



In the Newsletter this Month

Welcome to the December Newsletter, which is packed full of articles this month for a lovely read over Christmas. We have articles about the dilemma of whether or not to fence a coppice from Gillian Leddy, an article from Phil Hopkinson about constructing a round wood timber-framed building. Bryophytes, the mosses and liverworts, are an overlooked group of woodland flora—not any more, thanks to another welcome contribution.

Several of you have contributed pictures of the fungi in your woods, or woods that you manage—and it is lovely to see such a wonderful variety of pictures. Finally, we have reviewed the BBC4 series “Tales from the Wild Woods”.

There is more news about Chalara dieback of ash, including posters and postcards which we can display in and around our woodlands to help reduce spread of infection.

Many organisations are now publishing their timetables for courses and events for 2013, and we have tried to point you to some of the most relevant courses for woodland owners. No matter what your interest, there is something for you.

We also have some FANTASTIC pictures of fungi contributed by SWOG members—please take a look. We are always happy to put your photos in the newsletter, so please keep sending them in, with or without an accompanying article.

Finally, there is an appeal from Margaret for somebody to take over as co-ordinator of SWOG from Tracy, who has done a fantastic job for the last 5 years, but now wants to move on. Do you think you could do it? Have a look below and see whether you would like to help out.

Finally, we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

If you have any stories from your woodland, please send them to us at sarah@swog.org.uk

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Wanted—SWOG Co-ordinator

SWOG has now been going for five years, and Tracy, the co-ordinator, feels it is time to move on. We are looking for a new co-ordinator for SWOG.

Are you a woodland owner, or part of a family/partnership which owns or manages a small wood? Do you find it interesting and exciting? Do you enjoy meeting and talking with other woodland owners? Are you computer literate? Do you have a bit of spare time at home when you could receive and send loads of emails? Do you enjoy organising things and co-ordinating activities? Would you be able to get out and about sometimes, mainly within your own region but sometimes anywhere in Britain, for meetings related to woodland management?

Then it might be you! You would work closely with Rich Hare, who manages the SWOG website and especially the Forum, and keeps the membership list up to date. And with Sarah Walters, who edits the monthly SWOG e-newsletter. And with Margaret, who is part of Woodlands.co.uk, who would pay your travelling expenses and a monthly fee, to be negotiated. Tracy would give time to filling you in on the background and getting you started.

Would you like to learn more? Contact tracy@woodlands.co.uk or margaret@woodlands.co.uk

Bryology in our Woodland

Theresa Murphy tells the tale of a visit by a bryophyte specialist to her woods.

Bryology - or Mosses and Liverworts to us.

We have been lucky enough to have had a visit to our East Sussex woodland by Tom Ottley who is the British Bryological Society (mosses and liverworts) recorder for Sussex.

Tom spent a few hours with an eye glass and a Swiss Army knife and we joined him for some time, to get him to explain about what we thought were just mosses.

Liverworts to this point had been a German sausage in our limited knowledge.

Tom explained about the various types of mosses of which there are over 1000 in the UK. He has identified over 40 in our wood.

A good selection of the commoner mosses and liverworts were found with lovely names such as Slender Mouse-tail Moss, Heath Star Moss, Cow-horn Bog-moss, Bicoloured Bryum and Springy Turf-moss (They also have long unpronounceable names).

Tom also found some more unusual species such as Dwarf Haircap (*Pogonatum nanum*). This is a species very rare in Sussex, which he called a pleasant surprise, this plant having declined for reasons unknown throughout the country and now quite scarce. Tom says this is almost certainly the only place in East Sussex where it can be found.

It does however have a stronghold at Bedgebury Forest, in Kent, on rather similar soil.

Tom suggested that no special conservation measures were needed within the coppice; as the regular rotation of habitats provided by the coppicing suits the mosses growing on the stumps. He suggested that we should be mindful of the banks and the main track may need to be protected from heavy machinery or excessive trampling at the time of coppicing.

Recommended Books

For identification of the mosses listed above the Field Guide (Mosses and Liverworts of Britain and Ireland: A Field Guide) published by the British Bryological Society and obtainable from Amazon is quite suitable.

Tom also recommended a hand lens (x 10) would be needed to identify some of mosses. Tom will be visiting to cover more ground at some stage and we are looking forward to more surprises and the opportunity to pick his brains further.



*Dwarf Haircap (*Pogonatum nanum*)*

Sweet Chestnut Coppice—To Fence or Not to Fence?

To Fence or Not To Fence? That is the question. An experiment in whether or not to protect newly coppiced sweet chestnut. A lovely article from Gillian Leddy of Head and Pitch Wood.

