



## In the Newsletter this Month

Autumn is well and truly with us, and many of us are starting on the winter work of coppicing, thinning, planting and those other woodland tasks that we need to get done. This newsletter should provide something to read during our breaks from work. There are two articles on photography: the first of a series of two covering the basics of photography, and the second covering wildlife photography fieldcraft. I hope these will inspire everybody to get out there with their camera and take photos of their woods, and hopefully send us some of them!

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We also have the first contribution to the "My Favourite Tree" series, and what a superb article it is, about Robin Hood. Please, send us some words and photos of your favourite tree and we can feature it over the coming months.

There are reports from a number of meetings including a brief summary of the South East Coppice Conference (full report is downloadable from the SWOG web site), a lovely report of the SWOG meeting at Julian Evans' wood, and a summary of a partnership meeting in Warwickshire. If you attend any meetings or courses and would like to tell us about them, however briefly, please do send us your reports.

There is a lot of news this month about availability of grants, forthcoming meetings and conferences, and events. There are also some interesting forthcoming courses including photography workshops by Susan Young ARPS, who wrote the excellent article on wildlife photography for this newsletter.

There are a lot of SWOG meetings coming up in the next few months: it really is worth taking time out from the tasks in your own wood and meet up with fellow owners to see what they are doing, how they are doing it, and to share information, tips, experiences and, of course, cups of tea!

Have a lovely November in your woods: next month will be the Christmas Edition, so if any of you have any winter photographs to contribute, please send them in.

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

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## Photography Basics: Taking the Right Picture

We all love to take photographs in our wood, and there are so many images to be taken. But often we come home disappointed that we didn't quite show what we wanted to.

There are two key elements to taking a good photograph – the first is to take the right picture, and the second is to take the picture right. The first element is the artistic element and is to do with the composition of the image: capturing an image, mood or feeling that conveys what you want to convey of your emotions or perceptions on viewing a scene. The second is the technical element: dealing with issues such as exposure, depth of field, shutter speed and so on. Both of these interact to take a good photograph – you need good composition and artistic feel, but you also need to capture it correctly.

This is the first of two articles to help you take better photographs when you are out and about in your wood. It doesn't matter what camera you have: you can aim to take better images regardless of whether you use a top end SLR or a mobile phone.

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## Composition

Taking time to compose your picture is really important. It is relatively rare that you have to take a true “snap-shot” i.e. just point, click and hope. In most instances you have time to compose your image: practising this means that when you do have to shoot quickly, you are likely to compose the image well too, as it becomes second-nature.

We all know you need to avoid mistakes such as trees growing out of a person’s head, cutting off the top of a subject’s head, and avoiding distractions in the foreground and background, but there are some other simple tricks to improve your composition and make your images more dramatic

### The Rule of Thirds

The visual impact of an image can be greatly enhanced by use of the so-called “Rule of Thirds”. Basically, an image looks more balanced and generally more appealing when the key elements are placed on an imaginary line dividing the image approximately into thirds, either horizontally, vertically, or both. Where the horizontal lines and vertical lines intersect is often called the “zing point” – placing the subject there adds extra drama and interest to the image.

In the two examples, the snail is on a zing point, whereas the swan is centred vertically, but a third of the way along the horizontal axis.



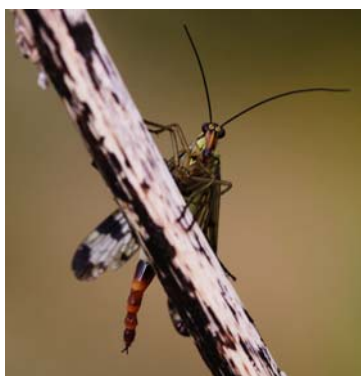
### Diagonals and Triangles

Another way to add impact to your images is the use of diagonal lines, and the formation of triangles. Diagonals tend to make the image look dynamic, and give it movement, even if it portrays a very stationary scene. Sometimes, if the subject doesn’t include diagonals, you can make it appear so by tilting the camera.



In the examples here, the first makes use of diagonals to give an

impression of movement in a static picture of willow catkins, and the second uses two diagonals to add interest to a photo of a scorpion fly.



### Visual Pathways

Visual pathways are lines or pathways that lead the eye through the image, helping the image to tell a story, as well as adding interest and movement to an otherwise static view. They can literally be a pathway, such as a road, path, stairway or river. The first example here shows a stairway acting as a visual pathway, taking you upwards towards the light. The second example on the next page is a bit more subtle: it shows a pathway that uses one object to lead your eye to another object in the frame - in this case the bluebells draw the eye into the centre of the scar on the tree.

Using a pathway to lead your eye through an image is an excellent way of making your pictures more interesting and dynamic.



## 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\\_Short\\_courses\\_2010.pdf](http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/CAT_Short_courses_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)

### LILI 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>





### Direction and angle of view

It is very easy to take all your photos from a standing position, just as the eye initially sees the object as you walk around. However, you can create very dramatic images by varying your direction of view: taking the picture from above, or getting right down and taking pictures from below. This helps you to see familiar objects in a different and more interesting way.

As well as considering the angle of view, you can consider how wide or narrow an angle you want to focus on: you can often create much more dramatic images by zooming in on a particular aspect of a scene, rather than trying to capture everything in one image. I found I often used to take pictures of a scene, which, while technically correct, didn't really convey the feeling I had when I was in the place. This is because that feeling came from only one or two aspects of the scene that were lost when I tried to capture the whole thing. If you stop and think "what is it that draws my attention in this place?" or "what is it that I find special or interesting in this place?" then you will often hone in on a small aspect of the overall view, and thereby get a picture that really captures the feelings you are experiencing while you are there.

