



In the Newsletter this Month



After last month's bumper edition, we are back to a more modest Newsletter this month, but I hope you find it enjoyable.

First of all, we look at wildlife surveys. We may not all have the time or inclination to do complicated surveys that require expert recognition, or require you to have a specialist licence, but there are many types of surveys that you can take part in with very low levels of skill. Many organisations are collecting data online, and publishing it in real time, and this is transforming our knowledge of wildlife, and of how it is responding to changes in climate and other stressors such as loss of habitat and changing farming practices. Please have a look at the article and see whether there are any surveys you could participate in.

2012 is going to be a year of drought, unless the rainfall pattern changes markedly during the Spring and Summer. But what can we do about our trees, particularly if we have planted trees recently, or are thinking of trying to establish new trees in drought conditions? There is a guide from the Woodland Trust, and the key points are summarized in the newsletter for your information—useful if you live in the South, East or Midlands, where there is already a drought.

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It has been a quiet month for news, but there are still some things to report, and we also have a full list of forthcoming SWOG meetings. PLEASE do support these meetings. It is great to get together with like-minded small woodland owners and share your experiences.

We would still like to hear from you. Please do tell us what you have been up to in your woods. Have you read any good books, and would you be able to review them for this Newsletter? Have you any activities planned in your woods this coming Spring? Do you have any tools that you use regularly and would like to review? Have you got any photos of your woods, and of people enjoying them? We really do depend on your contributions to make this newsletter *your* newsletter—so please keep them coming!

Sarah Walters (sarah@swog.org.uk)

Do You Forage?

There is a huge wealth of free, sustainable food in our woods, but we make use of only a fraction of what is there. Last year, we harvested blackberries, crab apples, elderberries, sloes, hawthorn berries, rosehips and used them to make bramble jelly, crab apple jelly, hedgerow jelly, sloe gin and sloe and elderberry vodka. I occasionally picked sorrel leaves to eat along with our planted salad leaves. And we ate a few rabbits, pheasants and woodpigeon kindly donated by our local shooters (who are very good, and only take a small, sustainable amount of game, just for their own consumption). We have also eaten some of our parasol mushrooms. We have had one complete meal from the woods, including our little garden there – woodpigeon, potato, onion, parasol mushroom and runner beans, with some crab-apple jelly on the side.

However, I am conscious that we don't forage nearly enough – that there is a lot more there for people who have knowledge and can be bothered. The new nettle shoots are starting to emerge – but I have never picked or eaten nettle. There is wild garlic there, but I have never picked or used it. I simply don't know what is out there and what you can eat.

So, do any of you forage in your woodlands? Would you like to share any recipes for spring woodland products such as elderflower and nettle shoots? Please write something for us!

Wildlife Surveys



Everybody notices the wildlife in the woods. Our visitors do, and we most certainly do, having become tuned in to what is there, what we can expect to see, what is different. We also get used to the pattern of seasons in our own woodlands. Knowing a single place in great detail means that we can easily detect a change, be that the arrival of a new bird or butterfly, the date on which a the buds burst, the breeding cycles of the deer, badgers and foxes, and the emergence in sequence of the wonderful wildflowers in our meadows.

The question is, what should we do with all this information? We spend more time in our own woods than anybody else, and probably notice more wildlife than anybody else (although visitors occasionally help us by spotting something we haven't seen).

One of the things we have been determined to do is help with data collection for national wildlife survey schemes, so that this information can be brought together with other local and national information to build up a picture of the wildlife in our local area and beyond.

Wildlife surveys in which "the public" contribute data are very important. Expert surveyors cannot hope to cover the whole of the country, and will only be able to gain a single snapshot of a particular site on a particular day when they visit. For example, a surveyor coming to our woods yesterday would not have seen willow tits, but we have seen and heard them repeatedly over the preceding days, and so we know they are there, there is a pair, and they are almost certainly breeding.

There are a huge number of participatory surveys to which woodland owners can contribute. So how do we know what is out there, and how do we select the ones we want to contribute to?

Types of survey

There are three principal types of survey

1. *The one-off* – a special survey on a special day or over a particular weekend, designed to get a snapshot of what is out there. A good example of this is the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch (which is for gardens, not woodlands). Over one weekend, people are asked to record the maximum number of each bird species seen over an hour of observation.
2. *Opportunistic or incidental surveys* – these are surveys or systems on which people can record incidental observations made at a particular place, or of a particular species. These are observations made not by undertaking a specific survey methodology, walking a particular transect, or surveying a specified area. They are simply our observations recorded in the course of walking round, or working in, our woodland. Incidental surveys can cover all sorts of things: butterflies, moths, alien deer species, bats, dragonflies, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds. Some allow you to record everything you saw on one particular



Course Directory

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 2012 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/whats-on>

day, others allow you to submit one-off observations, or record a rare sighting. BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) Bird Track, for example, allows you to record all the birds you saw while working in the woods on a particular day, or just make one record of one species you saw, and which you remembered, perhaps because it was remarkable.

3. *Structured surveys* – these are recording systems in which recorders comply with a specific methodology, be it a timed observation, a timed transect walk, use of a quadrat (a fixed area thrown randomly down) to record plants, or any other specific method. The BTO, Butterfly Conservation and many other organisations rely on such surveys.

Not all surveys are equally valuable, and the stricter the methodology, in general the more interpretable the results. Here's why. Suppose one year, 10,000 people submit records to a website saying they have seen otters (and where). The next year 12,000 people submit records saying they have seen an otter (and where). Does this mean that otters are getting more common? Or does it simply mean that more people took part in the survey and bothered to send in their records? Clearly we can't tell. But what we can tell, if they have given the location of their observation, is whether otters are becoming more widespread i.e. if they are cropping up in new locations, particularly if the observation series is repeated over several years to identify a trend.

On the other hand, if a survey is constructed such that an expert observer walks a specific transect, or grid square, and records all the birds seen and heard during that walk with a particular methodology, then the following year, if the observer repeats this survey, and sees more birds, then we can be pretty confident there are more birds there. But the same survey has to be repeated everywhere to know whether the birds are cropping up in new locations.

For this reason, both types of survey (incidental and structured) are valuable. Incidental surveys help us rapidly identify species cropping up in new locations, and structured surveys allow us to get a count or census of the species occurring in one location which can be used to construct longitudinal records and show whether the species is declining or increasing in that location.

Online recording

A lot of records can be submitted online. This method was pioneered by the Woodland Trust in the Nature's Diary project, which records the key dates on which particular events relating to spring and autumn occur. This has allowed a detailed picture of phenology (i.e. the changing of the seasons) to be built up over the course of its lifetime, and will in future be used to track both long-term changes relating to global climate change, and short-term fluctuations due to local weather and other factors. Now there are many online recording systems for mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and plants. Other recording systems operate via paper forms which are input by the recording organisation – this may seem archaic, but structured surveys usually use this form of recording as it allows for greater accuracy, and can allow for the recorder to be questioned if the observations seem unusual.

What we do

We do both incidental and structured surveys at our woods. The structured surveys we are currently involved in are the Wildlife Trust/BTO Breeding Bird Survey, BTO Birdtrack, Butterfly Conservation Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire Moth Monitoring Scheme and we have also submitted incidental records of mammals and alien species (in our case mink and muntjac deer).

Of these, by far the most structured are the Breeding Bird Survey and the Moth Monitoring Scheme. For the former, I attended a day of training at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust HQ and each year, between March and June, twice a month, I undertake a structured walk through the woods, at the same time of day, recording ALL the birds I see and hear on a particular transect. I prepare for this by carefully watching the birds arrive in January and February, and learning where the different birds are setting up their territories. I can then listen and look out for particular birds when I get started on the survey. The Moth Monitoring Scheme actually involves having a group of experts set up moth traps in the woods overnight at different times of year, and counting all those found in the traps as the night progresses. Moth identification can be very specialised, and although I am aware of some of the



common moths, the micro-moths are very difficult to distinguish, and are best left to experts.