Earlier this year (January 2012), half an acre of 30 year old sweet chestnut stands were coppiced in Head wood and the question arose as to whether to protect the new growth from deer browsing.

I have only seen roe deer in the wood and I believe that is the only deer that pass through according to other people who know the woods.

Course Directory

Institute of Chartered Foresters

Forthcoming events are on

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

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 2013 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>

After consulting a number of foresters I found I got conflicting advice on whether or not the deer would go for sweet chestnut and I expect that it would depend on what else was available for them to eat.

So none the wiser, I decided to experiment, and looking for the simplest method of protecting the stools, and I opted for brash hedging after researching various methods.

One method I'd read about involved laying down brash around the stump but end towards the stumps and spiky, branchy bits out then gradually building up to gain height. I modified this method by pushing the but ends diagonally into the earth surrounding the stools, so the branches still stuck out, but it was quicker to gain the height. The advantages of this method were,

a) there was plenty of brash, the birch being best as it had denser branches, but any stems would do.

b) it was fairly quick and easy to erect and the thin brash stems were much easier to stick into the ground than fencing posts.

c) The height did not have to be above grazing height as the width and circumference would deter the deer from getting too close, also, they wouldn't jump over it.

d) It left the stool open to the sky, so the new growth would not be damaged by brash covering, or shading



In February, I chose about half a dozen stools to protect at random, while leaving the others open and started to build the shelters.

Spring came, and by the beginning of May, some early signs of new growth appeared on the coppiced stumps. By mid May there were 3-4 inches of growth and no sign of browsing. By early June all the stools varied in their growth regardless of their protection, some were covered in new growth between 6 to 18 inches while others had just one or two shoots coming off them.

In the summer all was growing well 3-4 feet in late July and 5-7 feet by late August and no sign of browsing.

At the end of August, I noticed some fresh deer droppings around the coppice and slight browsing of the chestnut at the edge of the path, and most was now perhaps too tall for them to reach the tops.



In mid September I noticed more fresh deer droppings in the coppice and quite a lot of browsing around the edges of most of the stools, though the central shoots were growing tall and straight. The protected stools had not been browsed at all.

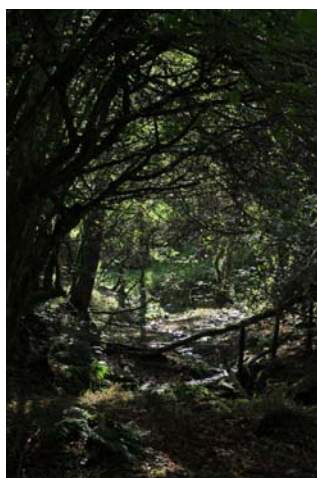
In October, I noticed more browsing and in some stools, all but a few central stems had been eaten right back. I got a bit concerned then, even though I know that most of the stems tend to die back naturally over time to leave just a handful of stronger leaders, I decided to protect several more stools in case they continued and damaged the remaining stems. Although some unprotected stools had not been browsed (obviously not on the deer's route), all the ones I'd originally protected had no browsing, including the ones which were clearly on the deer's route.

So in conclusion, maybe some times the deer don't bother to browse sweet chestnut, and just a slight deterrent seemed to make a difference, based on the fact that they tend to go for the easier option.

I've yet to see how the coppice fares when the leaves fall and through the winter, but I feel happier to think that with hope they won't get it all.

The pictures show the coppice before and after regrowth has started. What do you do to protect coppice stools against deer browsing? Which methods work for different species? We would love to hear from you with your experiences and pictures. We have a problem with muntjac and use old stock fencing taken from a boundary fence that has been removed. But we have to add chicken wire to stop the rabbits getting in as they seem to love hawthorn.

Review—Tales from the Wild Wood—Series on BBC4



A series very close to the hearts of many SWOG members was broadcast on BBC4 recently (and is still available via BBC iPlayer). Tales from the Wild Wood featured a writer Rob Penn, who traded his usual job for a year working in a 50 acre semi-natural woodland in South Wales that has not been managed for 50 years. The series followed him through the course of a year in learning how to manage the woodland, doing the work and evaluating the benefits, as well as trying to make some money from the wood, and show that traditional woodland management has a place in modern Britain.

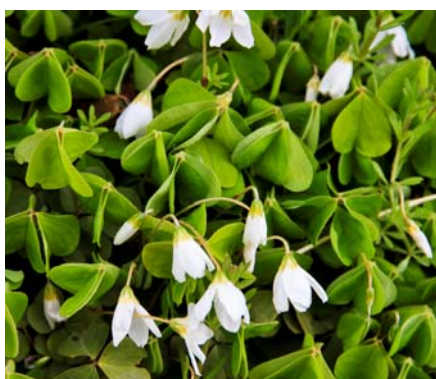
The series took us through many phases familiar to many woodland owners – assessing the wood, deciding on how to manage it and what needed to be done, planning, acquiring skills and doing the work.

