



### In this issue

- *Phytophthora ramorum* and the small woodland owner.
- Photographing people
- Photography Competition
- Community Woodlands
- England's woodlands
- SEWAF and woodland huts
- Book review: Coppicing and Coppice Crafts
- SWOG Meeting at Alvecote Wood
- News for Small Woodland Owners
- Forthcoming SWOG Meetings
- On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk
- Forthcoming Woodfairs
- On the forum
- A plea for contributions!

### In the Newsletter this Month

Spring seems to have been and gone so quickly this year, thanks to breaking all records for both temperature and lack of rainfall. We have had to water our newly-planted trees (all 4500 of them) and it would be interesting to hear how the drought is affecting you all.

This month we are launching a new photographic competition: photographs of grandparents and grandchildren enjoying their woods. You have until the end of July to enter, and could win prizes! A companion article gives you tips and hints on photographing people to help you along the way.

We also have an update on *Phytophthora ramorum* from a Forestry Commission expert in the condition. A new book on Coppice crafts is reviewed by Rich, and the results of a Forestry Commission survey showing that England has more woodland than previously thought are revealed.

The SWOG meetings programme is also in full swing and we have reports from Alvecote Wood, as well as a list of forthcoming meetings—please do try and support these if you can. Coming up are the first two meetings ever in Scotland. It's a long way for some of us to go, but they both look fantastic.

Community Woodlands are another interesting topic, particularly with the interest in woodlands generated by the proposed sales of Forestry Commission land, and the ongoing investigation by the Independent Panel on Forestry. The scheme, run by woodlands.co.uk, aims to get more people using woods by connecting community groups who wish to use woodlands with those who own woodlands and are willing to let such groups use them or rent them. They also provide advice for people looking to allow the use of their woodlands.

There is a lot of news this month, including what details we have been able to get regarding the Forestry Commission cuts in funding, staffing and re-organization of regional offices.

*If you are able to contribute to your newsletter, please let me know!*

Sarah Walters (sarah@swog.org.uk)

### *Phytophthora ramorum* and Small Woodland Owners

*Lee Dawson, from Forestry Commission Wales, gives us the latest on P. ramorum and what it means for us in small woods.*

A spectre is haunting woodlands....the spectre of *ramorum* disease...

A little melodramatic perhaps, but not a world away from some of the horror stories in the national press in recent months....

So what is *Phytophthora ramorum*, and what does it mean for SWOG members?

Back in 2009 *Phytophthora ramorum*, a particularly insidious member of the Water-Mould family, was found to have jumped across the species barrier from its usual host plants such as *Rhododendron* and into species of *Larix*, notably the *Japanese Larch*. *P. ramorum*, and a number of other pathogens of its ilk, is a quarantine pathogen under article 31 of the Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005. As such any plant or tree found to be infected with it is subject to legislation obliging the landowner to destroy the infected host species to prevent or limit its spread. This has led in the last year to a wide-scale clearance of infected larch both in South-Western England and the South Wales Valleys. To date in South Wales alone over 850ha of Larch on the PFE (Public Forest Estate) have been cleared or is due for

clearance in an effort to contain the disease and prevent further spread throughout the rest of the country.

While it is true to say that the Forestry Commission faces an enormous challenge in dealing with the disease, the like of which has been unprecedented since the Dutch Elm epidemic of the Seventies, initial fears that the pathogen would cause devastation to woodlands throughout the country have so far been unfounded. The term “Sudden Oak Death” has, on these shores at least, proved to be a misnomer coined in the USA, where it has killed innumerable North American native Tan Oaks (*Lithocarpus spp*) and oaks (*Quercus spp*). Our own native oaks, have proved much less susceptible to the disease, and so far appear to be a “terminal host”, meaning that the pathogen does not spread directly from them. Of more concern is the virulence of the pathogen in plantations of Larch, a problem which is far greater in commercial forestry than in small woodlands.

This does not mean, however, that it is not a concern to small woodland owners. If your woodland contains Larch, *Rhododendron*, Bilberry or other susceptible species it is vital to be vigilant for symptoms and report anything suspicious immediately to the Forestry Commission’s Tree Health Diagnostic & Advisory Service on [ddas.ah@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ddas.ah@forestry.gsi.gov.uk), tel: 01420 22255, or to the Forestry Commission Wales office in Clawdd Newydd, Ruthin, Denbighshire, LL15 2NL; tel: 0300 068 0300; email: [bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk). After all, you will not want to give the disease a foothold anywhere in your own area.

Likewise if you visit an infected area it is crucial to ensure that you don’t risk carrying the spores back to your own wood or garden on your shoes or clothing. Only through stringent application of such ‘biosecurity’ measures, and the destruction of infected plant material, can we ensure that the disease is contained and does not have the opportunity to spread further than it already has.

The Forestry Commission has set up, on its website, a wide variety of resources where you can find out more, including symptoms, maps of infected areas and advice for woodland owners. They can be found at [www.forestry.gov.uk/pramorum](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pramorum) or by going to the home page and following the link to Tree Pests and Diseases.

The Forestry Commission Wales latest update can be downloaded via the SWOG web site on <http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Spring-2011-Sector-briefing.pdf>

## Photographing People—some hints and tips



Photographing people used to be a chore for me. First of all I found wildlife and landscapes much more interesting, and second, I was a bit intimidated by people – unsure how to get them to stand, how to deal with lighting, and in consequence, most of my photos were pretty ordinary and involved people standing smiling at the camera in a standard rather cheesy way.

So, how do we get good pictures of people? Here are some hints and tips that I have learned.

### Composition

It is all too easy, particularly with auto-focus on cameras without face-recognition, to place the subject’s face in the middle of the frame so that the camera can focus on the subject. However this can lead to problems with composition: there is a lot of space above the subject’s head, and too much of their body is cut off. It also

### Course Directory

#### Field Studies Council

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

#### Institute of Chartered Foresters

Forthcoming events are on

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

#### British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

A large range of courses for woodland owners

For *BTCV Short Courses*

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

For *BTCV long courses*

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

#### Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)

To see upcoming courses for 2011 visit

<http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/>

#### Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

To see courses for the coming year visit

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/events/courses.aspx>

#### LILI Courses

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

<http://www.lowimpact.org/courses.htm>

#### Wildlife Trusts

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

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



leads to rather bland images.

The rule of thirds can be helpful in taking pictures of people too – place the subject one third of the way along, or up the frame, and the image immediately looks more balanced and pleasing. If the whole of the person is your subject, place them 1/3 of the way along the frame. If you are zooming in on your subject, then you could place a key feature, such as the eye, or occasionally the nose or mouth 1/3 way along and up the frame (on the “zing” point) and you will produce a dynamic image.