The examples show the use of both an unusual direction of view, as well as a narrow angle of view, to convey an unusual image of conifers, an oxeye daisy and the remains of a lightning-stricken oak tree.

### Lighting

It is useful to think of the direction and quality of the light that you are using when taking a picture. By quality of light, I mean the differences in light between different times of day, in different conditions of sunshine and shade, and different seasons of the year, as well as the patterns of light and shade that are created.

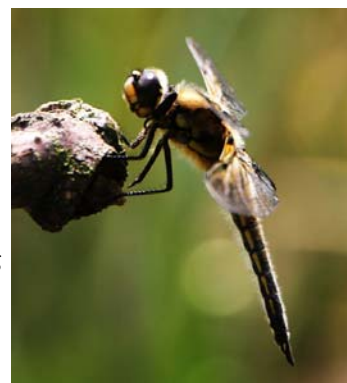
A lot of people think it is a good idea to get the sun behind you when taking a portrait, or to try and get the subject lit by full sunlight. This quite frequently produces relatively bland images, because it minimises the contrast between light and shadow.

It is very useful to consider the use of backlighting, or side-lighting, to bring out the qualities of light and shade, and to produce a much more interesting interpretation of the subject. Side-lighting really helps to bring out textures and contrast between highlight and shadow. Backlighting can produce a light through your subject which makes it interesting and sometimes rather ethereal. You can also take great images in the rain – it doesn't have to be bright sunshine to make an image interesting.

Lighting also varies with time of day: cooler at midday and at night, warmer in morning and evening. Low sunshine in winter produces a lovely watery quality of light that is not present during the summer, particularly if you combine it with an interesting angle of view and use side or backlighting to enhance your compositions. The examples show an image of trees taken at night, a backlit portrait, and back/side-lit picture of a dragonfly. The use of different types of lighting adds interest to what would otherwise be ordinary images.

### Patterns and Texture

Patterns and texture can make an image very interesting, particularly if you are using them in an abstract or semi-abstract way. They can be enhanced by the use of appropriate lighting, particularly by the use of side-lighting to emphasise the difference between highlight and shadow. In the example below, I have combined the use of a narrow angle of view (i.e. a zoomed-in approach) to produce an abstract image of a wall, and to convey the impression of a poppy field by concentrating on the pat-





terns and texture of the poppies, rather than by taking a literal image of the poppy field.

#### Summary and Practice

Practice makes perfect, so here are ten ideas to try. Don't try them all at once: work through them one by one to try and improve your photography. Each time you go out, try and work on one or at the most two of these ideas.

1. Take your time composing your pictures. View everything from several angles before you take your pictures.
2. Take lots of pictures: if you have a digital camera it doesn't cost you anything, so click away!
3. Take a series of images using the "rule of thirds" to compose them: try taking the image with the subject in the centre, and then on a zing point and compare the images. Do this lots of times so it becomes second-nature to compose images in this way. Then, when you do have to take a photo quickly, you are likely to compose it well.
4. Try taking pictures using diagonals or triangles to enhance the dynamic qualities and introduce the sensation of movement to your pictures.
5. Try taking a series of pictures exploring the use of visual pathways to draw your eye through the image and help it to tell a story
6. Take photos with light directly on the subject, and then take similar images with light behind or to the side of the subject and see how the images differ
7. Try taking photos at different times of day: night, dusk, early morning and see how the different quality of light affects the picture
8. Try taking photos in different weather: snow, ice, rain, wind, sun
9. Try taking photos from unusual directions and zoomed in closely: look at how the direction and width of the view affect the impression given of the subject

Look for repeating patterns of texture, light and shade, and use these in your photos to create strong impressions.

If you get any photos you are really pleased with, then send them to us and we will put them in the newsletter or on our web site!

*Sarah is currently studying a professional photography course, and runs photography workshops at Alvecote Wood. If you are interested in attending a workshop please contact [sarah@swog.org.uk](mailto:sarah@swog.org.uk) or visit [www.alvecotewood.co.uk](http://www.alvecotewood.co.uk).*

Next month will cover taking the picture right – a guide to exposure, depth of field and use of shutter speed to get great images.

## Photography: Wildlife Photography Fieldcraft

*This fabulous article from Susan Young, ARPS, gives us the inside track on how to track and photograph wildlife in our own woods. Susan also runs courses on wildlife photography and fieldcraft, if you want to go along and learn more: see below for details.*

The most important aspect of wildlife photography is fieldcraft. Without knowledge of the subject - its habits, its territory, signs of its presence etc- it can be almost impossible to achieve any photographs at all, let alone photographs of quality. You may know not to wait for a badger to appear at midday, but do you know how to recognise the signs of deer, or how to stalk a dragonfly?

**Use of perches and hides** The easiest way to start on the road to obtaining great wildlife photographs is to erect a bird feeder next to some perches. If you have the use of a hide, all the better. A log with holes drilled at the side and filled with a peanut/fat mixture will attract woodpeckers, and an attractive branch to the side of a bird feeder will encourage smaller birds to perch before feed-

### Course Directory

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

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

**Phil Hopkinson of Malvern Coppicing** offers practical coppicing courses

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

**Yorwoods** offer courses for woodland owners and managers in the Yorkshire area

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

**Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management**

offer a wide range of courses, some of which are of interest to woodland owners

<http://www.ieem.net/otherevents.asp>

**The Sustainability Centre**

offers lots of courses around the theme of sustainable living.

