



issue no.53

# Offcuts

the newsletter of the Oxfordshire Woodland Group



*Chairman Thomas Loyd addresses the Woodland Group AGM, Heath Farm, Swerford. Report: p3*

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*Events listing 2012: inside back page*



## Common Sense Risk Management in Trees

The Forestry Commission has just published the National Tree Safety Group's guidance document for landowners of estates and smallholdings and all those who manage, advise and work on them. It is available as the full 100-page document or as a 20-page landowner summary. The document is available as a pdf file on Forestry Commission website, [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

*“ Safety is but one of the goals to which we aspire; the mistake that is often made is to focus on safety as if it is the only goal” -Prof David Ball*

## myForest demos set to move Oxfordshire-wide

MyForest is a free facility that provides easy-to-use online tools for small woodland owners to relieve the hassle of woodland planning paperwork. For the past two years the Project has had funding to introduce the tools to woodland owners in southern Oxfordshire and this is set to conclude at the end of May. After that, the Project is bidding for new funding to take myForest into northern Oxfordshire. Anyone interested in using myForest to map, manage or market timber or coppice from their small woodlands should contact the Project office or perhaps come along to the next public seminar at Shotover House, Tuesday 20th March, see attached email flyer & book online at [www.eventelephant.com/myforest](http://www.eventelephant.com/myforest).

**10, 000ha now registered ...be a part of it!**  
**contact the Project office to book a demonstration**

## More community planting at Stanford-in-the-Vale

Stanford community turned out to augment their community woodland in December. Experimenting with cell-grown stock, volunteers replaced some of the failed trees, a process inexplicably referred to as 'beating-up'. Numbers were swelled by the appearance of a contingent of local Brownies with Mums & dads in tow.

Stanford's Mark Isaacs said that the parish is planning with the owner (Oxfordshire County Council) to increase the amount of woodland here as part of the provision of sports fields.

David Rees of the Oxfordshire Woodland Project says “Here's a place where children can explore in safety, not every community can offer that”. This is a reflection on the curious fact that while Oxfordshire is largely rural, it has the poorest rating for public access to green-space in the south east, according to a recent study carried out by Natural England.



### Heath Farm, Swerford

*courtesy: David Barbour*

The Woodland group found itself once again at David Barbour's Heath Farm in Swerford for a rare whole-day visit. In the morning the Group visited David's extensive areas of hazel, planted principally for coppice produce.



David Barbour and hazel

Veteran coppice cutter Mark Oakey, led proceedings, illustrating the many tasks that go into the harvesting and regeneration of hazel. Mark shed some light on the simple, apparently easy task of cutting standing coppice with a hook. Using a cut-down stihl machete, Mark illustrated the cut, showing the value of pre tensioning the rod prior to the cut. This enabled the blade to cut the rod rather than pushing it out of the way. Mark shared his wide experience of stool protection and expressed his support for piling wasdte brash on top of stools. Not only does this reduce access by deer but it has a distinctly positive effect on the vigour of the stool in the following year. It was thought that the brash may be insulating the stools from radiation frosts. While hazel is not frost tender, it will grow more strongly in warmer soils that have not been thoroughly chilled by exposure of bare ground.



Inspecting 1-year old hazel regrowth

The Woodland group AGM was held, al fresco.

The Group lunched on Heath Farm produce; venison and saddle of squirrel, barbecued using charcoal from Mark's ring kiln. In terms of flavour, a straw poll favoured the saddle of squirrel over the venison.

After lunch the Group considered the pros and cons of charcoal and traditional block firewood production.

The Group toured David's walnut hazel and chestnut orchards.



Splitting thatching liggers

Finally, returning through the more conventional native woodland the Group considered some rapidly growing broad-leaves on a north-facing bank watered by spring seepage. As is sometimes the case in forestry, there was a perplexing gradation of quality of timber across this bank, leaving the forester either depressed or elated, depending on the direction of travel!

There was a vote of thanks for David Barbour and his team of helpers and presenters, for producing such a diverse and entertaining day.



Mark Oakey describes a charcoal burn



## Green Woodworking Courses with the Wychwood Project

In collaboration with Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA) the Wychwood Project is promoting a variety of green woodworking training courses.

These courses are part of a new initiative for the Wychwood Project to explore ways to add value to the small size wood that can be harvested relatively easily from local woodlands. As well as providing training in once common traditional rural skills we hope these course and the items produced can be used to generate interest amongst the wider community about these activities and the products they can create. A natural extension of the workshops may be the development of informal and self-organised green woodworking groups where like-minded individuals get together to develop their skills further and club together for materials, transport, etc.

