to look at it".

My wife will tell you I am not a patient man and do not suffer fools gladly; I had my chainsaw back. Reluctantly I took it to the Stihl main agent and asked them to look at it. A week later they rang to say, in such a cheerful voice "Cor what a load of



rubbish someone has run this without oil, it needs a new piston and cylinder etc. Cost £300 for parts plus labour. Oh! And £25 for me to tell you that".

So this is not looking such a good bargain but a little time on the net says I can get pattern parts for about £70. I bit the bullet realising that I was going to have to learn about chainsaw mechanics. My previous mechanical experience was 40 years ago playing with a Morris 1000 engine. I ordered parts and with much trepidation set about replacing them. Taking off the cylinder head was fairly painless—four screws and up it came and yes, even a blind man would have said the piston and rings were shot. I took my time and very carefully removed the circlip that held the little shaft that the cylinder was held by and replaced it and the piston. The piston has a couple of steel rings that fit around it but are stressed outwards so that they hug the cylinder wall. I couldn't see any way to hold these in place whilst I persuaded the new cylinder block over them. After a little thought I tried using a strip of metal from a special brew tin (nectar of the Gods) to wrap around them to hold them in place but it was too fragile; I made a second attempt with a strip of metal from a cat food tin wrapped tight around the cylinder and piston rings and held in place with a pair of pliers. Geronimo! It worked and the cylinder slipped down over the piston. I reassembled everything as it had come off until once again I had a complete machine. With absolutely no faith whatsoever I fuelled up the saw (with the correct mix) and pulled on the starter. Third pull and I was absolutely staggered when the thing roared into life! YES!

I let the saw run gently for a while. It idled well but did not do full speed very well. I took the carburettor apart it was dirty, gave it a clean and since then we have hummed into life, and today it has been down to the wood and cut up a complete tree.

What have I learnt from this:- Buy a new saw if you can afford to; Teach yourself how to do your own maintenance. Always use the correct mix in the fuel, a little too much oil in the mix is not a bad thing and put not your trust in the dodgy mechanic down the road.



*This isn't Malcom, or even a Stihl Chainsaw, but it is a nice picture!*

## Community Woodlands—Making woodlands more accessible



Woodland owners Gareth and Justine Gaunt have been opening up their woodlands to a number of organised groups for some years. Starting with bushcraft weekends organised by Dan and Liz Watson, which proved an enormous success, Gareth and Justine decided to welcome school parties to their woodland areas, too. A number of local schools have experienced the joys of bushcrafting – building dens, lighting fires – along with tree identification and general countryside and wildlife awareness.

Not everyone is fortunate enough to own a piece of woodland, to spend time managing and exploring its natural wonders and relishing the peace and quiet and sense of well-being to be found there.

Community Woodlands is a new scheme founded by [woodlands.co.uk](http://woodlands.co.uk) that aims to give people greater access to private woodlands and thereby share the wonderful woodland experience. The scheme allows private woodland owners to pair up with groups looking for access to woodland, and will thereby enable ever-greater numbers of people to enjoy the numerous benefits of spending time in woods.

Community Woodlands is for:

- Groups of people who want to experience activities in a woodland setting, such as theatre groups, scout groups, children's groups, forest schools, social forestry, bushcraft courses, woodlands management demonstrations, orienteering, coppicing or off-road horse riding.
- Woodland owners who are happy to share their woods in exchange for woodland management, the added security of having people on their land, or the sheer pleasure of knowing that more people are being enabled to experience the treasures of British woodland.

Community Woodlands was founded by [woodlands.co.uk](http://woodlands.co.uk) following large numbers of requests from people to use woodlands for activities involving the local community. For more information, log on to [www.woodlands.co.uk/community-woodlands/](http://www.woodlands.co.uk/community-woodlands/)

## Forthcoming SWOG Meetings

If you have been inspired by Ray Perry's article on Page 3, then please do come along to a SWOG meeting. There are meetings all over the country in the coming months.

### SWOG Meeting

**Northdown Plantation, Hampshire**

16th October

with author Julian Evans

Topics will include:

Coppicing neglected hazel

Thinning trees to help them grow

How to develop a glade

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-in-hampshire-16th-october-2010/>

### SWOG Meeting,

**Edenbridge, Kent**

17th October



Jonathan is organising a walk and talk through his lovely woodland near Tunbridge Wells. This 25 acre wood has an interesting history. The big question is how to manage the maturing pine trees economically without leaving an unsightly clearfell area as many are 50 years old and reaching maturity

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-near-edenbridge-kent/>

### SWOG Meeting

**Camarthenshire**

6th November

Malcom has invited SWOG members to his 42 acre woodland site bounded by a river and crossed by streams, that also features an old lead mine. He is looking forward to meeting other woodland folk, and discussing his BWW grant. Wellies are a must!