<http://www.sustainability-centre.org/index.php>

**Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events** The

programmes for November and December can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2010/11/01/month/all/all/1>



ing. A hide at a suitable distance away (say 5 m ) will allow you to take photographs without the birds being disturbed, although great care is required with woodpeckers , as the slightest movement will frighten them off.

Hides come in many shapes, sizes and materials. A simple wooden shed with the window glass replaced with camouflage net is often all that is required for a fixed hide. The most convenient, if expensive, form of portable hide is one made from spring steel and covered with camouflage material. These can be erected very quickly, but are not always as easy to take down as the instructions claim. In the field, a convenient bush and some camouflage net can work well.

Choice of lens is important as it will be difficult to obtain good quality pictures of birds with anything less than a 300mm lens. Professional photographers frequently use 500 or 600mm lenses together with extending lenses as they require final images of A3 size and above.



*Action shots are always more interesting.*

*This chaffinch was eager to try out the woodpecker's food, but had great trouble keeping balance.*



*Beautiful Demoiselle dragonfly obligingly perched on a leaf.*

act the effects of the high contrast found in the bright sunny conditions which may be present.

#### **Elusive subjects**

British mammals are very difficult to photograph. Deer and foxes usually only appear at dawn and dusk and badgers mainly emerge at night. Others, such as stoats and weasels are so secretive and fast moving, that they are rarely photographed at all. Birds of prey are so keen eyed they can spot a mouse moving, so a human has no chance of avoiding detection. These animals require a more advanced form of fieldcraft and an intimate knowledge of the animals, although technology such as field cameras can help.

#### **Tracking**

The first step to photographing the elusive subjects is to look for signs of their presence. Hoof-prints will often give an indication of the presence of deer and studying the prints will have a good

#### **Stalking dragonflies and butterflies**

Dragonflies and butterflies can be frustrating to photograph as they have large eyes and will spot tiny movements. Having said that, they will often return to the same perch or flower, so it is a good idea to observe quietly for some time, then position yourself near to a favourite perch and wait. Putting a stick next to a pond will often attract dragonflies and can be very successful, but images are usually more successful if they are perched on a leaf or flower.

Great care must be taken to move slowly – It is all too easy to move the camera too quickly in the excitement of finding a suitable subject, and find nothing but a leaf on the image!

I usually use a 100 or 180mm lens with a ring flash for dragonflies and butterflies. Not only does the flash freeze any movement , it also makes it easier to counter-

#### **Ben Law**

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

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

**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 expires 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).

**New Coed Lleol address**  
Coed Lleol  
Unit 6 Dyfi Eco Park  
Machynlleth  
Powys  
SY20 8AX  
0845 4560342

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

indication of which type of deer. Patches of flattened grass can indicate where they lie, and droppings are also a good indicator. Badgers setts are easy to spot and are often seen in south-facing wooded slopes or under hedges, but the presence of badger 'poo loos' is required to indicate that the sett is active.

### Trail cameras

These were originally used by deer hunters in the US, but are now readily available in the UK and are being increasingly used to detect other forms of wildlife. They are invaluable in showing the presence of wildlife, and in particular will show the time of day they are present, as date and time are printed on the photograph. Once you have detected the presence of badgers for example, leaving out peanuts on a regular basis can tempt them out earlier in the evening making photography easier.

Setting up hanging feeders can be used to detect mice, and even dormice can be photographed in this way. As dormice are protected species this may in fact be the only way you will be able to obtain their photograph.



*This young Roe deer visited the pond frequently over a period of weeks.*



*Peregrine Falcon in the rain.*

### Patience and persistence

However good your fieldcraft and knowledge, you will still need patience and persistence. A few days ago I rose at 5am and lugged my camera to a spot well known as a site for deer rutting. The animals could be heard in the distance but not one came by, despite the fact there had been 50 deer in the same spot the day before. One nearly always has to re-visit sites and wait for several hours for those special shots. Once you get them, the waiting is worthwhile, and the shots are much more valuable for having been difficult to achieve.

Susan Young ARPS  
wildlifephotographyfieldcraft@gmail.com

*Susan is running a Wildlife Photography and Fieldcraft course with 2 fieldcraft experts, in Devon from 23rd to 26th May 2011. Details can be found at [www.wildlifephotographyfieldcraft.co.uk](http://www.wildlifephotographyfieldcraft.co.uk). Further courses are planned. Read more from Susan on the woodlands.co.uk blog at <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/wildlife-photography-and-field-craft/>*

**Captive animals.** Some animals are so difficult to photograph in the wild, that captive animals are often used. Highly detailed images of birds of prey or otters for example, are rarely achieved in the UK with truly wild animals. There is no shame in photographing captive animals as long as you are honest about it. A photographer was recently stripped of a major photography prize when he was accused of photographing a captive wolf after claiming it was a wild wolf. Bird of Prey centres often bring birds to a suitable site allowing you to take those wonderful close-ups you would be unlikely to obtain in any other way.

### Developing Your Skills Courses from Berks, Bucks, Oxon Wildlife Trust

A range of courses aimed at developing personal skills, very helpful for the woodland owner.