The background to your shot is also important and it is sometimes difficult to remember this in the heat of taking your picture – very easy in a woodland to end up with all kinds of foliage growing out of your subject’s head.

Think about the background and how you would like to see the subject.

A subject wearing light clothing will stand out more against a dark background and vice-versa. You might also want to think about the way in which colours interact – for example use complimentary colours such as yellow and purple to contrast and highlight your subject against a background.

Think also about the depth of field, controlled by aperture. Do you want to see a lot of the background in focus? Or will it distract from the image of your subject, in which case you might want to use a large aperture and small depth of field to blur the background.

It is easy to crop your image with editing software to produce a more dramatic effect – pictures don’t always have to conform to the shape of the image that your camera takes.

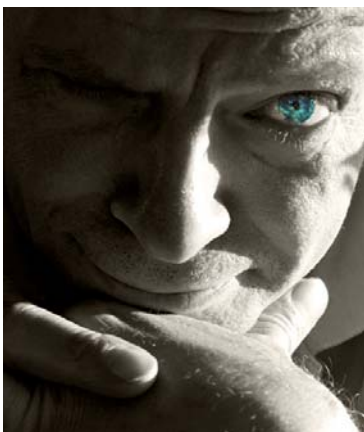
Sometimes a close crop is very dramatic, honing down onto one or two aspects of your subject’s face, rather than the whole face, or whole person. Editing software doesn’t have to be expensive, and some good software, like Google’s Picasa is completely free.

You also need to consider whether you want your subject to look at the camera or at something else. Traditionally, portraits are taken looking at the camera, but it can help to tell a story if they are looking elsewhere: the children illustrated in the photography competition article in this newsletter are not looking at the camera, but the images are very engaging. People are often very self-conscious of looking at the camera, and it can be easier to capture personality if they are looking elsewhere.



Also remember that if a subject is looking away from the camera, it is helpful for them to have some space in the frame to look into – that way the subject connects with the background instead of being apart from it.

### Lighting



Front, back or side? Traditionally, people are arranged so they are looking into the sun to capture their portrait. This was originally done because older cameras had small apertures, and did not use very sensitive film so the more light available the better. Nowadays this is not necessary, and it often produces very unflattering images (highlighting facial wrinkles, for example) as well as making it very uncomfortable for subjects looking into the sun.

Although sometimes technically more difficult to take, side or back lit images can be very powerful, and produce much more natural-looking shots. The disadvantage is that they can also cast powerful shadows across the face. You can sometimes get over this by holding a white sheet of paper out of frame on the shaded side of the image to act as a reflector, and to provide some gentle fill-in lighting. Another way of compensating is to use the flash as fill-in flash.

Fill-in flash means using the flash on your camera during the daytime to provide some low level lighting to fill in detail on the shaded side of your subject. On an automatic camera, the flash will

be too powerful if left to provide a full-power flash and you may need to find the flash exposure compensation button which will allow you to reduce the flash to ½ or 1/3 of its power – this way you will get gentle fill-in lighting and some lovely effects.

### High key and Low key and other effects



What does this mean? These are terms from studio photography where the key light is the main light on the subject, and the other lights are supplementary lights to pick out hair, or other features. High key photography is often used in fashion photography, using a very bright light, and a bright background. It is often intentionally over-exposed to allow the features to stand out against an almost white or very pale face. This can be very useful in reducing the appearance of facial flaws, which is why it is so often used in fashion and glamour photography. Low key is the opposite: often under-exposed, against a dark background and with a low level light. This can produce incredibly characterful portraits, but also problems with any flaws on the face or clothing.

Even if you are not in a studio, you can use these effects outdoors. A snowy day or pale building, or even pale blossom on trees can provide a great background for a high-key portrait. Likewise a dark setting in woodland can provide a setting for a low-key image, full of character.



### Shutter speeds

In the woods, even with modern sensitive cameras, lighting can be a problem, particularly if you are trying to freeze motion, or to get a smooth image free from graininess that comes when you are using a high ISO (high sensitivity) setting on your camera.

For a posed portrait, a slow shutter speed can be helpful, provided your subject can stay still, and you have a tripod for your camera (or something else to rest it on, such as a bean bag or Gorillapod).

If you want to freeze motion, for example capture a fast moving image of people sawing, using an axe, then you will need to select a fast shutter speed, using shutter speed priority setting on your camera. If there is not enough light, you will also need to use flash to freeze motion: in this case you will need to select the speed at which your flash synchronises with your shutter, and allow the flash to produce the motion-freezing effect. This is not always easy to get right, and you might need several goes to get the right picture.

### Candid camera versus posed pictures



Many people are very self-conscious about having their portrait taken. Many will either grimace at the camera, or take up very stiff poses, or a cheesy grin. Children will often be very shy, and look away from the camera, such their thumbs or otherwise misbehave. It takes a good deal of confidence for a subject to be comfortable with a camera – if they are, you can get some absolutely great shots. If they aren't then you have to decide whether to try and relax your subject through, or whether what you are trying to picture will be best captured through candid shots (that is, where the subject doesn't know they are being photographed).

Techniques for relaxing a subject are many and varied and photographers all have their own ways of doing it. Some suggestions are

- If there are two people in a picture, get them to look at each other – they will

**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>

**Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events** The

programmes for June 2011 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2011/06/01/month/all/all/1>

**Bat Conservation Trust**

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

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

There are special courses for arborists, on use of bat detectors and bat surveys



nearly always giggle after a while. Then tell them to look at the camera and take the picture immediately – they will still have a natural smile on their face. I used this technique in the photo at left.

- Get people to look up, down left, right, and then at the camera. Again, their eyes are not fixed into a stare, and you will get a natural-looking picture.
- Use props, such as a hat, scarf, ball, umbrella, kite, Frisbee or other items – get them to play with the props, imagine they are dancing in the rain, doffing their hat, bowing, wearing a glamorous fur stole or so on.
- Use imagination/visualisation. Get people to act out something e.g. their surprise at having won the lottery, their anger at having been told they've lost their job and so on. Some people are better at this than others, but it can help.
- Get people to play a game e.g. do the hokey-cokey or conga, then take some pictures while they are still laughing.

Candid shots will use different techniques. For example, if you know people are walking round your woods, and the route will take them past a feature of interest, or into an area with good lighting or a good background, then you can set up before they get to the critical place. Use a long focal-length lens e.g. 100 to 500mm, and sit well back so they don't notice you. I've even pretended to take pictures of birds, and then switched rapidly to people once they take their eyes off me. You may only get one shot if you are using flash, so set it up carefully in advance.