The first two episodes were particularly good. They set the scene, told the history of the wildwood and managed wood in Britain, and discussed eloquently the benefits of woodland management in terms of health of the trees and health of the woodland ecosystem. Many visitors to our own woodland are unaware of the benefits of, for example, restoring neglected coppice. This series explained how coppicing actually prolongs the life of the trees, just as it explained how felling one or two timber trees helps with regeneration of the veterans of the future. It also showed clearly the benefits of letting in light, provided there is not too much bracken and bramble, with regrowth of woodland floor plants such as bluebell and wood-sorrel (below).

Of course Rob was able to exploit the presence of TV cameras to bring in experts from a wide range of fields. He was able to call on expert and experienced woodsmen and arborists, ecological consultants, horse-loggers, local farmers for the loan of pigs and tractor, charcoal-burners (from the Bulworthy Project who are SWOG members), timber workers (wood turners and furniture-makers), as well as enlist the help of a local farmer for the loan of two pigs to work over the bracken. Clearly for the majority of us, such advice and help does not come for free, but he was also show working with a group of woodland volunteers, a resource that may be more widely available to those who are not on TV. It was lovely to see and hear these experts at work, and explaining their range of skills, the kind of wood and timber that they require and the kind of products that they can make. Something that all of us could learn from, and messages all of us could take away.

Rob didn't shy away from tricky issues in the filming either. The boar was for the abattoir after fattening up in the woods, having done a good job of clearing bracken and bramble. He dealt with the issue of animal damage and in particular with dispatching squirrels – something that is often not discussed, can be very important for individual woodland owners, and was shown in a positive light, producing squirrel meat to eat at the final barbecue. It produced a much more rounded picture of woods and their potential role than a sanitised account of a woodland idyll. However the idyll was prominent throughout too. Some of the best pieces of filming featured Rob connecting to the woodland, the wild place, its spirit and the closeness of nature and he dwelt on the role it played in healing his own grief, and that of others.

One of the main goals was to make the woodland pay and in pursuing this he was endless-



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

<http://smallwoods.org.uk/courses-events/courses-calendar/>

Phil Hopkinson of Malvern Coppicing offers practical coppicing courses

<http://www.malvernecoppicing.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 January 2013 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2012/11/01/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>

ly enthusiastic, but perhaps not always realistic. Even a 50 acre woodland can be hard to make economically viable, which is why so many are in such a poor state. He enthusiastically explored the sale of local charcoal, of hazel products (primarily beanpoles), and of timber for furniture-making and wood-turning (both commercial and artistic). However, if you take into account the fact that he was working there full-time, at least for part of the year, the huge number of hours involved, and the costs of things that he appeared to get for free (horse-logging, expert help from arborists, help with tractors when he got stuck, the free loan of a charcoal kiln from wonderful SWOG members at The Bulworthy Project, the ready availability of markets which ordinary wood-folk might struggle to find), he seemed to come away from the year with a net income from wood and timber products at best in the hundreds of pounds, rather than thousands which would be required.

This being the case, it was fortunate that he explored the much more commercially-viable proposition of letting the wood out for leisure activities. He looked at mountain-biking, allowing a local group to make and ride their own trails, and for which they were prepared to pay handsomely. But of course there are lots of other leisure uses to which woods can be put, with relatively low impact on the woodland itself – forest schools, renting out to wildlife groups, art groups, for wedding photographs, running courses in the wood, using the wood as a film set...the uses are potentially endless, and seemed likely to bring him many times more income than the wood, timber and charcoal themselves. To



me, this seemed the main way that a 21st Century wood could become a viable living, provided you have a decent size to work with. We have certainly found that by opening up the woodland, engaging the local community, permitting some leisure activities, opening up to paying groups, and running photography courses, we not only produce income, but also gain a whole community of supporters who help to watch over and care for the wood. And that is without the value that can be attached to the personal physical and mental benefits of spending time in your own woodland.

There were some things I wish he had dealt with more. First of all, nothing was said about the need for felling licences, tree preservation orders or insurance for third party, volunteers and workers on site, and this might leave an enthusiastic viewer with the impression that you can buy a wood then do what you like. Second, the Forestry Commission was only featured once, in the context of commercial forestry. This is a shame. It is how the public remember them from the 1970's, but not their main role now. The fact that free and often very expert advice can be had from the FC was not mentioned at all, nor were the grants available for woodland management, nor indeed that the FC support sustainable woodland management plans on the same lines as his own, leaving the impression that the FC does not support small woodlands – nothing could be further from the truth. Third, he did not mention the issue of on-site storage of tools and equipment, probably because he lived near his own wood and this was not an issue—but it is an issue for many small woodland owners, thanks to extreme inconsistency in the way planning regulations are applied.