<http://www.bbowt.org.uk/content.asp?did=23622&level2id=5876&depth=1&rootid=5843>

### Winter Bird ID

Saturday 13 November,  
8.30 am – 4.30 pm  
Chimney Meadows, nr.  
Bampton, Oxon

### Wildlife and Landscape Photography

Sunday 28 November  
2010, 10 am – 4 pm  
College Lake Nature  
Reserve, nr. Tring, Bucks

### Badger Survey

Saturday 18 December  
2010, 10.30 am – 2.30 pm  
Dancers End Nature  
Reserve, nr Tring, Bucks

### Hedge Laying

Saturday 15 January  
2011, 10 am – 4 pm  
Sydlings Copse Nature  
Reserve, nr Oxford, Oxon

### Coppicing

Saturday 12 February  
2010, 9.30 am – 4 pm  
Warburg Nature Reserve,  
nr. Henley-on-Thames,  
Oxon

### Charcoal Burning

Saturday 9 April 2011,  
9.30 am – 4.30 pm  
Warburg Nature Reserve,  
nr. Henley-on-Thames,  
Oxon.



## My Favourite Tree

### Lapwing Wood, Somerset by Elaine Hodgson



He rises out of the misty landscape - standing proud and strong against the woodland backdrop.



His ancient ivy-covered limbs hold his bow up high as he shoots at the clouds - like Robin Hood.



And he will forever keep a watchful eye over the borrowed land.

*Please write something about your favourite tree and send it to us with a photo.*

#### Courses

##### Underwoodsman Ltd

Places are still available on the following courses

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

#### Forest School Leader Courses at Boxmoor Trust

Level One: November 1st—3rd 2010

Level Two: March 27th to April 1st 2011

Level Three: February 21st to 25th and June 6th to 10th 2011

[http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/attachments/108\\_Training%20poster%20A4%20-%202010-2011.pdf](http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk/attachments/108_Training%20poster%20A4%20-%202010-2011.pdf)

call 01442 253300 or e-mail: forest-schools@boxmoortrust.org.uk

## SWOG Meeting at Professor Julian Evans' Wood

Professor Julian Evans very kindly hosted a SWOG meeting at his own wood in Hampshire on Saturday 16th October. As it was very much a 'hands on' day, about sixteen members duly turned up, suitably attired and hand tools at the ready! The day was split into three activities all of which with the general theme of opening up the canopy to allow light in.

### Woodland Glades

Firstly we looked at an intersection of two rides. Already it had a shrub layer of privet, hazel and other species, but it was very much overshadowed by the large beech trees to



the south of the main ride. Julian brought the beech tree down, letting the light flood in. Of course it all had to be cleared up, and stacked!



Creating a glade like this is not just good for wildlife as it allows more light and warmth to penetrate the canopy, but it also provides a great place to camp or have picnics!

### Thinning

Our next task was to assess an area of ash, oak and cherry and decide which trees to keep and which to thin. We discovered this to be more difficult than expected and really dependant on what the objectives are. Here Julian wanted to enhance the habitat for wildlife, but also keep in mind a good timber crop in years to come.

We tied black bin bags around the trees we thought should be thinned, and white bags around the ones to keep, giving them more room to grow and develop. The idea being to mark about 8 out of the 49 trees in



### Photography Courses

**David Plummer** Photography

<http://www.davidplummerimages.co.uk/courses.html>

**Susan Young**

Susan is running a Wildlife Photography and Fieldcraft course with 2 fieldcraft experts, in Devon from 23rd to 26th May 2011. Details can be found at [www.wildlifephotographyfieldcraft.co.uk](http://www.wildlifephotographyfieldcraft.co.uk).

### Photography workshops at Alvecote Wood

Sarah runs practical photography workshops at Alvecote Wood in Warwickshire. See [www.alvecotewood.co.uk](http://www.alvecotewood.co.uk)

**Nature photography workshops for beginners**  
Embrace Co-operation, at Lesnes Abbey Wood, South London

<http://embraceworkshops.wordpress.com/photography-workshops/>

Other courses include Coppicing and Tree Felling, Glade Clearing and Traditional Wooden Fence-making and Repair.

<http://embraceenvironment.wordpress.com/embrace-the-wild/>

### Charcoal making at Flimwell

On Friday 5 November. Learn how to make charcoal on a small scale using oil drums. Book your place by phoning 01273 892052. £80 or if you work in forestry or woodland management in the south east you may be eligible for a subsidised fee of £24. see [www.woodnet.org.uk/events](http://www.woodnet.org.uk/events) for more information.



the stand to keep and 8 to bring down, the others would be decided on at later thinnings. There was much head-scratching and discussion!

Some he was in agreement with, but others he produced counter arguments against, explaining that sometimes, there really is no 'right' decision! Even the Professor with years of experience put off a decision on a couple of trees until the next thinning, which may take place in another 5 or so years.

## Hazel Coppicing

Our final task was to coppice some hazel stools. This should be done about every 6-10 years depending on the speed of growth and what it is to be used for. Leave it much longer than that and it will become 'overstood' and difficult to cut as it entangles itself. Much of our hazel coppice over the past half century or so has been left unmanaged like this. The demand for traditional coppice products like hurdles and bean sticks has



been taken by cheaper imports and ubiquitous 'cheap' plastic products.

The day was not only very enjoyable and a chance to mingle with fellow woodlanders, but it proved to be an excellent piece of experiential learning. One of the main bits of feedback I received from the group was how much better it was to 'do' and 'see' the effects of our actions immediately, far better

than learning from a book or just being told.