I would say that if you have taken a candid shot, always ask the subject to look at it on the screen just in case they object. If you are intending to use images of children, you will always need to get permission of the parents.

### Flatter your subject

It is very easy to take all your pictures with the face and shoulders face on to the camera. This can be very unflattering for many reasons, and it is often much better to have the subject with their body at an angle to the camera, even if the face is tilted towards the camera. Here are a few more tips:



- For a broad subject, or ladies with larger chests, standing with shoulders oblique or even sideways to the camera can be very much more flattering than standing face on.
- For double chins, remember to tell the subject to tilt their face upwards.
- For men who are going a bit thin on top, they could wear a hat, or you could take a photo angled slightly upwards.
- The older neck can look very prominent in pictures – try use of a high-necked sweater or scarf, or get the subject to tilt the chin downwards slightly to relax the neck muscles.



### Ben Law

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

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

### Brighton Permaculture Trust

Run a number of courses of potential interest including courses on pruning old fruit trees, introduction to permaculture and building with straw bales.

<http://www.brightonpermaculture.org.uk/>

### Losehill Hall

This beautiful centre in the Peak District runs residential courses for professionals working in countryside and environment management. This includes courses on managing paths and public rights of way, and habitat creation and restoration.

[http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/professional\\_courses brochure\\_2010-12.pdf](http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/professional_courses brochure_2010-12.pdf)

### Kingcombe Environmental Studies Centre

Run a wide range of courses on wildlife, livestock and lifestyle management. See their web site for more information.

<https://www.kingcombe.org/courses/intro.aspx>

- Shiny faces can be difficult: either use matt make-up, or wipe the subject's face prior to taking a picture, or use a low-key approach. Red faces are also difficult: you may have to reduce the colour saturation, or selectively reduce red saturation in post-production using your software. (If you think this is cheating, remember, it was always possible to do this using filters when film cameras were in fashion!)
- Post production (editing software) can help with small issues that subjects are very aware of: you can remove spots, birthmarks, freckles, stray pet hair, rogue flyaway bits of a hairstyle, small scars, stray bits of chocolate or sweets on the face, marks on teeth and the marks left when people remove their spectacles to be photographed using spot-removal functions on your editing software.

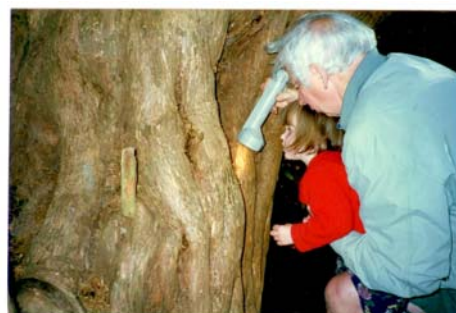
### Creativity

Modern image-editing software allows you to be very creative in your photography of people: in particular it is now easy to cut out a person from one image and place them into another. This is easier to do than make it look good, however, as you have to have credible lighting and shadows or it will look artificial. You can also merge images to put people together, or merge images of nature with a person's face to create something interesting and very arty—the photo on the right is a self-portrait combined with an image of an oak leaf from our woods. The latest version of Photoshop even allows you to move the position of a person's limb if it isn't quite right!



So, now you know! Margaret Hanton from Woodlands.co.uk now invites you to take part in a photography competition—so go out, and take some pictures!

## Photography Competition: Grandparents



*Above Right: Alice's Grandad showing her where the baby birds are hiding.*

*Above Left: Mick's grandsons are waiting while Grandad raises the swing with his pulley*

A lot of people feel the best quality time they have with their grandchildren is in their woods. Here is a place where Grandad is the expert, and where exciting things happen. You can light fires and toast buns. You can build shelters and climb trees. You can even get the grown-ups to play hide-and-seek. No one is bothered if you get muddy, or tear your shirt, and there's always lots of sticking plaster for those inevitable bumps and scratches.

**This month we're having a photo competition for the clearest, most interesting and most original photos of grandparents doing things with their grandchildren.**

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

<http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/files/documents/706.pdf>

**Barn Owl Trust** offers courses relating to Barn Owl ecology and surveying.

<http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/infopage.html?id=153>

19th and 20th July. Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys and Signs (BOESS) course.

21st July. Advanced Barn Owl Surveying and Mitigation (ABOSM) course

**National Energy Foundation**, Milton Keynes, is offering courses on renewable energy

Includes introduction to renewables on 6th July and MCS certification

<http://www.nef.org.uk/energytraining/index.htm>

**The Sustainability Centre** offers lots of courses around the theme of sustainable living. Upcoming courses include Hedgelaying, OCN Sustainable Woodland Management, Build a Treebog, Shingle-making, Herbal Remedies, Eco Film-making and Thatching.

[http://www.sustainability-centre.org/courses\\_adult.php](http://www.sustainability-centre.org/courses_adult.php)

Runners up will all get a book from Amazon ; “Go Wild” by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield, or if you prefer a £10 gift voucher. First prize will be a £50 Amazon token, so you can buy both books, and lots more besides. If you get a prize, we might put your photo on the Woodlands.co.uk website, or even use it in one of our magazine adverts. (our grandchildren love that!) and we assume we have permission for that. Make sure the parents are happy about that too.

Maybe in your picture it isn't entirely clear what is happening- feel free to add a caption if necessary. And it would be helpful if you include the first names of each grandchild, and/or the first name of the grandparent shown. All entries to be emailed to [margaret@woodlands.co.uk](mailto:margaret@woodlands.co.uk) with the subject heading **GRANDPARENTS** before the 16<sup>th</sup> July. It doesn't matter about the size of the picture, but somewhere between 600kb and 2MB would be convenient. There is no fee for entry, so feel free to send lots.

## Community Woodlands

*Woodlands.co.uk* run a scheme called Community Woodlands, which aims to partner people who wish to use woods for various purposes with those who have a wood available for use.

“One of [our main aims](#) at Woodlands.co.uk is to **get more people into woodlands**, including those people and groups who can't afford to buy their own wood. For the last 2 years we have been running a community woodlands project and in that space of time we have had more than 500 requests from people who wish to use woodlands for activities involving the local community. We now have [people who use our woods](#) for children's groups, scouts, forest schools, social forestry, bushcraft courses, woodlands management demonstrations, off-road horse riding organisations, orienteering and coppicing.

As we have received such a large number of enquiries, we have decided to set up a forum to put community groups in touch with other woodland owners who would be interested in allowing their woodland to be used in this way.”