I was also a bit worried by some of the Health and Safety on show in the series. Rob did not appear to get any formal chainsaw training and this showed in some quite alarming tree-felling technique. There were times when he was using a billhook dangerously (hand holding the pole below where he was cutting). His log piles were very high, not on bearers, and not adequately staked, which resulted in him pulling logs out and nearly having it collapse on him (which could have been fatal). It was just worrying that he seemed to wade in rather gung-ho at times. Rob did wear safety equipment and he stressed the

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. <https://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/



dangers throughout, including an alarming account from one of his co-workers about how a safety helmet had saved his own life, but didn't always show safe practice. Wading in gung-ho on your own is one thing, but showing this approach on TV is another.

But these are relatively minor criticisms. Overall, this was a really lovely series. Rob was an enthusiastic and informed presenter, drawing in expertise from a wide range of fields. His love for the woods really came across, and it was very clear just how much difference he had managed to make in the final episode of the series. If you haven't watched it, it really is worth it. He has definitely succeeded in showing the public just how much more there is to woodlands, and woodland management than meets the eye. In particular, he has shown just how therapeutic woodlands are as a retreat from daily stress. That, on its own, is worth a lot.

Request for help from Living Woods Magazine

Can you share your experience in trying to manage your woodland, and the obstacles you may have faced, with Nick Gibbs at Living Woods?

In this month's "Living Woods" we read about Rob Penn's recent TV series "Tales from the Wild Woods". Along with much other wisdom, he presents the sad but overriding conclusion that economic forces at the present time are not enough to tempt landowners to manage their woods satisfactorily. Living Woods says:

"The challenge is overcoming the investment required to restore neglected woodlands. We would like to be able to help bring landowners, community groups and individuals together for the long-term benefit of the woods. Please email us any advice or experience that might facilitate this to lw@freshwoodpublishing.com"

As an individual, or a family, owning and caring for a small woodland, are there ways in which this could be made easier for you? Could it be more rewarding? Have you been inhibited in taking action because of the red tape surrounding what you do, for example by a Tree Preservation Order? Have you been unable to carry out the amount of clearing or coppicing you would like to have done because of the lack of storage facilities for your kit, or shelter for you and your friends in bad weather? Tell Nick Gibbs at Living Woods- he wants to know!

Round timber-framed building—Phil Hopkinson



The framing bed with joints being marked up.

In the summer I spent a week in Sussex with Ben Law learning the techniques for jointing and helping to construct a round wood timber framed building.

We have recently completed this round wood timber framed building at Pontrilas in Herefordshire, which will be used for timber processing and storage.

We supplied a set of plans and drawings which were submitted as part of the planning permission application. We now have the ability to supply 3d images of potential projects, in addition to technical drawings suitable for submission with a planning application. We can also supply an engineering report detailing calculations of loadings etc.

We felled a small area of Larch in a local woods, which we then peeled ready for use in the A frames. We then constructed a framing bed on

which to construct the A-frames. Each component was strapped and attached to the framing bed with timber dogs (shown in the picture above).



A frames with Jowl posts and cross bracing added.

Once completed the A-frames and framing bed were taken to the construction site and reassembled. Once erected the frames were drilled and pinned with seasoned Oak pegs.

The main structure is peeled Larch. The joints are pegged with Oak It is clad with Larch and Western red Cedar and incorporates a Corsican Pine floor. All sourced from local woodlands we manage. This is a truly sustainable



Work started cladding the first wall.



The front timbers are peeled Ash.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – Forest Schools/Delivering the Curriculum Outdoors, a full range of courses for those working with children in their woods, plus other courses for 2012

<http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/page/training-courses>

The Sustainability Centre offers lots of courses around the theme of sustainable living. Upcoming courses include Green Woodworking, Permaculture and Bushcraft.

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/bishops-wood-centre.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>

News for small woodland owners

Update on Chalara Fraxinea—Ash Dieback

The Written Parliamentary Statement outlining the plan to tackle ash dieback was issued on 9th

“The scientific advice from that group is that where the disease is present in the natural environment, this is likely to be due to spores blown in on the wind from continental Europe. Their advice is that it will not be possible to eradicate Chalara.” This indicates that we have moved from a situation of eradication or a situation of containment to a situation where we are seeking to slow the transmission. The full action plan was also given in this statement:-

“1. Newly-planted diseased trees and diseased trees in nurseries will be traced and destroyed, as once young trees are infected they succumb quickly.

2. Mature trees will not currently be removed, as they are valuable to wildlife, take longer to die and can help us learn more about genetic strains that might be resistant to the disease. Infection does not occur directly from tree to tree.