So many thanks once again to Professor Julian Evans, his wife Margaret and of course to all the attendees who made the day a great success.

There are many more photos on the SWOG web site: see <http://www.swog.org.uk/news/a-meeting-with-professor-julian-evans/> for more images of this highly enjoyable event.

*If anybody attended the meeting at Jonathan's Wood and can write a report for us, we'd really like to hear about it.*

## 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 Management**

**An Introduction to Wildlife Population Monitoring**

**Phase One Habitat Survey: 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>

## Surrey Hills Woodfair and Surrey Hills Seminar: Meeting the Woodfuel Challenge



Around 1,000 people celebrated wood in every shape and form at the first Surrey Hills Wood Fair held at Birtley House, Bramley, on 8th and 9th October.

The versatility of wood was amazing: source of fuel; raw material for carving and turning, fencing and cabinet making; and blank canvas for creative art.

The theme of the fair was sustainability. Surrey is the most heavily wooded county in England and wood is a sustainable crop that has immense potential. So alongside traditional crafts such as willow hurdle making, there were stands demonstrating the latest wood-fuel boiler technology using pellets and wood chip and purpose-built log splitting tools for home use.

St James's School, Elstead, was there to encourage people to follow its example and install a wood pellet heating system and to talk about the benefits of biodiversity. Transition Guildford brought its apple press to show people how to make apple juice and to raise the profile of its campaign to create community orchards.

The fair was a real family event and the children had a wonderful time exploring the exhibits. For adults interested in sustainability, there were talks on wood fuel boilers, burners and distribution and woodland management.

The event was coordinated by James Little of Surrey Hills Wood Fuel Group, and sponsored by the Surrey Hills Board Sustainable Development Fund, Leader, Poujoulat, Birtley House and the Forestry Commission.

### Surrey Hills Seminar

The Chief Executive of Surrey County Council, David McNulty drew cheers from the audience when he stated that wood will now be the preferred option for heating council buildings.

Speaking at the end of the Surrey Hills Seminar: Meeting the Wood Fuel Challenge, at Birtley House, Bramley, on Friday, Mr McNulty said everyone had a responsibility to respond to innovation and technology, and the County Council had committed itself to a 30% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2014.

"This means trying to take 30,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> out over the next four years," he said. "We are also committed to a wood fuel policy. Our preferred position is that if we put heating sources in, we expect them to be wood fuel unless it can be demonstrated that there are reasons why it is not cost effective or suitable."

Acknowledging the pressures on capital spending by local government, he urged partners in the private sector to engage with the council to help make wood fuel viable. These would be important discussions, he said.

The seminar, chaired by Michael Sydney, Chairman of the Surrey Hills Board, attracted more than 70 delegates from local government, environmental groups, wood fuel producers and forestry owners, the University of Surrey and boiler manufacturers. Birtley House was a perfect venue as it has a large wood chip boiler providing its heating and hot water for its elderly care home residents. It was funded by Birtley House, Poujoulat, Surrey Hills Sustainable Development Fund, the Forestry Commission and Surrey Hills Leader programme.

The owner of Birtley House, Simon Whalley, explained that the estate produced wood, the savings involved in converting from gas to wood chip were substantial and said "this is a win, win, win situation and there are very few of these opportunities in life." He suggested Birtley could become a hub for local distribution.

Chris Miles, the Managing Director of Eenergy, said the Energy Minister Greg Barker acknowledged that biomass was the most important renewable energy source as it was bountiful and responsive to demand. He added he was confident that the Renewable Heat Incentive would soon be applied to wood fuel boilers.

Matthew Woodcock from the Forestry Commission said Surrey had 37,000 ha of woodland which had the potential to heat up to 10,000 houses a year but two thirds of the woodland was not managed and owners needed to wake up to the opportunities.





## Joining up the Dots—North Warwickshire Environment Group

A meeting organised by North Warwickshire Council was held in Atherstone Memorial Hall on 14<sup>th</sup> October that brought together a whole range of individuals and organisations interested in the development of wild open spaces in the area for conservation and community use.

Presentations showed what we know about wildlife in North Warwickshire and why there is a need for co-ordinated action. This was followed by excellent presentations from groups taking action on a local basis at Baddesley Common, Polesworth Abbey, the Geological Conservation Group, Wolvey Parish Council and a superb presentation on the role of farmers and farming from John Plumb of Southfields Farm. John showed just how well the needs of wildlife and the environment, and for provision of community access and education, can be integrated with profitable modern farming. Indeed, farmers often have equipment that make management of the environment on a large scale possible, something that those working with smaller tools and lower levels of resources find difficult. There was a lot to be learned by woodland owners from his approach, and we are looking forward to visiting his farm and learning more from him in the future.



After a delicious lunch, there was a discussion of the Local Nature Reserves Project. There was also an excellent presentation by Gina Rowe of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust of the Tame Valley Wetland Project, as an example of a Living Landscape project. This is a massive project which links together whole areas to form a wildlife corridor, and involves co-ordination across county boundaries as well as across multiple organisations. This way of joined-up thinking is key to providing coherent wildlife conservation projects as well as engaging the local community and getting children out and about in the countryside.

There were displays from many organisations including the Forestry Commission, Natural England, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, North Warwickshire Council and Warwickshire CAVA (co-ordination of volunteers).