There is also some great advice on the woodlands.co.uk web site for those thinking of letting others use their woods:-

If you're thinking about having a project in your woodland and are wondering what the benefits are, and about any possible pitfalls, then this is the page for you. We've put together some advice based on our own experience of hosting community projects in our woodlands.

### What are the advantages?

- Owning a woodland is a marvellous privilege and we can do so much to improve the diversity. Having some extra people in the woodland can help with some basic management and maintenance.
- It can give opportunities to meet neighbours and create good relationships.
- It can increase security by having more authorised people in the woodland.
- You can share knowledge, skills and enjoyment with other like minded people.

### How do I begin?

- Take a look on the website at all the different projects being offered and contact some that you are interested in.
- Meet more than one to get a feel for different people and projects.

**Woodcraft School** have published their timetable for woodcraft and bushcraft courses

<http://www.woodcraftschool.co.uk/woodcraft-courses.htm>

**Acres Wild Woodland** have a 2011 timetable of woodland and woodcrafts courses available on

<http://www.acreswildwoodlands.co.uk/courses/index.shtml>

**Willowcraft and Woodlands** is a social enterprise doing woodcrafts and woodland management based in Worcestershire. They run a number of woodland management and woodcraft courses of potential interest to woodland owners including courses on Living Willow structures, coppice management and treebog construction.

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

**John Waller, Underwoodsman** has an extensive programme of courses available. Lots of green woodworking, coppice management, charcoal making, living willow and introductory blacksmithing. See [http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/at\\_a\\_glance.html](http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/at_a_glance.html)

**Shift Bristol** are running a year long practical sustainability course as well as a seasonal programme of workshops. See <http://www.shiftbristol.org.uk/index.html> for further details.



- Start communications over email, and wait until you feel comfortable with the other person before giving out addresses and phone numbers.
- You may like the first meeting to be on neutral ground, away from the woodland so that you have not given away your location to an unknown person.
- You might like to go along with a friend or at least let someone know where you are.

- Proceed one step at a time, don't make any promises until you have met with the group a few times.
- Check they have insurance, qualifications, sufficient knowledge of woodlands etc. If they are working with children ensure they have an updated CRB check.
- Create a good legal agreement. You can download our draft contract from <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/community-woodlands/draft-contract.doc>
- In this agreement you can be very prescriptive about what can and can't be done on your land and how often the woodland is used
- Remember the impact this might have on neighbouring woodland owners.
- Hold regular reviews, keep open good lines of communication.
- Have a single contact person on each side as this makes communication easier.
- Leave yourselves a 'get out' clause.
- Keep receipts for any financial transactions.



The web site has people looking for woods for all sorts of things including forest schools, fitness classes, bushcraft and survival, woodcrafts, woodland management, paint-balling, weddings, dog walking—the list is quite extensive, and you can easily check for somebody seeking to use a wood in your area. And just to prove it works, we have made contact with a forest schools leader in our area who may wish to use our woods for her sessions.

If you don't want to open your woods all the time, but would like people to enjoy your woods at least some of the time, while retaining control of access, this could be just the thing for you. For more details visit <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/community-woodlands/>

## England has more woodland than previously thought

England has more woodland than previous estimates indicated, according to provisional results from the National Forest Inventory, a new survey undertaken by the Forestry Commission.

The provisional results of analysis of high-tech aerial photography, satellite imagery and other sources were published today as part of a major Forestry Commission project to compile the next National Forest Inventory (NFI).



**Courses from The Mammal Society** – a wide variety of courses, at various venues and dates. 2011 dates now announced.

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

Courses in forthcoming months include mammal identification, dormouse ecology and conservation, badger ecology, survey and recording techniques and radio tracking.

**Dorset Centre for Rural Skills**

Run a range of courses of interest to woodland owners

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

**Cotswolds Rural Skills Courses**

Include hedgelaying and coppicing. Details on.

<http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=cotswolds-rural-skills>

**Acorn Ecology** in Exeter run a range of courses including a Phase 1 habitat survey course, and courses on surveying and handling bats, otters, water voles, dormice and other protected species

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

**Forest Garden Shovel-strode**

Practical woodland courses and yurt camping. Upcoming courses include green woodwork-ing, hurdle-making, beekeeping, honeymaking and flint-knapping, starting in May 2011

[www.forestgarden.info](http://www.forestgarden.info)



They show that England has 1,294,000 ha of woodlands covering 9.9 per cent of the land area, up 164,000 ha from the previous estimate from 2010.

The difference in reported areas is mostly due to improved technology and including small woods in towns and cities in the statistics for the first time.

Pam Warhurst, Chair of the Forestry Commission, welcomed the statistics' publication, saying,

“If we are to have an ambitious programme of increased tree cover, which we must, we really do need to have a baseline that is robust and credible. What we have published today is just that.

“I'm particularly pleased that this work provides a great platform from which to plan urban tree expansion. Increasingly, planners, developers and investors are realising the benefits that trees bring, from their urban cooling effect through to just making our towns and cities more pleasant places to live in.”

The increase in the reported woodland area over the previous estimate can be attributed to a number of factors, as Peter Weston, Head of Inventory and Forecasting for the Forestry Commission, explained:

“The difference is mostly because we were able to use more sophisticated tools and techniques for gathering and interpreting woodland cover information than we have ever had since we began compiling forest inventories in the 1920s. These include satellite imagery and advanced geographical information systems (GIS).



“As a result we've been able to pick up more areas where woodland has regenerated or been planted, or been lost or removed, without our knowledge.

“We've also been able to 'fine tune' some of the data and correct mistakes in the previous inventory that inevitably happened because we did not have the sophisticated resources that we have now.

“This time we've also been able to accurately measure all woodland, urban and rural, down to areas as small as 0.5ha. Previously we only recorded the total area of woods greater than 2ha, and estimated the area of rural woods smaller than 2ha by recording a small sample and rating up the results.”

This and other information being compiled for the National Forest Inventory will help those planning to ensure that Britain's forests can withstand expected changes in the climate, contribute to climate change mitigation, and help society cope with some of the effects of climate change, such as flooding and heat-waves. NFI information will also underpin a wide range of future decisions about topics such as nature conservation, research, tree planting, forest and timber industries' development, and public recreation.

It will be valuable to people and organisations including: forestry policy makers; forest owners, managers and planners; the forestry and timber industries; local authorities; woodland-owning non-government organisations; and people and organisations with interests in biodiversity, wildlife, forest recreation, forest-related community development, and soil and water. The provisional woodland area results might also be a useful update for the Independent Forestry Panel for England, giving it robust and credible data to inform its work.