At other times of year, I submit lists of birds seen on a particular day to the BTO Bird-track scheme, and will also record a bird of particular interest, such as the arrival of the cuckoos in spring, or the sighting of a red kite overhead, a first for the area. Incidental lists are also submitted for butterflies and dragonflies.

I also record all mammals seen on our wildlife cameras, by sight, by prints or droppings, and by bat detection and submit these to the county mammal recorder. We hope to arrange a small mammal trapping session later this year.

Why have we chosen these things to monitor? Mainly because we already have an interest in and expertise in the identification of birds and butterflies. We are less confident, for example, in identification of the wild flowers, so have not participated yet in wildflower surveys, but hope to do so in future. We needed less training for bird and butterfly surveys, so we started with these.

How to go about it

You don't have to go too deeply into surveying if you don't want to. You can start by submitting incidental observations for a type of animal with which you are familiar and which you can identify easily. If you are already into birdwatching, then this is a great area to start with, and joining the BTO Birdtrack scheme means you can submit observations as and when you like. It is very unstructured.

If you have children who like to get muddy, they might love to get into some of the Buglife recording schemes, looking for oil beetles, stag beetles and other bugs, or may like to do some pond dipping and recording of frog spawn. Children may also enjoy the big nut hunt (looking for signs of dormouse nibbling of hazelnuts).

There is lots of help available in the form of identification guides, and I find that smartphone apps can be a godsend – particularly the bird identification guides. It is very easy to forget or confuse the songs of migrant birds when they arrive again in the spring. A guide that provides you with a recording of the song can very rapidly help you distinguish between, for example, a blackcap and garden warbler, or a marsh and willow tit (which look almost identical but have different songs).

The best thing is, just to have a go. It can provide you with a great activity for a day out in the woods, provide fun for children and adults alike, you will become more aware of your woods and the wildlife it contains, and most of all, you will be helping build up a big picture of what is out there, and how it is changing.

List of surveys to get you started

Birds

Birds - Big Garden Birdwatch <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/> from RSPB and BTO Surveys <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/surveys> which include Bird-track, Garden Birdwatch, Breeding Bird Survey, and nest record schemes RSPB Swifts Survey <http://www.rspb.org.uk/thingstodo/surveys/swifts/index.aspx>

Mammals

Bat Conservation Big Bat Map – put your sightings on a map http://www.bats.org.uk/big_bat_map.php



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 February 2012 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2012/03/01/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

Hogwatch – record a hedgehog sighting via PTES (People’s Trust for Endangered Species) <http://www.hogwatch.org.uk/>

PTES Great Nut Hunt (for dormice) <http://ptes.org/index.php?page=322>

Mammal Society – Mini Mammal Monitoring, National Mammal Atlas and National Owl Pellet Survey http://www.mammal.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=326&Itemid=316

Butterflies and Moths (Lepidoptera)

Butterfly conservation - migrant species hunt http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/sightings_home/1095/migrant_watch.html and UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme <http://www.ukbms.org/> and Moths Count <http://www.mothscount.org/> and National Moth Monitoring Scheme http://www.mothscount.org/text/27/National_Moth_Recording_Scheme.html

Alien moth survey (horse chestnut) <http://www.ourwebofife.org.uk/surveymission.html>

Other insects

Beewatch – Bumblebee conservation Trust <http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org.uk/surveys.htm>

Buglife Surveys including harlequin ladybirds, oil beetle and others <http://www.buglife.org.uk/getinvolved/surveys>

Great Stag Hunt (stag beetles) <http://nationalinsectweek.co.uk/stagbeetleintro.php>

UK Ladybird Survey <http://www.ladybird-survey.org/> and Harlequin Ladybird Survey <http://www.harlequin-survey.org/>

Dragonflies – habitat survey <http://british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/bds-dragonfly-habitat-survey> and general recording of dragonflies and damselflies <http://british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/recording-dragonflies-and-damselflies-british-isles>

Trees and Plants

Urban Tree Survey from Natural History Museum <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/british-natural-history/urban-tree-survey/>

NHM (Natural History Museum) Bluebell Survey <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/british-natural-history/survey-bluebells/bluebell-aboutthesurvey/index.html>

Ancient Tree Hunt (Woodland Trust) <http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/>

Wildflowers Count from Plantlife http://www.plantlife.org.uk/things_to_do/wildflowers_count/

Amphibians and Reptiles

Add and Adder <http://www.adder.org.uk/> (from Amphibian and Reptile Conservation)

Big Spawn Count from Pond Conservation <http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/>

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/>

Bulworthy Project

The Bulworthy project run courses including guided walks, as well as one day introductions to charcoal burning

See <http://www.bulworthyproject.org.uk/>

Kingcombe Environmental Studies Centre

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

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

Plantlife

A charity dedicated to wildflowers and wild plants, run a programme of educational activities

http://www.plantlife.org.uk/things_to_do/activities/

In praise of stillness..

How often do you really sit still in the woods? If you are a woodland owner, I'd guess it isn't very often. There is always something to do. You can always see something that needs your attention, particularly during winter, when all the woodland management work needs to be done. There are always brambles and elder and bracken to be controlled and cut back, coppices to cut, log piles to stack and to dry, paths and fences to maintain, trees to plant, hedges to cut and lay and repair. If you are into woodcrafts, there is always new green wood that needs attention. And if you are keen on wildlife, there are nest boxes to clean out, seed feeders to top up, wildlife trail cameras to check and maintain, and sites to prepare for photography.



Then again, even if you do none of those things, there is the relentless urge to move. We are told we must "eat well, move more, live longer" – the slogan of the Change4Life programme. Being sedentary is seen as being wrong in some way. We are even being encouraged to fidget more as a way of staving off an attack of flab (it is now called Non Exercise Activity Thermogenesis or NEAT). Yes, seriously! We are urged to activity from every angle. Don't just take a stroll, take a brisk walk! Get your heart rate up! Make yourself breathless! I am as guilty as anybody of encouraging people to do this, being a qualified fitness instructor myself.

People like me sit and fidget. We don't watch the TV, we watch the TV and do knitting or embroidery. We don't sit down and enjoy a camp-fire in stillness and quiet, but we whittle a stick, or carve a spoon, or use a bat-detector, or sing...the list of fidgety activities is endless.

I find I really have to make time and take trouble to be still, but when I do, the rewards are immense. Enjoying, as I do, photography of birds and other creatures, you have to learn the art of stillness, for unless you sit still and become one with the surroundings, they will not trust you, or come close, and you will not get those special pictures.

So it was, yesterday, that I found myself sitting still. Yes, I had my camera, but I was completely still, on a pile of rotting logs. Still and quiet, I sat without moving and the rewards were immense. As I deliberately stilled myself, I started to blend in with the surroundings. I felt connected to the place and time in a very special way. Peacefulness washed over me. I lost the stress and care of the day (even though I knew there were jobs to be done). And the little birds came. Just a few at first, flying past me, or looking at me from a distance, and deciding whether they could approach a little bit closer to get to the feeders. Before long, they were flying by so close I could feel the wind from their tiny wings against my face. They would come and sit only a meter or two from me in the bushes and posture, sing, or just eat the seeds they had harvested. Just for a few minutes, I became part of their world, feeling the air, hearing tiny sounds, aware of the little mouse that was running around by my feet. My world and theirs connected in a way that was beyond visual, or auditory.

A walk round the woods is good. Exercise is good for you. Fidgeting can be very productive. But every once in a while, it is great to take time to be really and truly still, connect with the world around you, use all of your senses, and find peace. Next time you are out in the woods, try it.