The opportunity for networking was enthusiastically enjoyed, and we ourselves have now gone away with the idea of forming a Living Landscapes partnership on the lines of the Tame Valley project covering the Anker and Coventry Canal area, which contains our woodland, our new field (soon to be woodland) two SSSI's, a country park and various areas of farmland in various stewardship schemes, as well as the Polesworth Abbey project.

For more information on the Living Landscapes projects, see <http://www.warwickshire-wildlife-trust.org.uk/conservation/living-landscapes.aspx>

## South East Coppice Conference



This event was held at Lodge Hill Centre, Pulborough, West Sussex between 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> October. This is a brief summary: the full report can be downloaded from the SWOG web site. The meeting was supported by the Forestry Commission, West Sussex County Council and SEEDA/RDPE.

The programme included site visits to woods and workplaces, discussion of regional differences in the coppice industry, exploration of the current issues for the workforce and ideas for the future development of the industry. There were particular sessions focusing on the hazel and chestnut industries, and delegates were invited to contribute throughout by use of flip-charts available throughout the weekend.

The top ten issues facing those working in the coppice industry which were raised by delegates were:-

- Neglected Woods/Poor Resource
- Access/Availability of grants for cutters, not owners
- Support for new starters
- Falling internal standards
- Deer numbers
- Landowner co-operation
- Affordable housing, yards and workshops
- Biodiversity/Conservation cutting cycles are not commercially viable
- Insurance/VAT/Tax/Complex contracts
- Lack of public understanding

At the end of the conference, a resolution was passed as follows:

*“This conference proposes that representatives of all coppice groups and counties/chestnut manufacturers where no formal group exists, be invited to attend the meeting at the Greenwood Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to discuss which identified issues, if any, could best be addressed by the formation of a National Coppice Association.”*

If you are at all interested in the future of the coppice industry, then the full report is available to download from <http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/South-East-Coppice-Conference-Report1.pdf>

## Forestry Commission News: Reform, Grants and Mapping Tools

Details are just emerging of the planned reforms affecting the Forestry Commission in England and Wales. In Wales, it is proposed that the functions of the Forestry Commission be taken over by the Welsh Assembly. In England, there are plans to abolish the statutory requirement for a number of the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission England's regional advisory committees to ensure that we have the flexibility and level of local engagement we need. These committees will be replaced by non-statutory advisory groups, with scope to provide expert local advice where required.

Plans for the Forestry Commission estate in England were announced by DEFRA on 29<sup>th</sup> October.

<http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/news/2010/10/29/forestry/>

The intention is to diversify ownership while protecting vulnerable species, and preserving public access and rights of way and controlling felling through licensing.

“We will consult the public on our proposals later this year, and will invite views from a wide range of potential private and civil society partners on a number of new ownership options and the means to secure public benefits. We envisage a managed programme of reform to further develop a competitive, thriving and resilient forestry sector that includes many sustainably managed woods operating as parts of viable land-based businesses.”

“We will not compromise the protection of our most valuable and biodiverse forests. Full measures will remain in place to preserve the public benefits of woods and forests under any new ownership arrangements. Tree felling is controlled through the licensing system managed by the Forestry Commission, public rights of way and access will be unaffected, statutory protection for wildlife will remain in force and there will be grant incentives for new planting that can be applied for”

It is thus still not clear which type of Forestry Commission estate will be placed in alternative ownership or management: whether it will be the timber-producing plantations, or those forests of environmental and amenity value.

### Grants

Details of availability of existing grants, and of newly created grant systems are yet to emerge for all Regions in England. In the West Midlands, the Woodland Creation Grant deadline has been extended, and money is still available for the current financial year.



See <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/60626993E58948E8802577A8004BF4CF> for further information

News is also good from the **South East Region**

“Following on from the initial announcements of the Comprehensive Spending Review the Forestry Commission has had it confirmed by our minister that the level of grants administered by the Forestry Commission under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Plan for England (RDPE) has not been altered for the remainder of the spending round which concludes in March 2014. Therefore the news is that:

- The Forestry Commission will continue to deliver the current planned levels of woodland grants under RDPE up to the end of the 2013-2014 financial year;
- we are still accepting woodland creation applications for 2011/12, and farmers will be eligible to continue to have SPS eligibility on that land;
- we are open for other grants with 2011/12 payment year and for grants up to March 2014;
- we have a mechanism available that allows woodland owners to meet CPET Category B criteria for sustainably produced timber which includes a 10 year felling licence approval ;
- we are planning to launch a Woodfuel WIG to support further roading access and specific management in under-managed woods in early 2011, owners may wish to start drawing potential projects to FC attention.

As it stands in South East England we have plenty of grants available up to 2014 in all our 6 grant types. Our 80% WIG target areas have been increased to cover all the main AONBs and the two National Parks within the south east. We are offering enhanced rates of planting grant where the new woodland provides informal public access within a Quality of Place target area and on the Isle of Wight.

Regarding bullet point 5 – grants will soon be announced which will offer owners new grants towards management in all woodland types that exhibit a lack of the appropriate levels of management and where there is clear potential to provide sustainable renewable energy for the future. This is likely to include grant towards track improvement, timber stacking, tree marking, tendering and other activity needed to present parcels of timber to the market place.”

#### **Wales—the Glastir Scheme**

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/A11ByUNID/41BDF6EA69366994802577C40038876C>

“A grant scheme to encourage landowners, especially farmers, to create new woodlands on their land has been launched by Rural Affairs Minister, Elin Jones.