If you would like to know more about green woodworking, please contact Jane.Bowley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Additional dates may be arranged if there is enough interest so please let me know if you are interested but you can't attend on these dates.

## Motorised Wheelbarrow for sale

The Ridgeway Path maintenance people have a motorised wheelbarrow for sale at a very good price at the County Council Eynsham Rights of Way workshop. Of obscure French manufacture and with a German 2-stroke petrol engine and 4-speed gearbox, this could be a solution to small-scale extraction of cordwood or coppice.

The wheelbarrow has a very narrow profile of just 1m. It has 4 traction tyres mounted on a single axle. The build is robust and the rated payload is 500kg. This will be sold quickly for a very keen price to the first community group to claim it ...but test it first at our Eynsham workshop, OX29 4TL, phone me on 01865 815427 to arrange a demonstration.

David Rees owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk





## **DEFRA: The new Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS)**

*Defra's Helen Dallas supplies the following information...*

The farming & forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS) is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is a scheme of support, developed to help farming, forestry and horticultural businesses in England to become more efficient at using resources. This scheme aims to help make your business more profitable and resilient whilst reducing the impact of farming on the environment.

What can be funded under FFIS? To be eligible for funding under FFIS the project must fall within one of the following key areas of activity:

**Forestry:** Projects which improve the economic value of forests through the efficiencies of improved processing and adding value. Eligible items include timber processors, forwarders, forestry trailers, tractor-mounted forestry grabs.

**Nutrient Management:** Improvements in use of farm manures and slurries so as to improve soil quality and reduce reliance on artificial fertiliser. Eligible items include slurry injectors, mechanical slurry separation systems and Global Positioning Systems.

**Energy Efficiency:** Projects to reduce or recover energy on farm, resulting in a reduction of farm energy bills and carbon dioxide emissions. Eligible items include heat exchangers, gel coolers and ice builders.

**Water Resource Management:** Rainwater harvesting, recycling and reuse systems to reduce reliance on mains water. Eligible items include pipework specifically to intercept and divert roof water to a storage facility, rainwater harvesting equipment.

**Animal Health and Welfare:** Projects which bring about significant improvements in farm animal health and welfare.

**Who can apply?:** Farmers, foresters, contractors and horticulturalists across England are eligible to apply.

**How to apply:** You will need to read the full guidance and complete the application forms available on the RDPE Network website. If you wish to discuss your proposal before completing the forms or if the item you are applying for is not listed in the guidance then please contact your local Defra RDPE delivery team.

for further information, contact your defra area team:-

South East 01932 357083 [rdpedeliverysoutheast@DEFRA.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:rdpedeliverysoutheast@DEFRA.GSI.GOV.UK)

# B O O K I N G      F O R M

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oxfordshire Woodland Group Events Booking form</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>--spring 2012--</b></p> <p>Print this booking form and enter your preferences and/or places to be booked. Return to OWP, Signal Court, Old Station Way Eynsham OX29 4TL. Feel free to email the relevant information to <a href="mailto:owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk">owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Queries? -contact us, see back page.</p>	<p><b>Your name:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>email/ phone number:</b></p> <p>_____</p>	
Event	Date & times	Enter below numbers of places to be booked
A memorial walk for Eric Douglass – Centenary Wood, Charlbury	5.30pm Thursday 24th May 2012 provisional	
<i>myForest</i> demonstration & deer management day, Shotover House	9.30am Tuesday 20th March	Register online <a href="http://www.eventelephant.com/myforest">www.eventelephant.com/myforest</a>
Formative Pruning workshop merton Community Wood	9.30-12.30 Tues 7th February	
Hedgelaying at Hollyshaw, Exlade St	Further details from <a href="mailto:ken@kfhume.freereserve.co.uk">ken@kfhume.freereserve.co.uk</a> .	
Woodland Group Autumn Visit : Wytham Woods location beyond Wytham village at SP469086	1.45pm for 2.00pm Saturday 8th September	

## OXFORDSHIRE WOODLAND GROUP (OWG) EVENTS 2012

For OWG events email the Project office [owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or use booking form opposite. For further information, contact the Oxfordshire Woodland Project on: 01865 815427 Attendance is only by advance booking unless otherwise stated. 'Woodland meeting' road signs are posted around the venues for all *Group* events. To minimise costs, your booking will be confirmed only on request. Field events will usually involve off-path walking over potentially physically demanding terrain.