Further information, including the maps and woodland cover statistics for each country, the methodology report and a Frequently Asked Questions document, is available from [www.forestry.gov.uk/inventory](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/inventory).

**The Field Studies Council** have a number of interesting looking courses in 2011. At Epping the courses include birds, amphibians, lichens, mosses, liverworts, aquatic plants, hedge-laying, bats, badgers and fungi.

<http://field-studies-coun-cil.org/eppingforest/professionaldev.aspx>

At Flatford Mill there are courses on on film-making, photography, painting and drawing wildlife as well as birds, wildflowers, dragonflies, butterflies and tree identification. <http://field-studies-coun-cil.org/flatfordmill/professionaldev.aspx>

For full details of courses at all the FSC Centres of particular relevance to woodland owners see <http://field-studies-coun-cil.org/professional/2011/habitats/habitats.aspx>

#### **AJS Crafts—Coppice Week**

Offer a wide range of courses covering many different woodland-related crafts. Upcoming are courses on spoon making, charcoal burning, willow basketry and sweet chestnut gates and hurdles.

<http://www.ajscrafts.co.uk/courses/CourseList.aspx>

**DWWP** offer a range of woodland activity and traditional woodcraft courses in Yorkshire

<http://www.dwwp.co.uk/Woodland%20Skills.asp>

## SEWAF looking for huts in woods

A spokesman from SEWAF is looking for examples of original woodsman's or charcoal burners' huts.

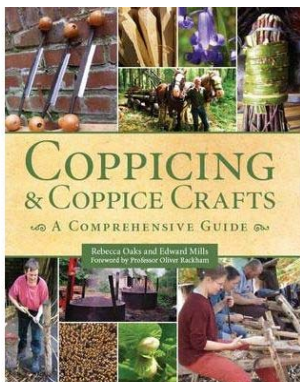
"I have found several of these huts in West Berks woods and one in a Chiltern wood. They are either circular or oblong. The circular ones are about 3m dia and the oblong about 3m x 2m. Generally associated with charcoal hearths but one seems to be associated with a chalk quarry. The charcoal burners huts are all about 9m SW (up-wind) of the hearth. One has a beech coppice stool growing on the edge putting it back at least a couple of hundred years.

They are marked either by a line of flints or by a very low line of humus (from the rotting thatch) which has a distinctive moss growing on it. The grass and plants on the inside is usually different from the surrounding area. (?Due to the leaf mould being scraped away to leave a clean floor). They are very difficult to photograph!

Has anyone any examples?"

If you have any archaeological features in your woods, or can help in any way, please visit SEWAF on <http://www.sewaf.org.uk/>

## Book Review: Coppicing and Coppice Crafts by Rich



The new book, *Coppicing and Coppice Crafts, A comprehensive Guide*, by Rebecca Oaks and Edward Mills, is just that. I found it covers a wide range of subject matter in an easy to follow readable format. The hardback has a nice colourful jacket and the book itself is well illustrated with pictures and diagrams.

The authors, have crammed the book with practical information. The chapters cover how to go about looking for the right wood, the indispensable tools and equipment needed while avoiding expensive and inappropriate outlay, a chapter on the biodiversity benefits and the amazing abundance of nature thus

created, a chapter on hazel coppice and another chapter on the versatile uses for other wood materials, wood fuel, charcoal making, and lastly invaluable advice on how to set up a coppice business.

The information presented is like attending a SWOG meet where we are privy to a speaker who shares his/her expertise and knowledge freely and accessibly. It is well laid out, concise and I have learnt much, as well as revisited subjects hiding in the recesses of my brain. It reminds us of the importance of bringing neglected coppice back into cycle and why we should be informing and educating those around us who may see it as destructive or just want woodlands left untouched for dog walking.

This book is not just for those keen to learn this ancient way of woodland management; it's also a book for new woodland owners, for those who love woodlands and for those who enjoy crafting things in wood. It's one of those books which is easy to dip in and out of as you come in excitedly from the woods to look up a specific subject and one that I'm happy to recommend to fellow members.

It is priced at £19.95, but can be had cheaper direct from the publisher, [Crowood Press](http://www.crowoodpress.com), or [Amazon](http://www.amazon.com) and [Waterstones](http://www.waterstones.com).

### Biocensus

Offer a range of courses including Phase One Habitat Survey and Wildlife Legislation. Full programme available on

<http://www.biocensus.co.uk/Upload/docs/BiocensusTrainingTimetable2011.pdf>

**Moelyci Environmental Training Centre** offer a wide variety of courses of interest to woodland owners, including courses on habitat surveying, woodland management and beekeeping. See <http://www.moelyci.org> for further information.

**Lawrence Weston Community Farm** in Bristol is offering a Level 3 Forest School leader Course. See <http://www.lwfarm.org.uk/> for more information.

**Monkton Wyld Court** in Dorset offer a wide range of courses in sustainable living. See <http://www.monktonwyldcourt.co.uk/> for more information.

**BTCV London** are running courses on wild flower identification at their Rotherhithe Centre in June and August

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level4/19/level>

They also run a wide range of other courses on wildlife and conservation including practical and certificated training.

**Woodlandskills.com** Based in Sussex, they offer a variety of courses in the field of woodland living, survival and traditional wood crafts.

## SWOG Meeting at Alvecote Wood

On the weekend of 7th and 8th May we were excited and privileged to welcome the Small Woodland Owners Group to Alvecote Wood. This is a wonderful group of people from all walks of life who own or manage small woodlands, and which gives owners the opportunity to learn from each other, solve practical problems, learn from professionals and experts, and best of all, visit each others' woods.

There is a certain amount of trepidation involved in getting ready for one of these meetings and we found ourselves asking a lot of questions. Will the wood look OK? How do we cater for everybody? Will we have the camping area ready? Will people actually turn up? What will the experts think of what we are doing? So we got on with the preparations, while still trying to water our little trees.



We needn't have worried – everybody who came was very friendly. We had seven people camping overnight, including ourselves, and the main clearing made an excellent camping venue. Dinner in the local pub was very convivial and quite a lot of beer was consumed. It was wonderful and enlightening to spend the evening in the company of real woodland experts, including those responsible for looking after some of the major forests in Wales. After months of drought, the rains finally came, and the heavens opened on those walking the half mile back to the woods. Thankfully, we all made it, and all tents remained watertight – we certainly slept well knowing we had respite from tree-watering, at least for a while.



The rain and wind was too much for our gazebo, however, which turned itself into scrap metal overnight and thwarted our plans for an alfresco breakfast. So it was we took to the building and rustled up a fry-up of bacon, eggs from our chickens, sausages, black pudding and bread.