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-carmarthenshire-6th-november/>

### SWOG Meeting

**Rusper, near Crawley**

12th December

Have a walk with Sussex Wildlife Trust and David Plummer in these gorgeous woodlands. Find out about SWL projects that



are running with woodlands.co.uk community woodland scheme, and see the famous Scrag Copse owned by David Plummer and as seen on the One Show! Topics will include trees, winter tree ID and winter birds. (and even some soup!)

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-in-rusper-near-crawley/>

### SWOG Meeting

**Spring birds and plants- Knowlands Wood, East Sussex.**

16th April 2011



Come and enjoy a walk in Nick's wood in April. Details will follow on the SWOG web site as soon as they are available.

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/spring-birds-and-plants-knowlands-wood-east-sussex-16th-april-2011/>

### SWOG Meeting

**Alvecote Wood, North Warwickshire**

8th May 2011

There will be a presentation by Alistair from the Sylva Foundation of the MyForest woodland management web site, together with a walk around Alvecote Wood (20 acres) at bluebell time to discuss the owners' experiences of managing ancient woodland for wildlife. We also hope that there will be something to show you of the new woodland the owners are planting in the adjacent field.

If you would like to attend any of these meetings please contact [tracy@swog.org.uk](mailto:tracy@swog.org.uk)



## Other Forthcoming Events

### Coppicing, Layering and Tree Felling with Hand Tools

15-16 Jan 2011 £90 per person

John Waller will be leading this woodland management weekend. Find out how to look after trees and utilise the wood to best effect. Cover hazel coppicing to felling larger trees using hand tools and ropes. Then help re-stock the wood by layering.

More information and other courses from Underwoodsman are listed on

[http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/courses\\_in\\_detail.html](http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/courses_in_detail.html)



### Free talk on Hampstead Heath

Professor Oliver Rackham, author of several well-known books on trees and the countryside, will give a free talk on the theme 'Hampstead Heath and Woods: deer, woodcutting and the urban heath island', on Thursday 7 October. The event is hosted by the Heath & Hampstead Society, and non-members are welcome. Doors open at 7:30pm for a glass of wine, with the talk starting at 8:00pm. Venue: Rosslyn Hill Chapel, London NW3.

### National Hedgelaying Championships

These championships will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October at Rutland Water. There will be exhibitions, demonstrations and trade stands. For further information, please see

<http://www.hedgelaying.org.uk/champ09.htm>

### ICF Study Tour

South Downs National Park, 19-21<sup>st</sup> October

The Institute of Chartered Foresters will be undertaking a study tour to the South Downs National Park to look at the role of woodlands in the National Park area. The tour will be based in Brighton and visit a number of important and diverse woodlands and wooded landscapes. This is an opportunity to learn more about lowland silviculture, and integrating recreation with ancient woodlands and archaeological sites. Further information can be obtained, bookings made, and a flyer downloaded from

<http://www.charteredforesters.org/default.asp?page=124>

### Offcuts – Oxfordshire Woodland Group Newsletter

[http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/council\\_services/environment\\_planning/countryside/woodland\\_advice/offcuts/Offcuts\\_50.pdf](http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/council_services/environment_planning/countryside/woodland_advice/offcuts/Offcuts_50.pdf)

The Oxford Woodland Group Newsletter can be downloaded from the link above. This includes a listing of events and workshops for the coming winter. Of particular interest are the following:-

**Woodstock Community Woodland** needs a proper entrance! Volunteers wishing to develop their green wood-working skills are invited to participate in the design and manufacture of a cleft oak and chestnut gate with associated post & rail fencing. The workshops will take place in the winter, timing to be settled with those who register their interest with the Project office. Participants must have basic tools experience.

**Pruning and marking-for-thinning workshops** to be held across the county. Normally from 11.00am-1pm on a weekday or weekend. We bring the tools, you bring the warm clothing, boots & sandwiches! Contact the Project office to express your interest, we'll get back to you with dates. These workshops can accommodate rookies and more experienced persons together.