The woodland creation scheme aims to help to fulfil the commitment to create more native and mixed woodland as set out in Woodlands for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government’s woodland strategy.

It is a bespoke element of Glastir, Wales’s new sustainable land management scheme, and offers grants to landowners to create new woodlands on their land.

The grants provide support for the costs of creating new woodlands as well as income foregone payments for taking land out of agriculture.”

#### **Interactive Mapping Tools**

New interactive mapping tools are available in Wales and Scotland, although not available yet in England.

The tool from FC Wales – gives information on where planting is needed and can go ahead, where consultation is needed, and where there is a presumption against planting. This will be helpful for woodland creation schemes.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8A9FPS>

An interactive map viewer also available for Scotland

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-857dt5>



## Other News

### Consultation on TPO's

This consultation paper seeks comments on the proposals to consolidate the legal provisions currently contained in regulations and tree preservation orders (TPOs) in England into one set of new regulations. At the same time we propose to introduce revisions to streamline the TPO system and make it a fairer system which is easier for tree owners to use.

These changes are intended to reduce the administrative burden of the TPO system, particularly on local planning authorities, and increase accessibility to a more equitable system. Visit <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/treestreamliningconsult> to participate

### Southern Gas Network Grants

Camilla Blackburn, living landscape project officer with the Kent Wildlife Trust has secured some funding from the Southern Gas Network which will need to be spent before March 2011.

If you are a woodland owner within the project's [area](#) and meet the criteria in the leaflet (ancient woodland, not currently in a scheme, small areas that aren't of any real commercial value etc), then please could you get in touch with her.

Camilla Blackburn | Living Landscape Project Officer

General Enquiries: 01622 662012

Direct dial: 01622 656461

E-mail: [Camilla.Blackburn@kentwildlife.org.uk](mailto:Camilla.Blackburn@kentwildlife.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk>

Or see <http://www.swog.org.uk/news/southern-gas-network-grants/>

### Free Advice in West Weald Area

West Weald Landscape Partnership are offering free advice and services including help on accessing stewardship schemes (Nat Eng) and For Comm grants, wildlife improvement works and free specialist wildlife surveys.

[http://www.westweald.org.uk/pdf/wwlp\\_landowner\\_web.pdf](http://www.westweald.org.uk/pdf/wwlp_landowner_web.pdf)

### Volunteers needed for dormouse survey

Camarthen Biodiversity Partnership are seeking volunteers for Great Nut Hunt (dormouse survey)

See [http://www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk/attachments/337\\_Nut%20Hunt%20poster.pdf](http://www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk/attachments/337_Nut%20Hunt%20poster.pdf) for more information

### Managing Native Broadleaved Woodland

A brilliant new book has been published by the For-

estry Commission.

Entitled "Managing Native Broadleaved Woodland", this book draws together a wealth of information on how to identify and classify your woodland community, plan its management and implement that plan. A full review of this weighty tome will appear next month, but overall first impressions are that this is an

essential read for

woodland owners and managers with a massive amount of useful information presented in a very well readable format. At £30 a copy, this is definitely one for the Christmas present list...Further details, including how to order the book are available at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-89PDQH>



### Excellence in Forestry Awards 2011

The Royal Forestry Society (RFS) is launching its 2011 Excellence in Forestry (EiF) Awards to find the best managed woodlands in the East of England and East Midlands Regions, and the most inspirational school project that promotes seed-to-saw learning about trees. Woodland owners and managers (private and public), community groups, farmers and schools in the area are all being urged to take part.

There are four categories, each recognising good forestry practice – Multipurpose Woodlands (Duke of Cornwall Award), Small Woodlands, Community Forestry, and Silviculture. The Schools Award is open to all schools and educational establishments and can encompass any project involving the growing or use of trees and wood.

Entries are being sought from Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex – together with all the Greater London Boroughs north of the River Thames.

There are prizes of **£1000 for the winner** and **£500 for the runner up** in each category. Entries must be received by 8 March 2011, and judging will be held in May and June 2011.

For further details and entry forms visit [www.rfs.org.uk](http://www.rfs.org.uk) or email [rfscompetition@boyns.net](mailto:rfscompetition@boyns.net)



## Forthcoming SWOG Meetings and Other Meetings

### 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 Ross-on-Wye 21st November



Paul and Andrea are offering a walk in their woodland on the 21 st Nov. Speaker to be confirmed, but keep the date free if you wish to come along!

<http://www.swog.org.uk/swog-events/swog-meeting-at-ross-on-wye/>

### 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, meadow and ponds that Sarah and Stephen are creating for wildlife in their newly-acquired adjacent field.

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

### SEWAF Forum Meeting November 11th

There will be a meeting of SEWAF (South East Woodland Archaeology Forum) in the afternoon at Bedgebury Visitor Centre following the Kent and East Sussex Woodland Forum on November 11th.

It will start at 2pm and finish by 4.30. Tea and refreshments will be available, and anyone who would like to contribute a cake or two will find themselves surrounded by appreciative SEWAF members.

Speakers have yet to be confirmed but at least half the afternoon will be given over to discussion of issues raised by you and news of field meetings.

Please contact David Brown [david@sewaf.org.uk](mailto:david@sewaf.org.uk) if you would like to attend, he will need to organise a parking permit for you.