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/1258.pdf>

The Sustainability Centre offers lots of courses around the theme of sustainable living. Upcoming courses include Festive Willow Craft and Coppicing.

http://www.sustainability-centre.org/courses_adult.php

Bishops Wood Centre at Stourport on Severn, offer a wide range of courses of interest to woodland owners including bushcrafts, photography, pole lathe and other woodland crafts, as well as offering forest school leader training and CPD

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/education-and-learning/be-healthy/outdoor-education-centres/bishops-wood-centre/training-and-courses.aspx>

British Dragonfly Society run a programme of field visits and educational events.

<http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk/content/diary-field-trips-and-other-bds-events>

Caring for trees during a drought

Parts of the country are officially in drought, even though February is not yet finished, and we are yet to experience March winds and April showers. Unfortunately, though, we need more than showers. For parts of the East and Midlands, we have had the driest 12 months from October 2010 to November 2011 since records began. This would be OK, but in fact we had another 2 relatively dry years before that, and it looks like we will have an exceptionally dry winter too. A summary report from the Environment Agency spells it out (<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/PDF/GEHO1111BVDT-E-E.pdf>). According to DEFRA “Hampshire, West Sussex, East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, London, Berkshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and the east of Gloucestershire are now in drought”.



The fact is that a large area of England including the South, South East, East and much of the Midlands is already at high risk of drought in 2012, even if we get normal amounts of rain from now on http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Leisure/Drought_risk_map.pdf. Weekly water state reports spell out the situation quite graphically http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Research/WE_210212.pdf

I have already reported on the difficulty that we had establishing new trees under drought conditions in 2011 (<http://www.swog.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/NL-Aug2011-final.pdf>), but the best predictions are that the drought situation is going to continue in 2012, so what can we do to protect our trees against drought, particularly when we have planted new trees, or are trying to establish young trees?

Selection of species

Gabriel Hemery has written a nice article on this issue. Some of our native species are not drought-tolerant—indeed, they are adapted to the rather wet climate that the UK has traditionally enjoyed. But this appears to be changing, with the risk of drought increasing, particularly in the South, East and Midlands. That being the case, there is an argument for looking at non-native species that can thrive in a drought environment, or at buying our native species from stock grown further south, in dryer regions, and which has been habituated to drought conditions.

Beech, for example, may no longer thrive in the South, and walnut and sweet chestnut may become suitable for planting further north.

http://www.nicholsonsforestry.com/advice/forestry_climatechange.htm

After planting

The Woodland Trust have issued a helpful practice paper on the care of saplings after planting in potential drought conditions.

This is their summary

“Based on the evidence the following are suggested;

- Reinforce and monitor best practice – failure to implement best practice in terms of plant handling, planting and aftercare will negate other measures. Existing best practice should ensure that tree roots suffer as little damage as possible and that plants are not subject to heat stress or drying out during handling or planting. Greater emphasis might be placed on planting before the end of December

Woodcraft School have published their timetable for woodcraft and bushcraft courses

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

Acres Wild Woodland have 2012 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

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.

(particularly in the lowlands).

- Use of mulches – consideration should be given to an increase in the use of mulches for weed control given the additional benefits of water retention.
- Mycorrhizal fungi – there appears to be evidence that inoculation with mycorrhizal fungi can increase transplant survival. Current inoculum for UK use is based on lowland conditions but may be transferable to upland planting.
- Drought hardening – preconditioning plants in the year before transplanting may aid survival.
- Water harvesting – the use of micro-catchments around individual trees may be too expensive on larger planting sites. However measures to reduce runoff and increase infiltration (cultivation across the contour, establishment of inter-tree vegetation and use of mulches, will increase the water supply to plants.
- Water-retaining polymers and Anti-transpirants – there is little evidence that these can aid establishment at a field scale, and so their use is not recommended.
- Irrigation – the use of field irrigation and water bowsers is likely to be costly and controversial in times of water shortage. In addition it may reduce the adaptation of plants to subsequent dry periods.
- Natural regeneration and direct seeding – all else being equal plants established from seed are likely to be better adapted to drought than transplanted trees. Other factors need to be considered in determining whether to use these methods.

http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/moretrees-moregood/advice-centre/Documents/Establishing_trees_drought_%20conditions.pdf

Watering

The Royal Horticultural Society say that trees within 5 years of planting are highly susceptible to drought stress and may need watering, but this can be very difficult in drought conditions. Even without a drought being in place, a licence may be needed to abstract water for watering your trees, even if you have your own stream, pond or other water source available at your woods. The Environment Agency say “You probably need to apply for a licence if you want to impound water or take more than 20 cubic metres (4,000 gallons) of water per day from a:

- river or stream
- reservoir, lake or pond
- canal
- spring, or
- an underground source
- dock, channel, creek, bay, estuary or arm of the sea

So this is OK for small-scale watering, but not for a larger project which may need more water than this. A drought order may restrict abstractions, even under licence, and prevent abstraction without a licence. So if you are planning to irrigate or water your trees, be sure you are not breaking the conditions of the normal licence or any special orders that may be in force. Let us hope it rains, quite a lot! But in the meantime, the above advice should help.

Courses from The Mammal Society – a wide variety of courses, at various venues and dates. 2012 dates now announced.

<http://tinyurl.com/69l76s7>

Courses in forthcoming months include mammal identification and radio tracking.

Dorset Centre for Rural Skills

Run a range of courses of interest to woodland owners including hurdle-making and green woodworking.

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

Cotswolds Rural Skills Courses

Include grassland management and drystone walling. 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

www.acornecology.co.uk

Forest Garden Show-elstrode

Practical woodland courses and yurt camping. Upcoming courses include green woodworking, hurdle-making, beekeeping for adults and children.

www.forestgarden.info

News for small woodland owners



Free Bee Information Offer for Small Woodland Owners

Paul Hirons has very kindly offered to write bee conservation and bee-keeping articles from his collection onto a CD for SWOG members. He says "I am creating a free CDR with loads of Basic Beekeeping info on and loads of Beekeeping files ranging from Recipes to the History of Bee-keeping. I got loads of info on my PC, collected over many years and I thought I'd share it with other inter-

ested parties and Beekeepers. CDRs are cheap these days and its the winter months so it keeps me occupied!! There are Bumble Bee Conservation Articles and Gardening for Bees on the CDR. If your Newsletter Readers would like a free copy just ask them to send their name and address to

paul@nimrodonline.com
www.nimrodonline.com."

Useful Aide-Memoire for assessing tree safety

Following our article on tree safety in last month's Newsletter, a useful aide-memoire has kindly been made available by Save Our Woods. This is a very simple and useful graphic aide memoire to keep in your pocket when you are walking around surveying the safety of your own trees.

<http://saveourwoods.co.uk/articles/forestry-information/trees-body-language-diagnosis-biomechanics-an-open-door-to-a-wonderful-world-by-claus-mattheck/>

Reminder - National Mammal Atlas project

Both the national mammal atlas and the Kent Mammal Group need you to record your mammal sightings on their web sites.

Mammal Society can be round on:

http://www.mammal.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=357&Itemid=329 – please record your mammal sightings on the Mammal Society web site, and ensure that an accurate picture is created of mammals in the UK.

Kent Mammal Group also need you to submit recorded sightings of deer to complete their county atlas due out in 2013. For more information please see: http://www.kentmammalgroup.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=119:kent-mammal-atlas&catid=43:projects&Itemid=73

New report from Forestry Commission – Proceedings of the Urban Tree Research Conference.

This conference was held in April 2011 and the report is available from [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRP017.pdf/\\$FILE/FCRP017.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCRP017.pdf/$FILE/FCRP017.pdf)



The Field Studies Council

run a wide range of courses for individuals, families and professionals at their centres around the UK. Courses of interest to woodland owners include tree identification, woodland management and woodland ecology, and wildlife surveying and recording techniques. See their web site for details of all courses

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

AJS Crafts

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>

Coastal Survival and Bushcraft Courses

Available from the Coastal Survival School in North West Wales. Courses include 1-day, 2-day and 5-day survival skills courses for individuals and families. See web site for more details.