3. Better understanding of the disease will be built through research and surveys, which will look not only for diseased trees but for those that show signs of resistance to Chalara, to help identify genetic strains resistant to the disease.

4. The search for the disease will include trees in towns and cities as well as the countryside, building partnerships with a range of organisations beyond Government.

5. Foresters, land managers, environmental groups and the public will be informed about how to identify diseased trees and those likely to be resistant to the disease, and know what to do if they find a diseased tree.

For now, the main control measure is the ban on imports and movements. Infection in mature trees is not a threat at this time of year as they are not producing spores. The main risk to manage between now and the spring is the movement of infected ash leaf litter for which we have already provided advice to the public, local authorities and landowners."

The full statement is available to view on <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2012/11/09/wms-ash/>

Information from the Forestry Commission

Forestry Commission – key scientific facts about Chalara

These have been updated and are available from the FC web site. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8ZSS7U>

New guidance from the Forestry Commission on the disposal of ash leaves

The FC have issued guidance on how to deal with ash leaf litter, the major source of infection with Chalara, depending on whether your site is infected or not. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-92gjvb>

Map of latest distribution of Chalara dieback—as of 27th November.

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Map2b_12-11-22_UK_outbreak_map.pdf/\\$FILE/Map2b_12-11-22_UK_outbreak_map.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Map2b_12-11-22_UK_outbreak_map.pdf/$FILE/Map2b_12-11-22_UK_outbreak_map.pdf)

Remember the wonderful pictorial guide to recognising the symptoms in ash trees

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCPH-ADD.pdf/\\$FILE/FCPH-ADD.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCPH-ADD.pdf/$FILE/FCPH-ADD.pdf)

Chalara Posters available for all woodland sites.

Useful posters that can be downloaded and printed available for England and Scotland from the Forestry Commission web site

Chalara ash dieback

The disease ash dieback is affecting woodland in this area. **The disease is not harmful to people or animals, but it can kill ash trees.**

To help stop the disease spreading:

- Scrape any mud and leaves from footwear, pushchairs, bikes, cars, dogs and horses before leaving woodlands
- Before visiting other places, clean mud and leaves from footwear, pushchairs, bikes, cars, dogs and horses
- Do not remove leaves, plants or wood from this area.

For further information:
visit forestry.gov.uk/chalara
use the QR code below or phone:
08459 335577

Contact:
Land manager name
0800 000000

Chalara ash dieback

The disease ash dieback is affecting woodland in Britain. **The disease is not harmful to people or animals, but it can kill ash trees.**

How to spot symptoms of ash dieback

The main symptoms are:

- dead branches
- blackening of leaves which often hang on the tree
- discoloured stems often in a diamond shape where a leaf was attached.

If you see these symptoms, please:

- double check them at the website: www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara or using the QR code below
- report them to the helpline:
08459 335577

To help stop the disease spreading:

- Before visiting other places, clean mud and leaves from footwear, pushchairs, bikes, cars, dogs and horses
- Do not remove leaves, plants or wood from this area.

Contact:
Land manager name
0800 000000

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.

FloraLocale run a wide range of courses of interest to woodland owners www.floralocale.org

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-8zklv5>. One poster is for woodland that is affected by Chalara (on the left) and one for woodland that is not currently affected. DEFRA also have some postcards outlining the action you need to take if you are visiting woodlands, walking, cycling, using a child buggy or have ash trees in your garden. These are available on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/DefraGovUK>. The Forestry Commission are asking all woodland managers, particularly those whose woodlands have public access, to print and display these signs in their woodland.

FC Train Foresters and Gardeners to train others in ash dieback and other tree diseases

The Forestry Commission have announced a new training programme to roll out expertise in tree diseases. The idea is to train gardeners, nurserymen, garden centre staff and foresters to recognise the signs of disease in trees to help with rapid recognition of new threats. The trained staff will cascade out the training to other staff, thus improving the capability of all those working in forestry and gardening/horticulture to recognise tree disease. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/8A32156537AEBC9B80257AC300539A0E>

Silvicultural strategies for ash affected by dieback

We have been notified of a really useful paper outlining realistic silvicultural strategies for ash affected by dieback, given that the disease appears to be widespread in the UK, and has actually probably been here for a few years http://bfw.ac.at/400/pdf/fsaktuell_55_6.pdf



Advice from The Sylva Foundation re Chalara

The Sylva Foundation have their own page on Chalara dieback of ash. They offer some sound practical advice for all woodland owners

1. “Inspect ash trees in your woodland without delay. Before the winter winds remove all leaves, those infected by Chalara can be quite obvious in that they persist after those that drop as usual in the Autumn (see image). On young trees, coppice regrowth or other regeneration the lesions can be quite easy to spot. On older wood they are less clear. Dieback in the canopy may be possible to spot during the dormant season but it is easy to miss.