The building was then turned into an impromptu lecture theatre – it isn't every day that you get to sit on a tractor and watch an expert presentation. And what a brilliant presentation it was – from Alistair Yeomans of the Sylva Foundation. This organisation is responsible for the MyForest web site, which provides a range of web tools for woodland owners and managers, including a neat way of producing an inventory and management plan for your woodland based on the Forestry Commission template. But it isn't only the geographical and inventory tools that are potentially useful – small woodland owners can market any spare produce ranging from a few beanpoles, a small quantity of firewood, a single log or pieces of wood for wood-turning

and crafts right up to commercial quantities of timber and coppice products.

After coffee and biscuits, Alistair took us into the woods and demonstrated the use of the MyForest inventory tools. This included how to survey stocking density, recognise tree species, measure diameter at breast height (DBH) (which does involve some tree-hugging) and use a clinometer to estimate height. We looked at different areas in the wood and how we could use the tools, as well as studying individual trees to see how we could use the tools to record the "form" of the tree.

Lunch was al fresco and involved eating a certain amount of cake. Stephen then led a walk and talk around the woods, discussing what we had done since taking ownership to manage the woodlands, maintain





and improve habitats and introduce new ones. As well as discussing drainage and ponds, we also looked at the coppice, and had a walk round Betty's Wood to see what we had achieved by planting 4000 trees during the winter of 2010/11.

In glorious sunshine, the meeting ended, and we struck camp. It was brilliant to have met so many wonderful people, who had travelled so far to visit us, including Rich from Kent and Nigel and Elaine from Somerset. At the end of it we sat, exhilarated and exhausted, drinking tea and reflecting on a wonderful weekend.

And as a slight post-script – our alfresco TreeBog, constructed especially for the weekend from pallets, available timber and a tarpaulin, seemed to be much appreciated by all. Sadly too late for the SWOG competition!

We hope we can host another meeting in the future, and in the meantime, are looking forward to keeping in touch with all our new friends.

And finally, if anybody would like to see Sarah's performance of the Tree Plantin' Rap, Rich kindly filmed it and it is available on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BbmZw6J7cA> (not a candidate for The X Factor!).

## News for Small Woodland Owners

### Forestry Commission Guide on Woodland Management for Bats

A good practice guide on woodland management for bats has been released by the Forestry Commission. It is designed to maintain habitats for bats, rather than focusing on individual bat roosts and is available for download on <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6K3CXY>

### Is this the Greenest Government Ever?

When elected, David Cameron announced that this was going to be the greenest Government ever, but how is it doing? Friends of the Earth have released a new report assessing whether this claim is valid, and in which areas the Government is doing well, poorly or not at all. Download at [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest\\_gvt\\_ever.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest_gvt_ever.pdf)

### Project targets off-roading teenagers

A new project by the Forestry Commission Wales is targeting teenagers who ride off-road motorcycles illegally:

“A new project aims to stop teenagers indulging in illegal off-roading by showing them the damage motorbikes can cause to the countryside. The Treads project promotes responsible and safe driving and targets teenagers in south Wales who have been in trouble with the police or who have been identified as having potential to cause trouble. The project is a partnership between Forestry Commission Wales, Gwent Police and Caerphilly Council youth services and teaches 14 to 19-year-olds to appreciate their environment.”



“The course opens their eyes to the damage off-roading can cause to livestock and farmers' livelihoods by ripping down and cutting fences, destroying ground vegetation, ruining footpaths and creating noise disturbance. Participants are taught new skills such as drystone walling and first aid, and during a recent session with Forestry Commission Wales they watched a tree felling and climbing demonstration before learning the finer points of how to operate a chainsaw.” For more information please see <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/news1/49D35A7EB496B7C08025787100532A82>

## Native thugs as bad as alien invaders

A new report from the NERC suggests that native plants that tend to grow out of control, such as bramble, bracken and ivy, can be as damaging for woodlands as invasive alien species such as *Rhododendron*, and Himalayan balsam. Native invaders are four times more widespread than alien invaders, and adversely affect the biodiversity of the woodland habitat. Native invaders are affected by the climate, soil type and how woodland is managed. See <http://planetearth.nerc.ac.uk/news/story.aspx?id=980> for further details.

## An unique perspective on the Landscape

A speech from Adrian Phillips, former head of the Countryside Commission has been made available, and makes a very interesting read, based upon 60 years of experience. Recognising past mistakes including that of separating nature conservation from landscape management and enjoyment, and the tensions between conservation and recreation in national parks, as well as failure to address the interaction between farming, forestry and the landscape, he goes on to draw the lessons for future integrated landscape and habitat management. If you are interested in landscapes and countryside management, this is an essential read.



[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Adrian%20Phillips\\_speech\\_tcm6-15764.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Adrian%20Phillips_speech_tcm6-15764.pdf)

## Independent Forestry Panel Call for Views

The Independent panel set up to review the future of the forests in England in the wake of the Government sell-off that was halted due to a public outcry has now called for views from the public. There are five questions that you can answer, or you can write your own views in a different format. The consultation is open until 31st July, so if you want to contribute to the discussion, please see <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/forestry/documents/forestry-panel-callforviews-110519.pdf>

## Hedgerows for Dormice project newsletter

The Hedgerows for Dormice project is a collaborative survey undertaken by volunteers and covers Surrey, Dorset, Essex, Shropshire, Kent, Cumbria, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Herefordshire. Digital mapping of hedgerows is undertaken and volunteer surveys are then undertaken of priority hedgerows. Only 14% were found to be in good condition overall, failing due to nutrient enrichment, gappiness (too many gaps) and legginess (hedges allowed to get too tall and thin). The newsletter details action being taken via Natural England to improve management. See [http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/HfD\\_newsletter.pdf](http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/HfD_newsletter.pdf) for more information.

## New book on woodland management for butterflies



Woodland butterflies are declining faster than many other more generalist species, and the reason for this decline is lack of woodland management, particularly management of rides and woodland edges, which form the main habitat for native butterflies. This book, from Butterfly Conservation, aims to help woodland owners and managers to consider the needs of butterflies and moths when managing their woodland.

The book guides you through the importance of woodland habitat for butterflies, the type of foodplants for caterpillars and adult butterflies, and the action you can take to improve habitat for butterflies. Species-specific pages are also included, and this helps you target your action to butterflies which are struggling in your area, as well as take action for key declining species.

There are lots of illustrations to help you identify key butterflies and moths of concern. The book is available from Butterfly Conservation and is on a special half-price offer of £7.50 until July 31st.