<http://www.coastalsurvival.com/>

“The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now”.

All of the articles are written from presentations given at the conference. There is a good section on mycorrhizal inoculation and on factors affecting tree establishment in an urban environment—relevant to the above article on establishing trees in a drought, since urban areas are often very dry.

There is also a good section on social benefits of trees and the promotion of well-being. Another section looks at trees in relation to storm water management and cooling effects of trees in cities, governance, and trees and the green agenda.

The alien versus native debate is also tackled, in a very balanced way and community participation in the urban forest is explored. What about the downsides of trees? CCTV obstruction and subsidence are discussed in detail.

More from the Forestry Commission Forest Research News Winter 2012

Forest Research News Winter 2012 edition is now available from the Forestry Commission publications web site. This edition carries articles on oak processionary moth, recently-published reports and forthcoming events, as well as a project to estimate the amount of carbon and woodfuel that is contained in farm woodlands. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/frnews>

FC Report on Woodland-Related Social Enterprises

This report looks at enabling factors, and factors affecting success. Starting with a broad definition of social enterprise, barriers to success are examined. Financial barriers are obviously one, but aside from that, other sources of frustration were reported, including excessive bureaucratic hurdles. Factors affecting success, including leadership and sources of non-financial support are discussed. The report is useful if you are considering running a social enterprise within your woodland and can be downloaded from.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-84JD86>

FC Plans more Tree and Forest Health days in 2012

In Scotland

[Challenges for Scotland's biodiversity conservation: from the soils to the skies](#) Edinburgh - 8th to 9th March 2012. Meeting to help bridge the gap between excellent ecological science and the needs of policy makers. Organised by: British Ecological Society, British Society of Soil Science, and the Scottish Government's Biodiversity Science Group.

[Scottish soils and ecosystem services](#) Roslin, Edinburgh - 9th March 2012. One of a series of free seminars covering a variety of forestry and related research topics. Organised by: Forest Research.

[Valuing ecosystem services](#) Roslin, Edinburgh - 23rd March 2012. One of a series of free seminars covering a variety of forestry and related research topics. Organised by: Forest Research.

And in England

[Valuing and adding value to trees and woodlands](#)

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire - 23rd April 2012.

Conference to look at new ways of valuing the UK's woodlands and forests and how the new valuations might generate benefits for owners, managers, society and the woodlands themselves. Organised by: Royal Forestry Society and the Royal Agricultural Society of England.

Moelyci Environmental Training Centre offer a wide variety of courses of interest to woodland owners, including courses on Phase 1 habitat surveys, national vegetation classification and wildlife surveys. <http://www.moelyci.org> for further 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 woodland management and coppicing.

<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.

Abbots Living Wood offers a range of green woodworking courses
http://www.living-wood.co.uk/2011_course_dates.html

First Responder Course from Emergency Life Support Team—as reviewed by Tracy and Mike. Learn first aid in the outdoor environment and get HSE accreditation as a First Aider too.

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

For updated list and details, please see: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/events>

New form of *Phytophthora* seen in native juniper trees

In upper Teesdale, a new form of *Phytophthora* has been found in native Juniper trees. Caused by *Phytophthora austrocedrae*, this disease infects via the roots and eventually causes the foliage to die. This is particularly worrying due to the rarity of Juniper in the UK, and its recent decline. Please see the news release for further information.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/D099CB7E8DF5BE3F8025799E00386284>

Blue Planet Synthesis Report

Blue Planet Synthesis: Environmental and Development Challenges – the imperative to act.

This is a summary of all the papers that received a Blue Planet award. Headed up by Gro-Harlem Brundtland, and with the views of many influential international figures, this is a synthesis of what is wrong with the planet, and what needs to change. Big stuff for small woodland owners, but makes an interesting read.

<http://saveourwoods.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Blue-Planet-synthesis-paper.pdf>

Blog from Sussex Wildlife Trust with tips for pond creation

Sussex Wildlife Trust blog with top tips for pond creation—although a drought year may not be the best for this activity!

<http://www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/2012/02/ponds-for-life/>

Help needed recording non-native species

DEFRA need your help in recording sightings of specific non-native species. This is the list

Animals:

Muntjac deer
Zebra mussel
Mitten crab
American bullfrog
Citrus longhorn beetle
Western conifer seedbug
Southern green shieldbug
Rhododendron leafhopper
Signal crayfish

Plants:

Water primrose
Tree of heaven
American skunk-cabbage
Floating pennywort
Water fern
Wakame
Rhododendron
Himalayan balsam



Sightings are easy to record online at the portal <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/index.cfm?pageid=234>

Does outdoor play keep the doctor away

Richard Louv, author of “The last Child in the Woods”, has coined the term Nature Deficit Disorder to describe the disconnection that children have with nature and the natural world. Well educated about global concerns such as deforestation and global warming, they spend less and less time in a wild environment and thus become disconnected from and distanced from the nature in their own backyards.

A new report has been published entitled “Sowing the Seeds—Reconnecting London’s Children with Nature”

<http://www.londonsdc.org/documents/Sowing%20the%20Seeds%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf> in which this issue is discussed in relation to urban children in London in the wake of the Summer 2011 riots. In particular they recommend wild play, as well as structured experiences in the natural environment, as a key to getting a good and lasting connection with the natural environment. Forest Schools are one way of delivering this, but others are also discussed.

A good read, and a good summary of the issues also on the BBC web site <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-16963807>



DEFRA announces new Nature Improvement Areas

Twelve new havens for wildlife are to be created with £75m funding from DEFRA, and they are listed here http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2012/02/27/nature_improvement_area/ In these areas there may be funding available to help with landscape-scale conservation and joined-up areas for wildlife on a large scale, so it is worth checking if your woods are located in one of these new areas.

And read about a visit to the South Downs NIA by the Chief Executive of Sussex Wildlife Trust here <http://www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/2012/02/a-nature-improvement-area-for-the-south-downs/>

Forthcoming Events

Actif Woods Wales Seminars from Coed Lleol

You are warmly invited to attend one of the Actif Woods Wales seminar days, hosted by Coed Lleol, aimed at health professionals, organisations and individuals with an interest in linking health care with the natural environment. These are being held in Aberystwyth and Treherbert.

Aberystwyth- Friday 16th March: 10.00- 4.30, at the Morlan Centre and Penglais Woods

Treherbert- Friday 23rd March: 09.30- 15.00, at the Penyreglyn Project office and Cwm Saerbren woods

Both events are FREE, with lunch and refreshments provided

Booking form is available from

http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=186&Itemid=27

For more details or to book a place please contact Jo or Zena:

coedlleol@smallwoods.org.uk 01654 700061

Other events from Coed Lleol can be found on their web site at

http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=16&lang=en

Events from Heartwoods Firewood Production, Ironbridge, Shropshire on 15th March

There are a small number of places available on our Firewood Production event at Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, Ironbridge, Shropshire.