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**Eric Dougliss: a memorial walk, Centenary Wood, Charlbury.** Meet at the Bowls Club, Ticknell Piece Road, Charlbury OX7 3TW NGR: SP364196 5.30pm Thursday 24th May.

An informal walk in Centenary Wood in Eric's memory. Eric, retired County Forester and trustee to the Oxfordshire Woodland Group, was closely involved with Centenary Wood. Warm informal dress and stout footwear is advised. Refreshments will be available at the Bowls club. All welcome but please do contact the Project office so that we may plan refreshments.

### **myForest demonstration day, Shotover House OX44 9PX**

**9.30am-4.00pm** Tuesday 20th March

The penultimate demonstration day in this series is to be held provisionally at Shotover House, courtesy the Stanier family. Attendees will receive information on deer management and a demonstration of the versatility of the myForest system. Lunch is on us. Register on [www.eventelephant.com/myforest](http://www.eventelephant.com/myforest)

### **Small woodland management workshops for late winter 2012:**

Pruning and marking-for-thinning workshops to be held across the county. Normally from 11.00am-1pm both weekdays & weekends. We bring the tools, you bring the warm clothing, boots & sandwiches! Contact the Project office to express your interest, we'll get back to you with dates. These workshops can accommodate rookies and more experienced persons together. Workshops planned for the new year are at Ramsden, Kidlington and **Besselsleigh**. **For Merton, see detail below...**

**Formative Pruning workshop, Merton Community Wood**, Merton SP585180 from 9.30am-12.30 pm Tuesday 7th February. Tools will be supplied but you may bring your own. Bring warm clothing & a flask.

### **Hedge laying at Hollyshaw Wood near Woodcote:**

A project to lay hedges at Hollyshaw Wood will proceed in the new year led by Clive Leeke. Woodland Group members are welcome to join this countryside improvement project on a volunteer basis and will learn how to lay a hedge in traditional Oxfordshire fashion in a effort to increase local biodiversity and improve the visual amenity of a typical woodland boundary hedge in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in South Oxfordshire. Contact Ken Hume on 01256 881344 or email [ken@kfhume.freemove.co.uk](mailto:ken@kfhume.freemove.co.uk) for further details.

### **Woodland Group AGM & Autumn Field Visit: Wytham Woods**

1.45pm for 2.00pm start Saturday 8th September

The autumn field visit will feature highlights of research undertaken in the wood over the decades in non technical language and deer management. The venue is beyond Wytham village west of Oxford city, at SP469086.

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The government has published the Armed Services Covenant Interim Annual Report, 2011. It introduces the concept of a community covenant, an expression of mutual support between local military presences and their communities, providing opportunities for joint action of mutual benefit. The Community Covenant is supported by a £30 million grant scheme to support local projects which strengthen the ties or mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and their wider community [www.mod.uk/covenant](http://www.mod.uk/covenant).

Thanks to the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF), one of the first Community Covenants will be here in Oxfordshire.

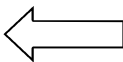
A leading proposal is to manage neglected woodlands as a joint resource to bring amenity, social, financial and mental health benefits to the local community. Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum and Sylva Foundation are in discussion with the MOD at Bicester Garrison regarding the 30 ha Graven Hill Wood. The plan is to:

- generate income (woodfuel and timber products)
- provide amenity (eg walks, log trim trail, cycleways)
- skills training (eg coppicing, charcoal, wood carving)



### **Community Covenant**

Servicemen, their families and civilians will have the opportunity to take up volunteering and training opportunities. Increased biodiversity in the wood should result from reinstatement of traditional management, whilst 'badging' of the wood by the volunteers may help to safeguard it in future. For more information, contact: [cynth@oncf.org.uk](mailto:cynth@oncf.org.uk)



events listing: see over

### **The Oxfordshire Woodland Group**

*Registered charity no.1055228*

*Woodland Group: [www.oxfordshirewoodlandgroup.co.uk](http://www.oxfordshirewoodlandgroup.co.uk)*

*see also woodland project web pages at: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodland\\_project](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodland_project)*

Membership is open to all with an interest in Oxfordshire's woodland. The group works towards a sustainable future for our small woodlands for the many benefits they provide. The annual subscription is £20, payable from August and confers full rights of membership. Cheques should be made payable to the Oxfordshire Woodland Group and sent to:

Oxfordshire Woodland Project

Signal Court

Old Station Way

Eynsham

Oxfordshire OX29 4TL

Tel 01865 815427

—email: [owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk)—

*Manager: David Rees BSc MICFor CEnv*