### Volunteering Opportunity

Sarah Partridge from [www.orchardbarn.org.uk](http://www.orchardbarn.org.uk) has written with news of an opportunity to volunteer in the making of a shingle roof. For further details please see <http://networkedblogs.com/8oBDE>

### Surrey Hills Woodfair

9-10th October, Birtley House, Bramley

[http://www.surreyhillswoodfuel.org.uk/Wood\\_fair.htm](http://www.surreyhillswoodfuel.org.uk/Wood_fair.htm)

**The Wood Fair** will be a celebration of wood and all that it offers, from biodiversity to renewable energy, with fun for all the family! There will be demonstrations, trade stands, coppice crafts, sculptures, wood stoves and boilers and local produce. Entry is FREE

Contact [jameslittle@surreyhillswoodfuel.org.uk](mailto:jameslittle@surreyhillswoodfuel.org.uk)



Helen Danby sent this and many other beautiful pictures of her wood, Saltern Wood, on the Isle of Wight to SWOG. Please see <http://www.swog.org.uk/articles/offshore-woodland/attachment/autumn-salern-wood/> for more of her lovely images.



## News for Woodland Owners

### What to do about wild boar

As part of the Defra Wild Boar Action Plan, the Deer Initiative (in collaboration with Natural England and BASC) has published six free best-practice guides with the aim of improving management of wild boar, a species that is becoming increasingly widespread in English woodlands. Download them from [www.wild-boar.org.uk](http://www.wild-boar.org.uk).

### Changes to woodland grants in Wales

The Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW) woodland grant scheme, which is delivered by Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) will close with effect from 1 January 2011. Instead, woodland grants will be integrated into Glastir, the Welsh Assembly Government's new sustainable land management scheme. However, woodland creation grants will continue to be delivered by FCW until 1 January 2013, via Glastir.

Details of the FCW announcement, made by Wales' rural affairs minister, Elin Jones, are at [www.forestry.gov.uk/wales](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales).



### Cuts to DEFRA Web sites

Fifty-seven out of 82 Defra-backed websites are due to be cut as part of the Government spending review, according to an answer to a Parliamentary Question. The sites to be shut by April 2011 include <http://www.ecolots.co.uk>, <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk>, <http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk> and <http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk>. The full list of sites under threat and those that will be kept can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/atYp1t>.

### Forestry Commission is a potential target for Government Cuts

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/24\\_09\\_10\\_bbcnewsquangos3.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/24_09_10_bbcnewsquangos3.pdf)

The BBC Politics Show has obtained a leaked list containing the most up-to-date information about proposed cuts to Government Bodies as part of the latest efficiency drive. On the list of organisations whose future has not yet been decided are a number of organisations of relevance to woodland owners including the Carbon Trust, the Energy Saving Trust, The Environment Agency, Natural England, The Forestry Commission, The National Forest Company, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. British Waterways is scheduled to be mutualised, and the Commission for Rural Communities is to be abolished.

### DEFRA online consultation on the Natural Environment White Paper

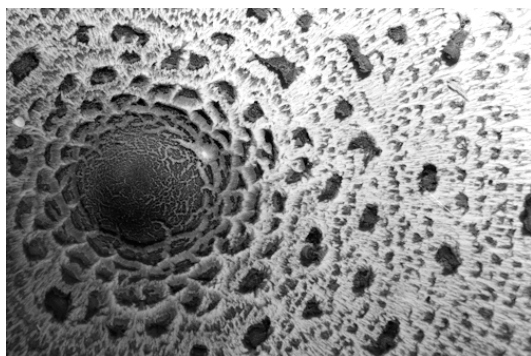
DEFRA have launched a consultation exercise on this White Paper. At a time of pending cuts in public spending, it is important that you have your say so that what money is available is spent on things that are important to you. Visit the survey site and have your say.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/nature-of-england>

### Disease-resistant elm study by Butterfly Conservation

Butterfly conservation started trials of disease-resistant elm in relation to its conservation objectives for the white-letter hair-streak butterfly in 2000. The report of these trials has now been published, with assessment of suitable cultivars for use in countryside and ornamental/parks settings.

<http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/conservation/2010%20Elm%20Report.pdf>



### Arbtree fungi web site

The Arbtree forum is a web discussion forum for arborists. They have launched a great tree fungus directory, with over 440 images of fungi affecting trees, helping you to distinguish between the parasites, saprophytes and beneficial fungi. See <http://arbtree.co.uk/forum/tree-fungi.html>

### Report on Socio-economic impact of National Forest

This is the third in a series of reports detailing progress on social and economic impacts of the National Forest project since 2004. The report is detailed, but shows that the National Forest area has out-performed similar areas in terms of unemployment rates, establishment of new businesses, population growth, property market indices and indices of multiple deprivation.

tion. There is a lot of support from stakeholders and the local community. If you live in this area, and are interested in the report, it is available for download from:

[http://www.nationalforest.org/document/research/much\\_more\\_than\\_trees\\_3.pdf](http://www.nationalforest.org/document/research/much_more_than_trees_3.pdf)

## Start

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

This is a new initiative from the Prince's Charities Foundation to help people make sustainable choices. Aimed at those making the first steps to sustainability, it nevertheless carries information about sustainable wood fuel and other things you can do to help reduce your impact on the environment

## On the Blogs at woodlands.co.uk...



### Autumn Leaves

Why do leaves change colour in Autumn? Read about colour-changes and leaf fall here..