The aim of this course is to provide producers of firewood with the knowledge and skills to produce sustainable and viable firewood for the long term future, focusing on an added value product that meets the modern consumer's needs. The course focuses on:

- Firewood as a renewable fuel
- Sources of timber for firewood
- Turning timber into firewood



- Handling and delivering firewood
- Introduction to markets for firewood
- Economics of firewood supply

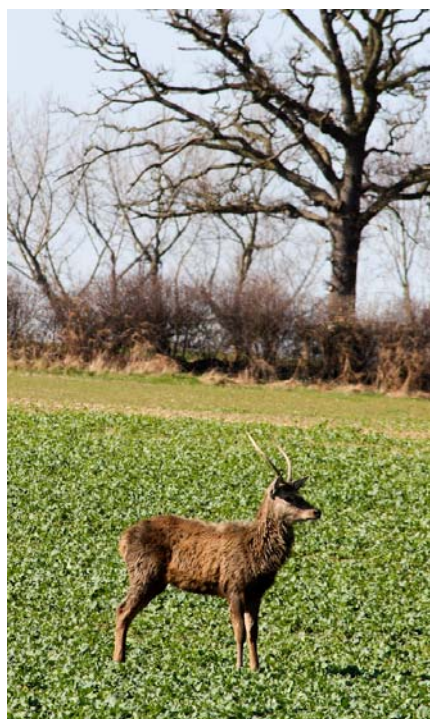
Course costs £30 to eligible beneficiaries (those employed in the industry, woodland owners, managers within the West Midlands).

To book a place please contact Heartwoods on info@heartwoods.co.uk or 01952 435860
18th April - Landowners Risk Insurance, and Tree Liability Conference, Discovery Centre, Wyre Forest.

Woodland Insurance Overview

- Rights and Responsibilities of having Rights of Way near or in your Woodland
- Roadside Trees – The new guidance and what this means to you
- Safety aspects of Practical Woodland Management
- Bringing groups into your woodland – Your responsibilities
- Multi-purpose Woodland Management and Safety
- Outdoor Workshop on Practical Risk Management and Trees for Landowners

The event costs £10, which includes lunch and refreshments. To book a place please contact Heartwoods on info@heartwoods.co.uk or 01952 435860



Deer Impact Event

Monday 26th March 2012 at Gatley Park, Nr Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 9TR

Looking at issues relating to deer damage and management in woodlands. Mainly aimed at rangers, and looks at the opportunity for estate managers to manage deer and gain an income from venison. To book see www.heartwoods.co.uk, email info@heartwoods.co.uk or phone 01952 435860

Other Events from Heartwoods

There are also some other events taking place, of which I have not yet had full details, but if you are interested, please contact the Heartwoods team directly. At the time of writing, the Heartwoods web site was not up to date and did not have information about these events.

23rd & 24th May - Tree Disease Seminars, Herefordshire and Shropshire, Staffordshire.

21st March - ASNW/PAWS Restoration Event, Oswestry.

13th April - Low Impact Extraction/Woodland Management, Stoke On Trent.

For more information on these events please contact the Heartwoods team on 01952 435860 or email: info@heartwoods.co.uk web: www.heartwoods.co.uk

Greenwood Centre

The Greenwood Centre offers a wide range of woodland management and wood craft courses the whole year round. Based in Shropshire.

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

Black Country Living Landscape –

courses including wild-flower plug planting and rustic fence-building
http://www.bcll.org.uk/whats_happening/events.html

The Bulworthy Project

These SWOG members offer a range of courses to suit your own needs on the subject of charcoal burning.

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

Greenwood Days

Offer courses to public and corporate groups on green woodworking and a wide range of creative arts in Leicestershire

<http://www.greenwood-days.co.uk/>

Woodland Skills Centre

Courses in coppice and greenwood crafts- Woodland management, basket-making, Chair-making, timber-frame building, Wood carving, coracles, oak swill baskets, Make and use pole-lathe and shave-horse, Charcoal, home chain-saw, hedge-laying. Bushcraft courses and Family Holidays.

www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk or 01745710626

Courses

Woodcraft Courses for 2012 from Maurice Pyle

The following courses will take place at The Flint Mill, Beamish, Co Durham

For further details visit www.mpwoodsmith.co.uk/woodcrafttraining or e-mail: Maurice@mpwoodsmith.co.uk for booking form.

Note: *BYOPL* stands for “Build your own Pole Lathe”!

Course	Dates	Cost	Venue
Charcoal Burning	31 March/1 April	140	Beamish
Cleft Ash Gates	7/8 April	175	Beamish
Bowls Workshop	21/22 April	175	Beamish
BYOPL	27/28/29 April	360	Beamish
Carved Spoons and Turned Bowls	19/20 May	150	Beamish
Tool Sharpening	25 May	75	Beamish
Green Woodworking 1	26/27 May	160	Beamish
Green Woodworking 2	4/5 Oct	160	Beamish
Green Woodworking 3	6/7 Oct	160	Beamish
BYOPL	12/13/14 Oct	360	Beamish
Bowl Carving	20/21 Oct	160	Beamish
Charcoal Burning	27/28 Oct	140	Beamish

The following courses will take place within an outdoor woodland workshop within the grounds of our house in Holoydal, eastern Norway. Cost includes tuition, accommodation in well-appointed bell tents and delicious home cooked meals throughout the duration of the course

Scandinavian Craft with Final Year Students from Saterglantan.	13 – 17 August	£575	Norway
Bowls and Spoons	27 – 31 August	£575	Norway

Courses from CAT

Courses from CAT in March include Hedgelaying, Horse Logging and sustainable woodland management, plus greenwood crafts. For further details please see <http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/index.php?cPath=6>

Still places on courses from the Mammal Society

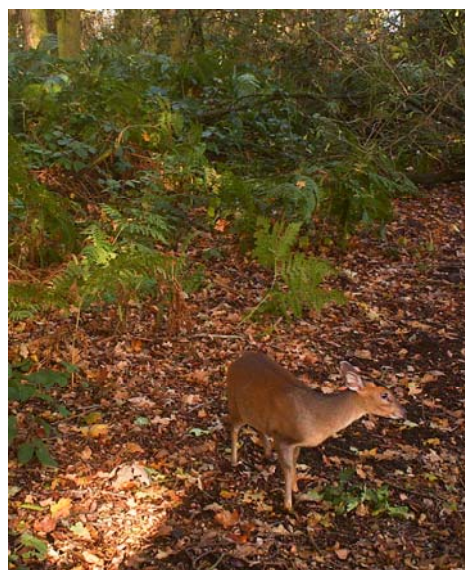
There are still a few places left on the forthcoming courses from the Mammal Society.

[Badger Ecology](#), with Dave Williams (Chair, Badger Trust) - 31st March - Surrey.

[Deer Awareness](#) with the British Deer Society - 12th April - Longparish, Hampshire.

[Management for Riparian Mammals](#) - 17th–18th April - Cotswold Water Park.

These courses are designed for consultants and those looking to move into consultancy, prices start at £204, a significant reduction on prices in pre-



vious years, so confirm your place and book now! Please see the web site at http://www.mammal.org.uk/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&page=shop.browse&category_id=9&Itemid=219

Courses from Endangered Species Conservation Trust

<http://www.speciesrecoverytrust.org.uk/Events.html>

These courses for Spring and Summer 2012 include courses on woodland wildflower identification, wildflower identification in a variety of other habitats, identification of grasses and sedges, and use of indicator species for habitat classification. Take place in London, the South East, Dorset and Wiltshire. Please see their web site for further information.

Camera Trapping Workshop from Royal Geographical Society – 17th March 2012

Camera trapping is a great way of finding out about the wildlife on your site with a minimum of disturbance. This workshop looks at the use of this technique for field surveys and research. For further details, please see the web site at

<http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Fieldwork+and+Expeditions/GO+seminars+and+workshops/Camera+Trapping+Workshop.htm>

Field Studies Council, Epping—Getting young people engaged in environmental activities

There are two great courses at the FSC Centre in Epping around the topic of how young people can be inspired to, and engaged in, environmental activities.

Inspiring Young People in Environmental Activities—looks at a range of activities designed to fulfil different needs and learning styles. <http://field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/courses/2012/ef/inspiring-young-people-in-environmental-activities-34929.aspx>

Engaging People in Environmental Activities is a follow-up course to the above, dealing with managing customer expectations and health and safety <http://field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/courses/2012/ef/engaging-people-in-environmental-activities-34931.aspx>

Courses from Woodland Ways

Woodland Ways run bushcraft and survival courses in the Peak District and Oxfordshire, ranging from half-day introductory experiences, to week long courses, and a full two-year ultimate bushcraft course aimed at developing your skills to the level where you can obtain an instructor qualification.