If you believe that you have *Chalara fraxinea* in your woodland contact the [Forestry Commission](#) without delay. The Forestry

Commission are treating *C. fraxinea* as a ‘quarantine’ plant pathogen, which means that they may use emergency powers to contain or eradicate it when it is found. This is being done in the form of Statutory Plant Health Notices which they serve on affected owners requiring them to remove and destroy affected plants by burning or deep burial on site. This situation may change in time.

Where possible implement rigorous biosecurity measures. Follow the advice of the [Forestry Commission’s Biosecurity Measures](#).

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. They also run online ecology courses.

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

1. *In terms of minimising the impact of the pathogen on ash trees within an infected woodland, current thinking is that the removal and burning of ash leaf litter may reduce the prevalence of the pathogen next year. This may be a practical action in high value sites, such as important biodiversity areas, parklands, garden trees or perhaps notable ancient trees. In larger ash stands clearly this may not be practicable.*

2. *Felling of diseased trees. Advice is not yet clear on this issue. Note that finding resistant trees in the 'wild' will be very important in creating the foundation for a new population of trees resistant to the pathogen. Felling all ash trees in infected woodlands therefore, cannot be recommended.*

Before transporting ash wood, check the [Forestry Commission webpage](http://www.sylva.org.uk/blog/chalara-fraxinea-advice-for-woodland-owners/) for the latest advice.”
<http://www.sylva.org.uk/blog/chalara-fraxinea-advice-for-woodland-owners/>

The view from the RFS following the Chalara summit

The RFS have issued a statement of their position following the Chalara summit in November. <http://www.rfs.org.uk/files/Chalara-fraxinea-Summit-the-RFS-view.pdf>

CONFOR release their plant diseases action plan

In response to the Chalara outbreak, but taking a more generic and long term view of the prevention of tree diseases in the UK, CONFOR have released their action plan. <http://www.confor.org.uk/NewsAndEvents/News.aspx?pid=23&id=1353>

The Woodland Trust Launch new Tree Diseases web site

The Woodland Trust have launched a new web site dedicated to tree diseases and with an aim of educating everybody to help identify new threats. This deals with threats other than Chalara, and identifies the action we can take for each.

See <http://treedisease.co.uk/> for more information.

Remember AshTag

AshTag is a rapid way of reporting trees suspected to be affected by Ash Dieback. It is available online, or via an iOS or Android app <http://ashtag.org/>



FC Wales ask for more woodland creation applications

FC Wales are asking landowners to reconsider application for a Glastir woodland creation grant after land designations changed in some areas, which means more areas are suitable for planting. See <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPRByCountryLang/BBFEEADC51079BBC80257ABD00389F25>

Forest School Study says Risky Play Good for Children

Children flourish when they are allowed to play in risky situations unhindered by excessive supervision. They are adept at policing their own behaviour, and were more likely to learn if activities were self-directed and not excessively supervised. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/F14F1DCEA465A55E80257AA7003FEC6E>

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.aspx>

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/>

Permaculture Courses from Patrick Whitefield, including how to read the landscape

http://www.patrickwhitefield.co.uk/reading_the_landscape_info.htm

DEFRA launches new enquiry on adequacy of tree disease prevention

A new enquiry has been launched by DEFRA and they are asking for submissions. The enquiry will look at preparedness of UK to meet health threats to trees and plants.

"The aim of this inquiry is to explore whether Defra policies such as the Action Plan on Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity are fit for purpose. It will also ask whether there are sufficient resources and adequate management plans to effectively prevent disease outbreaks and, where necessary, to mitigate impacts."

The web site holds a set of key questions to which they would like us to respond by 14th January 2013. Please do have your say.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/news/tor-tree-health--plant-biosecurity/>

Staffordshire Police crackdown on rural crime

A new initiative in Staffordshire was launched at the end of November to crack down on rural crime, including thefts, wildlife crime and poaching. Results were shared on social media sites, and targeted known hotspots.