[http://butterfly-conservation.org/product/5448/woodland\\_management\\_guide.html](http://butterfly-conservation.org/product/5448/woodland_management_guide.html)

### The importance of Hedges—Hedgeline web site.

Hedges form vital habitat, not just in their own right, but as a key link between woodlands that would otherwise be isolated, allowing species to move between wooded areas, colonise new areas, or to have a safe passage out should a problem affect their home habitat. The Hedgeline web site provides a wealth of information about Hedgerows and their management including how to cut hedges safely, the fuel from hedgerows case study, the hedgerows for dormice project (see above) and provides educational material for children and teachers. See <http://www.hedgeline.org.uk/> for more information.



### Forest Research Reports

Forest Research is the research arm of the Forestry Commission, and regularly publishes reports of research into woodlands and forests, their management, and their use. There have been a number of really helpful reports into the social science behind forests and woodlands, and these are all available from Forest Research:

- Environmental Volunteering <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7GDHD3> and <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-8G2BRY> (Wales and Scotland)
- Community woodlands <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7TSD7E>
- Urban health and health inequalities and the role of urban forestry <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-83EHVX>
- Woodland and Health <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6HCF4N>
- Outdoors and Health Network <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7S6CR4>
- Benefits of using woodlands and natural spaces for health <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-5Z5B95>
- Forest School in England and Wales – its impact on young children <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/infd-5z3jvz>
- Review of research evidence in relation to the role of trees and woods in formal education and learning <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-85RHHY>
- Woodland based social enterprises <http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-84JD86>

### The Bushcraft Show, Windermere



If you are interested in Bushcraft or Survival, this would be an event to visit between 3rd and 5th June—with talks, demonstrations, activities, entertainment and instruction in a wide range of Bushcraft and survival skills. People will be on hand giving a wide range of demonstrations, including willow basket weaving and green wood turning.

Details on <http://www.thebushcraftshow.co.uk/>

## Forthcoming SWOG Meetings



### Dolgellau, Sunday 19th June

Stephen and Jane are offering to host a day in their woodland in Gwynnedd. Looks very interesting! Topics include enjoying woodland on a steep terrain and camping. Coed Glyndwr consists of mixed coniferous and deciduous trees. The total area is about fifteen acres. It lies on a North facing slope and offers spectacular views over the river Mawddach towards

the Rhinog mountains. In many places the ground is steep and slippery, although there are parts which are virtually level, and some good tracks. There are other woodlands immediately adjacent to it. It is the largest woodland in the associated group. Unsuitable for those with limited mobility and dogs are allowed. Please email Tracy@woodlands.co.uk if you would like to know more or to book your place



### Aberdeen, Sunday 26th June 2011

Adrian is offering to host a day in his woodland 12 miles south of Aberdeen.

He says: The plan is to walk through the wood about 1.5 Km to the bothy where we will have a BBQ. The main aim is to make contact with other SWOG members in the area, however we intend to do a chainsaw milling demo, and members of the Dunotter bodgers will demonstrate pole lathe turning. If any knowledgeable botanists turn up they can tell the the names of the green stuff growing all over the place.

There is a short section of "off road" Jungle to negotiate and is rough and sometimes steep in places, however it is intended to walk mostly on the land-rover track and the less able can take a short cut over the farmers field. The option after lunch is to have a look at the seldom visited Mallies Den which will be difficult under foot. We prefer dogs not to come, we will have more chance of seeing the deer.

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### South Ayrshire, 29th October 2011

Nick and his local FC officer are leading a walk around his wood in October. The woodland is half semi ancient and half coniferous, and abundant in natural regeneration! There are deer, hare, squirrel (red and grey) and birds of prey.

*These meetings look absolutely fantastic, so please support them and attend if you possibly can! Please let Tracy know ASAP if you would like to attend any of them (tracy@woodlands.co.uk). Please also contact Tracy if you would like to host a meeting.*

### Biocensus

Biocensus run courses of interest to woodland owners at their centre in Gloucestershire and will shortly be running courses in the Lake District. Include badger ecology, Phase 1 habitat survey, wildlife and the law and identifying common grassland plants.

<http://www.biocensus.co.uk/training.asp>

### Ignite Woodfuel Courses

Forthcoming courses include Managing Woodlands for Woodfuel, a four day course on Woodfuel, and Woodlands Archaeology

<http://www.ruraldevelopment.org.uk/events/all>

### BTCV London

Courses include coppicing, tree identification and tree planting  
<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/536/level>

### Alvecote Wood, North Warwickshire

Introduction to Photography Workshops, and an Introductory Woodland Management workshop

<http://www.alvecotewood.co.uk/AW-EventsProg-0211.pdf>

Woodsmoke offer a range of bushcraft, traditional woodcrafts and survival courses in Cumbria

<http://www.woodsmoke.uk.com/p/v//FAQ/Calendar/>

Pikea offer a range of woodcraft courses in Staffordshire

[http://www.pikea.org/?page\\_id=9](http://www.pikea.org/?page_id=9)

## Forestry Commission Cuts and Re-organisation

The Forestry Commission has not been exempt from Government cuts in expenditure of approximately 25%. In order to achieve this, the Forestry Commission workforce is due to be cut by approximately 25%, with the merging of several Forestry Regions. 350 jobs will go in England and 100 in Scotland, the majority of the former will come in the Forest Enterprise section, which manages the public forest estate.

Of particular interest to small woodland owners who receive Woodland Management Grants and other Forestry Commission grants is the plan to merge Regional offices, reducing from 12 current districts into 5 or 6. Main Regional hubs will now only be present at Penrith, York, Worcester, Santon Downham, Exeter, Bristol and Alice Holt. Westonbirt will remain unchanged. A number of Forest Enterprise offices will also close, particularly in the Central, North and West regions. How this will affect the ability of the FC to process and monitor woodland grants is not yet clear, nor whether the FC officers who have become familiar faces and in some cases friends of small woodland owners will be affected. This is clearly a fast-moving area, and information on cuts as far as is known have been released on the Save Our Woods web site at <http://saveourwoods.co.uk/articles/news/forestry-commission-25-cuts-details/>

## On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk

### Roadkill by Chris

Which animals are most likely to be killed on the road, and why? In England, PTES survey shows it is rabbits, hedgehogs and squirrels. Read more on <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/wildlife/roadkill-rabbits-hedgehogs-foxes/>



### Wildlife Surveys by Lewis

There are many ongoing national and local wildlife surveys dependent upon volunteers. Could you help by surveying the wild-

life in your woods?