<http://www.woodland-ways.co.uk/>

Forest School Leader Courses from Lawrence Weston Community Farm

This Community Farm in Bristol is offering Level 1 and Level 3 Forest School courses, as well as courses in green woodworking and chicken, pig and beekeeping courses.

<http://www.lwfarm.org.uk/learning.html>

Celtic Wisdom Bow-making course

This course comes highly recommended from a friend, who owns a bow made by this wonderful bowyer, Chris Boyton. Two residential bow-making courses will run from 10th to 14th May and 7-9th September. Accommodation is at the wonderful Celtic Harmony Iron Age camp. An opportunity to learn from a master.

http://www.celticharmony.org/pages/bushcraft_bowmaking.php

Forest Schools and Outdoor Learning courses from Archimedes

Archimedes training offer a wide range of courses to help you deliver outdoor learning to children and adults in your woodland. These include Entry Level to Level 4 (introduction to Forest Schools right through to Forest School Trainer), as well as a certificate in outdoor learning, and various skills courses, as well as first aid courses specifically for Forest Schools. They also offer Beach Schools training, for those of us lucky enough to have a beach nearby. Please see the web site for more details <http://www.forestschoools.com/book-a-forest-schools->

training-course.php

Bushcraft walks in Scotland

A programme of bushcraft walks and courses in Nevis range, Moidart, Loch Lomond and Trossachs are available at Wildwood Bushcraft. These courses include foraging, survival, family bushcraft, two-hour guided walks, bushcraft cooking, woodland nature days and others. See the web site for more information.

http://wildwoodbushcraft.com/bushcraft_course_list_scotland.htm

Courses for March and April from Greenwood Days

Greenwood Days at Staunton Harold in Leicestershire, are running a whole range of courses throughout the Spring and Summer. Here are the forthcoming courses for March and April.

Sharpening Day 10th March £70 per person.

Family Greenwood Day 11th April £70 per adult £30 per child. Inc materials.

Family Greenwood Days 12th April £70 per adult £30 per child. Inc materials.

Plant Climbers 28th April £60 per person Inc materials.

Peter is also holding an Open Day on 15th March from 10.30 to 2.30—you can visit, walk around, have a go at various things, stay for an hour or stay all day.

For more information, please contact Peter Wood at Greenwood Days, Ferrers Centre, Staunton Harold, Leicestershire, LE65 1RU www.greenwooddays.co.uk - peter@greenwooddays.co.uk 01332 864529 – 07946 163860

Wildlife and Environmental Training Company

WETC is a Social Enterprise delivering a wide range of quality training in the Wildlife and Environmental sector, across Central England, and they are offering a 20% discount to SWOG members who sign up to their forthcoming courses

Introduction to Worcestershire Historic Landscapes: £80 per person (20% off to SWOG members) 9th June 2012

Based in Malvern, this one day course will show how surviving elements of the historic landscape can be identified, interpreted, and used to reconstruct the social and environmental history of the countryside.

Introduction to Warwickshire Historic Landscapes: £80 per person (20% off to SWOG members) 16th June 2012

Based in and around the Burton Dassett Hills Country Park in south Warwickshire, this one day field course will provide an introduction to the techniques and approaches used to identify and interpret surviving elements of the historic landscape. These techniques will include: identifying past rural industry and settlement, using landscape features to reconstruct local histories, and using maps and public records to identify areas of archaeological interest.

To find out more or to book your place visit us at www.wetc.co and further details are also on the SWOG web site at <http://www.swog.org.uk/news/the-wildlife-environmental-training-company/>



Forthcoming SWOG Events

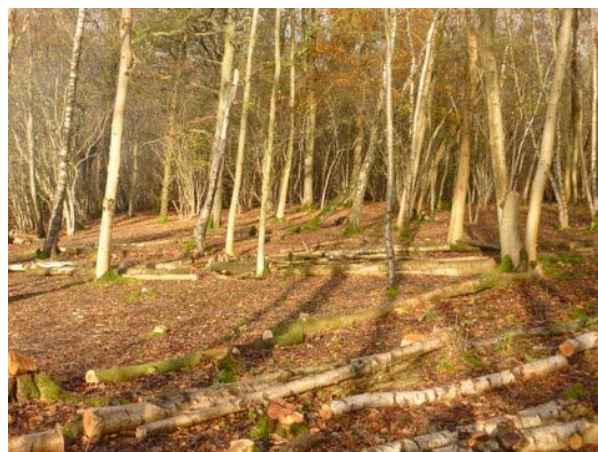
Note from Tracy

If you do book a place, please actually turn up! We have rather a large number of 'no shows' at meetings which is very disheartening for those running them and means that others might have been able to go in your place.

SWOG Meeting, Clan Wood, April 14th 2012

Many thanks Howard and Shirley Symonds of Clan Wood, who have kindly offered to host a meeting at their wood in April. They first mooted the idea whilst attending a meeting last year at Julian Evans' wood in Hampshire. Howard has sent us a nice introduction to the wood and some great photos.

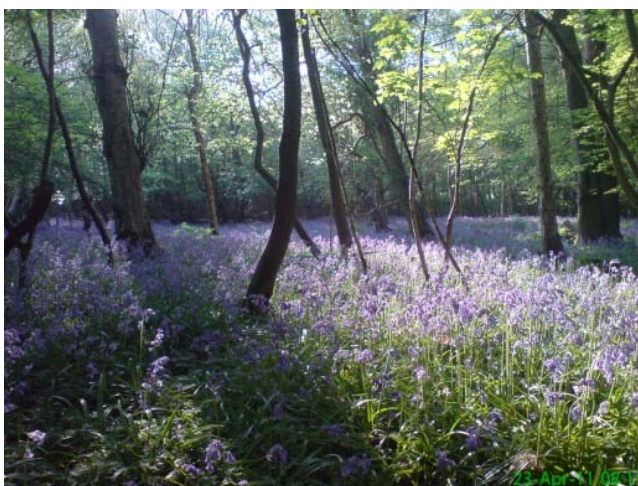
Clan Wood is part of the East Hyden Wood and is part of a range of woodlands which is now in the South Downs National Park. It slopes gently to the south and is on clay with flint over chalk. The wood contains hazel, ash and some mixed broadleaves. The west side consists of a grass valley which has in the past been used as a shooting ride. The remainder of the wood is oak plantation and un-thinned mixed broadleaves. The area we are currently coppicing and forms part of our Management Plan is part of an area totalling 1.5ha. It is seriously overstood hazel and ash coppice with too many hazel, ash and birch standards and is being restored and managed on traditional lines. The objective is to maintain the valley as grassland, bring the coppice into rotation and thin the plantation to improve the mix of trees. Some mature beech trees will be retained to become veterans.



SWOG Meeting, Hendall Wood, Heron's Ghyll, East Sussex, April 21st 2012

Two adjacent parts of Hendall Wood are open, courtesy of Duncan & Bridget Ferns and Penny and Rich.

Duncan & Bridget Ferns family bought their 52 acres in two-halves, the first in 2004 and the second in 2006. It is Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) with a seasonal stream, carpets of anemones and bluebells, areas of orchids and many archaeological features surveyed by Wealden Iron Research Group (8 pits, 15 or so charcoal platforms and a couple of likely sawpits). The east end of the wood is coppiced sweet chestnut, split into 8 cants. We are now in the fourth year of coppicing cants of 0.5-1 acre. Extraction has been by the low-impact 'Iron Horse' machine with caterpillar tracks, and mowing we use a BSC power-scythe, both of which we hope will be demonstrated. Deer browsing is a serious issue, despite fencing, and deer management has started during 2011-12. The majority of the woodland is being left as 'wildwood' of mature ash, hornbeam with beech and oak standards.