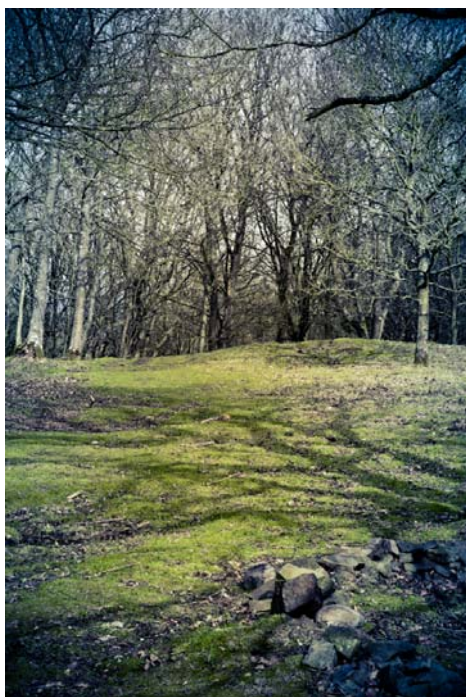
[http://](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk/news/news_releases/121122_21_wildlife_rural_crime/?view=Standard&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)

www.staffordshire.police.uk/news/news_releases/121122_21_wildlife_rural_crime/?view=Standard&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter



Bushnell

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Spotlight on SSSI's – First report available from Natural England

This is an annual update on the state of England's SSSI's, looking at their state, whether they are favourable or recovering, what factors affect ability to recover, and changes in category to favourable status. There are also some case studies from individual sites.

Download and read from their web site.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3004475?category=20003>

Natural England update National Character Area profiles

Several areas have had characteristics updated, including the Forest of Dean. See

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/nca-update-feature.aspx>

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.

<http://www.woodlandskills.com/#/courses/4530829941>

Abbots Living Wood offers a range of green woodworking courses

http://www.living-wood.co.uk/green_wood_work_courses.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](http://www.elst.co.uk)

Courses and Events

One-day meeting to discuss British Woodlands Survey at Oxford University—11th December—Places still available

British Woodlands Conference – University of Oxford – 11th December 2012. This conference will present the results of the recent survey of woodland owners and managers undertaken by the Sylva Foundation. It will also look at contemporary issues around sustainable woodland management in private woodlands. Only £25 per participant, with lunch included. Sarah, the editor of this newsletter, will be presenting her experience of managing Alvecote Wood. Includes speakers from the Forestry Commission, Country Landowners and Business Association, Woodland Trust, Natural England, noted academics, plus Rob Penn, who was the presenter of the BBC4 series reviewed in this newsletter.

See http://www.oxforduniversitystores.co.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?modid=1&prodid=5487&deptid=122&compid=1&prodvarid=0&catid=1703 for more details.

From Smallwoods – the Greenwood Centre

Courses include coppicing, first aid, introduction to forest schools and tree diseases. The course programme is now available running into April 2013. Many of their courses are OCN accredited at Level 2 or Level 3. Of particular note is the Woodland Skills Taster Day at the Greenwood Centre, Coalbrookdale on 14th January. For information about this event see <http://smallwoods.org.uk/event/wood-skills-taster-day-free/> and for a general course calendar please see <http://smallwoods.org.uk/courses-events/courses-calendar/>

From Woodland Skills Centre

Coppicing course – 17th March. Other courses include bushcraft and woodland living. Details on <http://www.woodlandskills.com/#!/learn-coppicing/4530848900>

Practical workshops in Cumbria

Some workshops are planned for 2013 to demonstrate how even small woodlands can be managed to their potential. These workshops will demonstrate equipment that can be used in small and difficult to access areas, and show how even shelter belts can be sustainably managed. Workshops are available on 17th January and 28th February. Details on Forestry Commission web site <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/1D99FB8EBAE05D3E80257A76002B1ED9>

Tree Diseases—A Growing Concern for Woodland Owners/Managers

A workshop, organised by Heartwoods, and supported by the Forestry Commission, Smallwoods, FERA, DEFRA and the Rural Development Programme for the West Midlands, is to be held on Friday 7th December at Cholmondeley Estate and Gardens. This will cover important emerging threats including *Phytophthora ramorum*, red band needle blight, oak declines, bleeding cankers and *Chalara* dieback of ash. There will be both indoor presentations and outdoor walks to see trees and plants threatened by diseases. It costs £10 including lunch and refreshments.



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 Bulworth 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

Mark Fisher Art

Woodland-based art days for all abilities

www.markfisherart.co.uk

It is very important for all woodland owners to be up to speed on tree diseases and this would be an excellent way of learning about them from the real experts. It is aimed at woodland owners and managers within the Northern Marches region, although open to anybody, particularly those with woodlands in the Midlands. *Editor's Note: We attended one of these workshops in June 2012 and it was absolutely excellent. Thoroughly recommended for anybody who has a woodland and wants to update themselves about tree diseases, how to identify them, what to do if you spot them, and how to prevent!*

Contact the Heartwoods office on 01952 435860 or email info@heartwoods.co.uk for more information



Greenwood Days courses in the Midlands

Greenwood Days have released their 2013 timetable of courses. There are a wide range of courses, from bushcraft to making rustic furniture, to wood turning, steam bending, dulcimer-making and others. Sarah, the newsletter editor, has been on some of these courses and they are excellent—Pete is a very good tutor, the venue is lovely, everybody is very friendly, and it is definitely worth a visit.