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/wildlife/wildlife-surveys/>

### Scots Pine, Fires and Capercaillies by Lewis

Fire has been on trial as a method of management in Scotland to encourage blueberry/bilberry upon which the endangered capercaillie depends.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/wildlife/scots-pine-fire-and-capercaillies/>

### What do woodland owners do about sheds by Angus

What are your chances of being allowed to build a shed without tool storage, and how can you ensure you don't get on the wrong side of the planning authorities?

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/what-do-woodland-owners-do-about-sheds-for-storage/>

This is accompanied by an updated leaflet on Sheds in Woodlands from <http://www.woodlands.co.uk/owning-a-wood/sheds/leaflet.php>

### Toxic caterpillars—the oak processionary moth and brown tail moth by Chris

These caterpillars survived the severe winter and are causing problems again.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/wildlife/toxic-caterpillars-%E2%80%93-the-oak-processionary-moth-and-brown-tail-moth/>

### Bows and arrows in Woodland—archery at different levels by Angus

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/bows-and-arrows-in-woodland-archery-at-different-levels/>

### Catching woodland wildlife on camera by Simon Salter

Using a trail camera to follow the wildlife in your woods

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



## Forthcoming Woodfairs from woodfairs.co.uk



### Woodfairs in Scotland

**Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh**

23-26th June 2011

<http://www.royalhighlandshow.org/visitors/tickets>

**Tweed Valley Forest Festival**

21st to 30th October 2011

<http://www.forest-festival.com/website/index.php>

### Woodfairs in England

**Live Crafts and Festival of Woods**

Various dates and venues across SE England.

[http://www.hdfairs.co.uk/live\\_crafts\\_default.html](http://www.hdfairs.co.uk/live_crafts_default.html)

**Blackdown Hills Woodfair**

2nd July, Park Farm near Wellington

<http://www.woodbiz.co.uk/freepage.asp?ID=9>

**South Downs Woodfair**

9th and 10th July 2011, Queen Elizabeth Country park, South Downs National Park

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

**Great Yorkshire Show**

Harrogate, 12-14th July

<http://www.greatyorkshireshow.com/html/home/>

**The Arb and Forestry Event**

15th and 16th July 2011, Shipborne, Kent

<http://www.frjonesandson.co.uk/show/>

**Festival of the Tree**

Westonbirt Arboretum, 26-29th August

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt>

**Stock Gaylard Estate Oak Fair**

Sturminster Newton, Devon, 27th August

<http://www.stockgaylard.com/oak-fair/oak-fair-at-stock-gaylard.html>

**National Forest Woodfair**

Beacon Hill Country Park, Leicestershire, 29th August

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/woodfair>

**Woodworks**

3rd and 4th September 2011, Marston Mortaine, Bedfordshire

<http://www.marstonvale.org/woodworks/>

**Wychwood Woodfair**

Sunday 4th September

<http://www.wychwoodproject.org/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Wychwood/Events/>

**South West Woodland Show**

Longleat Estate, Warminster, Wilts, 9th September

<http://www.southwestwoodlandshow.org.uk/>

**Wild About Wood**

Castle Howard Arboretum, 10th to 11th September

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

**Bentley Weald Woodfair**

Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, Lewes, East Sussex, 16-18th September

<http://www.bentley.org.uk/#!/woodfair/4525168793>

**Lincolnshire Firewood fair and auction**

Revesby Estate, Lincolnshire, 18th September 2011

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

**Cranborne Chase Woodfair**

8th-9th October, Larmer Tree Gardens

<http://www.woodfair.org.uk/>

**Surrey Hills Woodfair**

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

**Ickworth House, Suffolk**

8th and 9th October

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-ickworth>



## Newsletter - June 2011

### 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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[www.swog.org.uk](http://www.swog.org.uk)

## On the forum...what have we been doing this month?

**Jennysmate** set off the discussion this month by asking what tools would be suitable for felling 3ft circumference pines. There followed a heated discussion about the safety implications of cutting down such trees, particularly if you are novice to the field. The consensus was that you need training!

Loads of people have just been enjoying the woods and their wildlife: **treegrl, the barrowers, austino and Exeldama**. Between us we have enjoyed the swansong of the bluebells, tawny owls, snakes, deer, buzzards and blackcaps.

**Cassie** asked for legal advice after a co-purchaser went back on a verbal agreement to split ownership of a woodland, preventing her from managing the woodland as she wanted.

**Exeldama** asked how far an oak tree needs to be away from a new pond. The answer seems to be variable: 1.5 to 2.5 x crown, but some of us have oaks growing much closer to ponds than that.



**Hannah** has been asking us if we would be willing to talk to the press about our woodlands on behalf of woodlands.co.uk. She can be contacted on [hannahcbourne@gmail.com](mailto:hannahcbourne@gmail.com)—and she is interested in your opinions on a variety of different topics, including why we own woodlands in the first place.

The words of **docsquid's** tree plantin' rap

are up there for the World to see.

Another major topic of discussion was Bridgit Strawbridge's (of It's Not Easy Being Green fame) video on how to use a Kelly-kettle from the perspective of a complete beginner. Some of us liked the informal approach, and at least she didn't leave the cork in....

Exceptions to the 28 day camping rule were also under discussion after **austino** had difficulty with his neighbours about this. A difficult regulation to judge as it isn't quite clear what constitutes camping, and what differentiates leisure camping from seasonal forestry work: if you are there all night but awake, are you camping? What if you have a nap during the day? What if your vehicle is a mobile home too? All very complicated. Answers on a postcard...

**Shirley bork** also asked how to deal with invasive weeds such as brambles, nettles and bracken while retaining bulbs such as wild garlic and bluebells. Or should we try at all?

**Wrekin** asked about woodland planning grants and how to go about completing the paperwork. The MyForest web site has tools to help with this.

**Northmetking** asked about what we do for drinking water: generally we take supplies with us from supermarkets or in drinking water bottles.

## Contributions, please!

I know this is the season for getting out there and enjoying the woods in the summer sunshine, but it would be absolutely wonderful if some of you could write about your experiences for the newsletter. Do you have a favourite tree? Why did you buy your woods? Do any of you have any special skills about which you could write a beginner guide, such as spoon carving, basket-weaving, pole lathe turning, planking, walking-stick making or anything else? Do you sell any of your coppice products, such as poles or firewood? If so, how do you go about it? Do you have any particularly rare or interesting species on your site? If so, what, and how are you managing the habitat for those species? Or can you write something about your observations of wildlife, common or rare? Contributions please to [sarah@swog.org.uk](mailto:sarah@swog.org.uk)