Richard and Penny's adjacent wood is the northern spur of Hendall wood and about 11 acres in size. The woodland shares a lot of the features and history of the main part of the wood (charcoal platforms and a sawpit) and is slowly being restored to a working wood. We have found mention of the wood as far back as the 1500's, Hendall was one of the gateways to the Ashdown Forest, and derived from the word for a 'hind' presumably a hind deer.

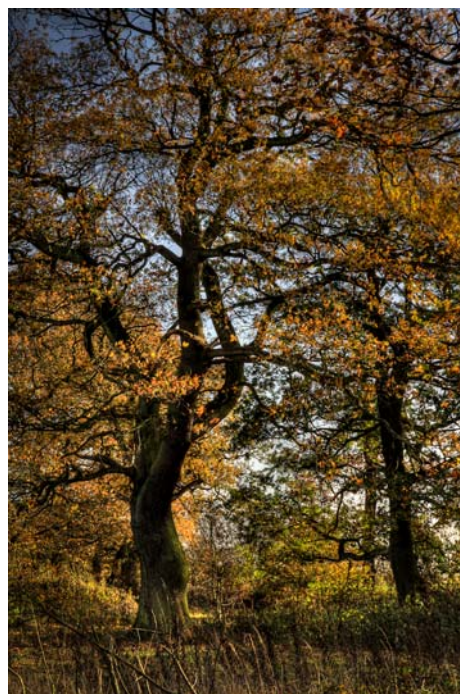
We have been actively managing the wood for about 4 years now, coppicing and opening up a ride. The main problem as with anywhere close to the Ashdown Forest is the pressure of deer numbers. These have proved almost impossible to keep out of the newly coppiced cants, however they definitely have an order of preference for certain species. Oak, hornbeam and hazel tends to get browsed the hardest, whilst chestnut and alder is left relatively

unscathed.

If you would like to attend the meeting, please email: tracy@woodlands.co.uk, full details will be sent out nearer the time.

SWOG Meeting, Alvecote Wood, North Warwickshire, 28th April 2012

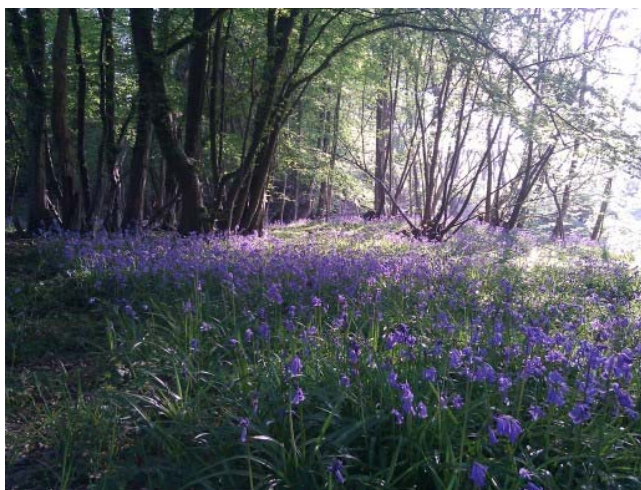
Sarah and Stephen are pleased to invite SWOG members to their woods again in 2012. Alvecote Wood comprises 11 acres of ancient oak woodland, together with 9 acres of newly-planted woodland, wildflower meadow and ponds. **Gina Rowe, Director of Living Landscapes at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust** will be coming along to discuss landscape-scale conservation and how small woodland owners can work together with each other, with farmers and other organisations to provide the best environment for wildlife across a whole landscape. This can be demonstrated at Alvecote Wood by looking at the newly-planted Betty's Wood and the way in which the site is being managed for wildlife in itself, and in conjunction with neighbouring wildlife areas. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust can also talk about other landscape-scale conservation initiatives in the area. Camping will be available on site, and Stephen and Sarah will also happily provide a walk and talk through the woods, discussing the management issues that have arisen since they took ownership in 2007.



There will be a public Open Day at Alvecote Wood on Sunday 29th April, and visitors are welcome to stay and make a weekend of it, and see what we do on our Open Days. Please contact tracy@woodlands.co.uk for more information, and to book a place!

SWOG Meeting – Ferriby Wood, Yorkshire, 27th May 2012

Mike is kindly offering to host a meeting at his woodland on the edge of the Yorkshire Wolds. Parking is available for 6 or 7 cars so make sure you book with Tracy. Mike says it's an easy walk or he will ferry people with his Land Rover. Please bring a mug and packed lunch, there will be a fire and trivet for those who want to cook.



Suggested topics for discussion include:

- thinning of young beech
- healthy market for ashpoles
- coppicing/market for products
- new rainwater system
- ride cutting regime
- flora/fauna diversification

Tracy will be sending out full instructions nearer the time so please email her if you are interested in attending tracy@woodlands.co.uk

SWOG Meeting Rainham, Kent, 17th June 2012

Andy has offered us a SWOG meeting with a difference! This one involves his Alpaca farm (and lots of newly planted trees) There will also be a guided walk by Peter from Butterfly Conservation and a short talk from a bee-breeder.

More details to follow, please keep the date free in your diary!

Woodfairs in 2012

The season of woodfairs is about to start, so here are the dates for your diaries. More information is available on woodfairs.co.uk

Woodfairs in Scotland

Royal Highland Show

Edinburgh

21st - 24th June 2012

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

Peebles Wood Market

21st and 22nd October 2012

Tweed Valley

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

Woodfairs in Wales

Dates for 2012 yet to be confirmed, please check woodfairs.co.uk for more information.

Woodfairs in England

Live crafts and festival of woods

Nr Reading, Berkshire

Variety of dates through the year.

http://www.livecraftslimited.co.uk/live_crafts.html

Capel Manor Gardens

20th - 21st April

<http://www.capelmanorgardens.co.uk/events/celebration-of-trees-and-the-countryside.html>

Silk wood fair

5th - 7th May 2012

Venue - Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury Gloucestershire, GL8 8QS

www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt

Weird and Wonderful Wood

12th and 13th May 2012

Haughley Park, Wetherden, Nr Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3JY.

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

Devon county show

17th - 19th May 2012

Westpoint, Exeter

<http://www.devoncountyshow.co.uk/home>

Horse logging demonstration

27th May 2012

Scottish borders TBC

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

Roydon Woods Woodfair

Hampshire



27th May 2012

<http://www.hwt.org.uk/events.php/1836/roydon-woods-woodfair-and-local-produce-market>

Blackdown Hills Woodfair

7th July 2012

Park Farm near Wellington

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

Great Yorkshire show

Harrogate

10th - 12th July 2012

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

South Downs Woodfair

21st and 22nd July 2012

Queen Elizabeth Country park, South Downs National Park

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

New Forest and Hampshire County Show

Brockenhurst, Hampshire

24th - 26th July 2012

<http://www.newforestshow.co.uk/index.htm>

National Forest Woodfair

26 and 27 August 2012

Beacon Hill Country Park, Leicestershire

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

Stock Gaylard Estate Oak Fair

Near Sturminster Newton, Dorset

Saturday 25th August 2012

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

Festival of the Tree, Westonbirt

Treefest

25th - 27th August 2012

Venue - Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury
Gloucestershire, GL8 8QS

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

Woodworks

1st and 2nd September 2012
Forest Centre and Millennium Country Park
Marston Mortaine
Bedfordshire
MK43 0PR

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

Lincolnshire Firewood fair and auction

Revesby Estate, Lincolnshire
2nd September 2012

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

Wychwood Forest Fair

Sunday 2nd September 2012

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

APF 2012

Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire
13th - 15th Sept 2012

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



Wild about Wood

15th and 16th September 2012
Castle Howard Arboretum Trust, Kew
<http://www.wildaboutwood.org/>

Bentley Weald woodfair

21st - 23rd September 2012
Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum,
Halland, near Lewes, East Sussex
BN8 5AF

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

Derbyshire County Council Woodland Festival

22nd and 23rd September 2012
Elvaston Castle Country Park, Borrowash
Road, Elvaston, Derby. DE72 3EP

10am - 5pm

08 456 058 058

countrysideservice@derbyshire.gov.uk

Ickworth House Suffolk, woodfair

6th and 7th October 2012

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ickworth>

On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk and woodlandsTV

These are the latest blogs from Woodlands.co.uk and videos on woodlandsTV. Please have a look and comment upon them, as they make very interesting reading.