### Horse logging event from Kent Wildlife Trust November 18th

Free Horse Logging Event at St Julian's Club, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0RX (see flyer – check if flyer is on SWOG web site and add address)

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November  
10am to 3pm

Live demonstration with Mick Lott from the Living Forest

Aimed at woodland owners and land managers

Firewood processing demonstrations with Jonathan Latham from Forestry Equipment

Free tea and coffee

Further details from Camilla Blackburn on 01622 662012 or [Camilla.blackburn@kentwildlife.org.uk](mailto:Camilla.blackburn@kentwildlife.org.uk)



## Other Forthcoming Events

### Tidy Wales Awards 2011

The Tidy Wales Awards 2010 are now open for entries. The presentations will be made at a special ceremony in **January 2011** and will recognise groups who have made a major contribution to the cleanliness of their local area during 2010. The winners of each category will receive a prize of £250 and then compete for the prestigious Tidy Wales Award trophy – the winner of this will receive an additional prize of £500.

The closing date for receiving applications is **19 November 2010**

Full details on <http://www.keepwalestidy.org/events/tidy-wales-awards>

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

### New plans for badger culls attacked by protest groups

England and Wales are taking a different approach to badger culling.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/animal-diseases-problems/new-plans-for-badger-culls-attacked-by-protest-groups/>

### Training and Course Providers

Since June 2009, anybody buying a woodland through woodlands.co.uk has been entitled to £300 towards the cost of a woodland management course. Find a course here!

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/events-places/training-and-course-providers/>

### Trout Tickling Too

Ever fancied tickling trout? Here's how to do it



<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/trout-tickling-too/>

### Carving with Chainsaws

Ever wondered how they do it? Particularly if you've had a go! Read the thoughts of an expert here.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/carving-wooden-sculptures-with-chainsaws/>

### Building Bridges

Here is a guide to building a successful bridge across your pond, ditch or stream.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/building-bridges/>

### Old Woodworking Tools: From billhooks to portable anvils

Ian shows off his antique tools and explains why people are queuing up to buy them.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/old-woodworking-tools-from-billhooks-to-portable-anvils/>

### Wildlife Photography Fieldcraft

From Susan Young, ARPS, who wrote the excellent article for this newsletter .

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/wildlife-photography-and-field-craft/>

### How do you remove stumps from a woodland path or track?

Read this and find out all about stump grinders.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/how-do-you-remove-stumps-from-a-woodland-path-or-track/>

### Dog's Mercury

A great description of this unassuming but important woodland plant

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/plants-flowers/dogs-mercury/>

### Botanic Gardens and Arboreta

About Oxford Botanic Gardens. Can you recommend a garden or arboretum to visit?

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/botanic-gardens-arboreta/>

## Newsletter - November 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

### On the forum...

**Martin D** opened a topic of concern to many—the fate of the Forestry Commission. While the Forestry Commission itself is to stay, and the grants appear to be preserved, we don't know what impact the decision to sell off part of the FC estate will have on small woodland owners: will it make more woods available for small owners, will the prices of woodland rise or fall?

**Dennis** wondered why his green sycamore was so difficult to work. Suggestions were made regarding seasoning and the types of tools to try, as well as confirming if it really is sycamore or a closely-related species.

**Woodlander** asked whether, and how, to prune dead branches from the side of his larch trees. **Stephen 1** replied in detail, highlighting the differences between European, Japanese and hybrid larch, and the distribution of disease resistance be-

tween these, and among hybrids formed from them. Worth reading if you have larch trees in your wood.

**Toby Allen** asked whether there should be a national coppice association. Follow the arguments for and against here.

**Splodger** asked if anybody wanted to swop nuts? Seriously, he is offering to swop his good chestnuts with other SWOG members.

**Cinimod** recently completed the purchase of their woodland in East Sussex. Nothing beats the feeling of owning your first wood for the first time.

**Doesquid** also told us about the proposed extension to her woodland: more to come in future newsletters!

*Please let us know what you think about these and other topics on the forum. Please also write something for us about "My Favourite Tree".*

### On the Web..

#### Latest videos at Woodlands.tv Woodchip heating using chestnut coppice

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/89/woodchip-heating-using-chestnut-coppice>

#### Efficient woodburning stoves for firewood

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/90/efficient-wood-burning-stoves-for-firewood>

#### How the Forestry Commission Promotes sustainable Woodland

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/91/how-the-forestry-commission-promotes-sustainable-woodlands>

#### The Renewable Heat Incentive

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/92/the-renewable-heat-incentive>

#### Managing Woodland for Fuel and Diversity

<http://www.woodlandstv.co.uk/videos/watch/93/managing-woodland-for-fuel-and-diversity>

#### From Woodfairs.co.uk

The dates for some of the big woodfairs in

2011 are now on the web site—get them in your diary now!

**Devon County Show**—19th-21st May 2011

**Naturefest**—28th-30th May 2011, Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, Lewes, East Sussex

**Stock Gaylard Estate Oak Fair** near Sturminster Newton, Dorset, 27th August 2011

**Bentley Woodfair**—16th to 18th September at Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, Lewes, East Sussex

**South West Woodland Show**—9th September 2011, Longleat Estate, Warminster, Wiltshire

**Festival of the Tree, Westonbirt Arboretum**, Tetbury, Glos, 26th to 29th August 2011

**Royal Highland Show**, Edinburgh, June 23rd to 26th 2011

**Woodfest Wales**, June 3rd to 5th 2011, St Asaph

*More dates will be added soon!*