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/trees/autumn-leaves/#more-3633>

### Wooden Books for a Wood Library

Derek Farrar has created a library using book-shaped blocks of wood. A wood library like this is called a xylarium. The wooden books can be purchased to build up a library of woods from all over the World

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/wooden-books-for-a-wood-library/>

**Managing Woodland for Wildlife** – new book from woodlands.co.uk

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/managing-your-woodland-for-wildlife/>

This new book has been reviewed on Page 6 of this Newsletter. Have a look at it, read it, buy it!

### Autumn Fruits

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/autumn-fruits/>

Read about autumn fruits and their uses on this blog—and try your hands at jam and jelly-making (see pages 1-2)

### Woodland Steps

If you have steep slopes in your woodland, and want to make a flight of wooden steps to make getting around easier, these two blog entries tell you how to do it.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/woodland-steps-%E2%80%93-part-1/>

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/woodland-steps-part-2/>

### Preparing rabbit for the pot

How to do it! There are images of dead rabbits in this posting, so don't look if you're likely to get upset by this.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/wild-food/preparing-rabbit-for-the-pot/>

### Urban foxes

Urban foxes have been in the news recently, with reports of attacks on humans. So, why do foxes come into cities, what do they eat, and how do they live alongside humans?

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/animal-diseases-problems/urban-foxes/>



### The Survival Tin

Survival with the minimum of equipment that can be fitted into a single small tin. What should you carry and how can you use it to make fire, make a shelter, obtain clean water and navigate your way out of trouble? This article tells you.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/the-survival-tin-by-john-hayward/>

## Newsletter - October 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](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61487332523)

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## Small Woodland Owners' Group Forum

### What have we been doing this month?

Can you help bees by keeping hives in a woodland? That was a question posed by **The Barrowers**. Yes, you can, and there is a lot of advice about how to do this on the forum this month.

Pricing wood is also a topic for discussion. How do you set a price for four standing oak trees? That was the question from **Toby Allen**. The answer was...well, it depends!

**Meadowcopse** asked about how you establish randomized planting plans, where trees are mixed in species and not in nice neat rows. Lots of practical advice to be had from forum members.

Is it a bumper Autumn for fungi—quite a few of us think it is. However a lot of us are stumped by which ones we can eat and which we can't.

**Old Smithy** joined us from Shropshire, and asked if there were any local members—

evidently there are quite a few. There were other new members too—**Treegrl** from Essex with four acres of wood, and **cinimod** from East Sussex, who completed their purchase of 11 acres of wood.

**Rogerspianocat** has had trouble with his froe—after a brief foray off-topic, some helpful advice to prevent the handle falling off was forthcoming.

An area of concern to many of us are the pending Government Cutbacks. This discussion has already started, and is likely to run and run, as we get further news of web sites that will close, and of the fate of bodies such as the Forestry Commission.

There were also threads praising the Bentley and Weald Woodfairs, and discussing the APF Show at Cannock—attended by several SWOG members.

*Visit the forum and have your say on these and many other topics.*

### On the Web..

#### Latest videos at Woodlands.tv

Woodlands.tv.co.uk has many videos on woodland-related activities, including practical demonstrations of woodland techniques. This is the ideal way of learning woodcrafts, bushcraft and forestry by watching the experts

#### Butchering and Cooking a Caught Squirrel

Not for those who might be upset by images of dead squirrels.

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/86/butchering-and-cooking-a-squirrel-caught-in-the-woods>

#### Storing and Curing Wood

From a cabinet-maker, watch how he will store and cure freshly-milled plane tree

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/87/storing-and-curing-wood>

#### Chestnut Coppice for Buildings

David Saunders shows how local chestnut was used in the construction of the Woodlands Enterprise Centre at Flimwell

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/88/chestnut-coppice-for-buildings-flimwell>

#### From Woodfairs.co.uk Woodfest Wales

3rd-5th June 2011 at St Asaph. Further details on

<http://www.woodfairs.co.uk/wales/> and [http://www.woodfestwales.co.uk/north/general\\_information.php](http://www.woodfestwales.co.uk/north/general_information.php)