The black squirrel project ~ by Lewis

Black squirrels? Have you seen any? The black, or melanistic, version of the grey squirrel seems to be getting more common in the UK, and a record of sightings is being requested.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/the-black-squirrel-project/>

Social Forestry in Glede Wood. ~ by Luke

Glede wood is provided for the use of the Small Woods Association by woodlands.co.uk. Based in Shropshire, this wood is aiming projects at the NEET group in local towns, as well as the BME community. Read more about what they do here.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/social-forestry-in-glede-wood/>

Is Spring on its way ? ~ by Chris

The cuckoos are on the move! Follow the progress of electronically tagged cuckoos as they start to move



north, on schedule to arrive in the UK in April.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/spring-is-on-its-way/>

Lath Wood ~ by Robert S

Read about Robert's experience in buying and starting to manage his new woodland.

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

Forestry Commission accounts – a forest of facts ~ by Angus

The Forestry Commission accounts have been released. A long document, but full of interesting nuggets, facts and figures. Definitely worth a read.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/forestry-commission-accounts-a-forest-of-facts/>

Powys Forest Horses ~ by Nick Burton

Read about how Nick set up in business as a horse logger—from idea, through training, to buying a horse and setting up the business.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/powys-forest-horses/>

Climatic debt ~ by Chris

Climatic debt is the inability of species to respond quickly enough to adjust to climate change. Studies on British birds and butterflies shows that this is happening for some species, which have not been able to expand their range northwards as temperature rises. Do

humans need to intervene and move them to new habitats before they die out?

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/climatic-debt/>



Contributors needed!

Thank you again for all your contributions to this month's newsletter—we are very grateful, and depend on you to keep the newsletter interesting!

If you are able to help by writing something, please do let us know. We would love to hear from you with your spring recipes—does anybody have a recipe for elderflower wine or cordial, or nettle soup? Do you have any special events planned for your woods this year? Please let us know, and we will put it in the newsletter.

If you have attended any courses, we would love to hear what you think of them—it is really helpful to have a review from somebody who has been there and done that.

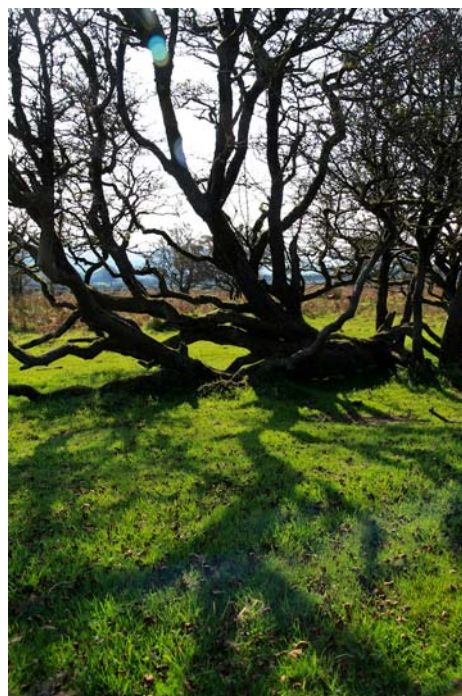
Also, if you have any photographs of your wood, we would love to receive them. We depend on you for photographs for the newsletter.

Book reviews—do you have a favourite book? Have you read something that makes you happy, that helps you manage your woodlands, or gain more pleasure from it? The same goes for smartphone apps—do any of you have any favourites that you would like to review. Tool reviews are also welcomed—any pieces of kit that you use, and find valuable, or alternatively that you have found to be disappointing, we would be interested to hear.

Creative writing—have you written a poem, or short story, or a short meditation on your woodlands? Would you be willing to share it with us? I'm sure there are lots of people who would love to read your work.

Finally, if you are writing in with something for the web site and are happy for it also to appear in the newsletter, please let us know—photographs or articles would all be welcome.

If you can help by writing just a little bit for this newsletter, we would be very grateful. Please contact sarah@swog.org.uk for further details or with your contributions.



Newsletter - March 2012

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

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Small Woodland Owners' Group Forum

On the SWOG Forum—December and January

It has been a very busy couple of months on the forum, so this section is a bit longer than normal. Please feel free to join the forum, and join in the discussions. Here is a flavor of the most recent threads.

Bart85 is a part-time Forestry and Woodland Management student looking for work in the Uckfield area to help support his studies. Check the forum and see if you can help.

Stephen1 reckons it is OK to use a couple of copper or aluminium nails to fix bird boxes to trees and they should do no harm. But strips of butyl pond liner also seem to stand up well to life in the woods.

Treebloke has a client who needs three oak, sweet chestnut or beech trunks in the Wolverhampton area. If you have such trunks available, please check the forum and see if you can help.

Tracy asked about how far apart to plant ash saplings when trying to establish a coppice. **Coppiceer** replied that the original idea of planting 3m separation was less successful than 1.5m separation with a 3m corridor every few rows for access.

Rich reminded forum members that posts can be categorized, and that we now have a new category of "for sale/swap/wanted/giveaway". **Exeldama** offered a Stihl brushcutter, which was snapped up. Do you have anything you want, would be willing to share, would like to sell, or would like to swap?

Wrekin wrote about the Scottish hutting campaign, and this led to discussions about connecting with nature, and tree houses—an interesting read.

SteveA offered shooting/vermin control services in Dartford, and this led to a very heated debate about whether the shooting of animals in woodland is justified or justifiable, or whether culling is necessary. Strong views on both sides.

Knight is a new member, who has recently bought a wood in Cambridgeshire. Are you nearby? Would you like to get in touch and share your experiences and expertise?

Tracy asked how you can deter trespass

and poaching in your woods, a problem that quite a few of us seem to have suffered from. **Exeldama** wrote a long response, and the advice is generally to report it, beware of poachers, who are usually armed, use remote wildlife cameras to capture them and their vehicle registration numbers where you can, and put up cheap signage, which seems to be less likely to be damaged. No one solution seems to work in every area. Do you have any potential solutions?

TobyAllen has a woodmizer mobile sawmill for sale, if you are interested—check out the forum.

The Barrowers asked if they can get their chainsaw chains sharpened by post. Lots of suggestions came in, including self-sharpening chain devices. Do you have any suggestions?

TheNativeGardener is a bodger looking for green wood in the Canterbury area. Can you help?

SimonFisher has two Gransfors axes for sale: a small belt hatchet and large splitting axe. If interested, see the forum.

SimonFisher has also made his own saw horse, rather than buying a commercial one, and posted a video on the forum.

Bellhurst asked about wood moisture meters and recommendations for a good model, and how to use it. Lots of information there. Can you help?

Justin has just started looking for a wood, and posted about using a towable mini-house to live in while at the woods. Anybody done this before? Any information is welcome.

Hornbeam_ma posted a design for a "wife-friendly wood-store" on the forum, designed by his dad.

Jennysmate asked about trail cameras, which models to get and how to reduce the risk of theft. Can you help? Catch up with the discussion on the forum.

Steverollnick asked if the value of woodlands is going up or down. What is your experience in your area? Share it on the forum.