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

Dry Stone Walling at FSC Margam

If you would like to learn how to do dry-stone walling, then the FSC Centre in Margam in South Wales are running a two-day course in March 2013, available with or without resident accommodation. Details <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/courses/2013/mp/introduction-to-dry-stone-walling-40667.aspx>

Mosses and Liverworts at FSC Preston Montford

If you were inspired to learn more about mosses and liverworts following the article in this newsletter, FSC Preston Montford have a course available in March 2013. More details on <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/courses/2013/pm/identifying-mosses-and-liverworts-40593.aspx>

Master's in Managing Sustainability and Uncertainty

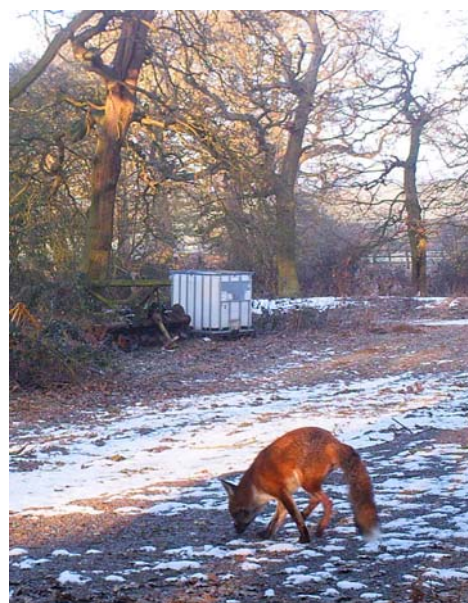
If you are interested in the politics, science and differing world views that underpin approaches to sustainability, then the Schumacher Institute are offering a Master's degree. See http://www.schumacherinstitute.org.uk/sustainability_masters

Mammal Society Programme

The Mammal Society Programme of courses and events for 2013 is now available. There are a huge range of courses to suit all range of abilities and interests from beginner to expert. Courses include Water Voles, Wild Boar, Urban Mammals, Pine Martens, using Camera Traps, Dormice, Badgers, Photography and Riparian Mammals. See <http://www.mammal.org.uk/training>

Using Environmental Crafts with Young People

Part of the professional development programme, this course is open to everybody, not just teachers. Learn how to engage young people in environmental crafts, experience a wide variety of crafts and work with different materials. From FSC Epping in March 2013 <http://www.field-studies-council.org/individuals-and-families/courses/2013/ef/using-environmental-crafts-with-young-people-40680.aspx>



Your Photos of Autumn Fungi

Thank you to Bryan Bullen who sent in these photos from woodland sites that he visits and manages.



Clockwise from top left:
Fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), ring of fly agaric,
Amethyst deceiver (*Laccaria amethystina*),
King Alfred's Cakes (*Daldinia concentrica*),
Pluteus aurantiorugosis.



And a couple of lovely pictures from Daniel from Woodlands.co.uk



Left:
Fly Agaric
Right:
Stinkhorn



And finally a couple from a walk through the birch wood on the opposite bank of the canal to our own woodlands.



We are always looking for photos and contributions to the newsletter and we are delighted to receive your articles and pictures. It would be lovely to have some more photos of you enjoying or working in your own woodlands. It would also be lovely to read about what you are doing there. It would also be lovely if you could review any books or equipment that you use, or share any expertise or experience. If you are running any courses or events in your wood, please let us know and we can share them in the newsletter. Please send all contributions to sarah@swog.org.uk

On the blogs at woodlands.co.uk and on the web

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.

Chain saw use and training ~ by Chris Colley

I don't need a chainsaw course. A bloke showed me how to do it. How often do we hear or say this? But it isn't true—if you are going to use a chainsaw you need to get training. Chris tells of his experience on a course with Phil Dunford in Clocaenog.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/chainsaw-use-and-training/>

Woodland carbon recycling ~ by Lewis

Lewis looks at the processes of decay in the woods—overlooked but vitally important in the carbon cycle of the woodlands.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/woodland-carbon-recycling/>

Biting bees ~ by Chris

How do bees keep their hives clean and free from varroa mite and other parasites? The answer is, they bite them, grooming other bees, and using an anaesthetic to subdue them, giving them time to remove them. An abso-



lutely fascinating account.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/biting-bees/>

Penny Bun Mushroom foraging ~ by Ste Carey

What is a penny bun? How do you identify it, find it, prepare it and cook it? Ste Carey has the answers in this blog.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-activities/penny-bun-mushroom-foraging/>

Back to bees, again ~ by Chris

The bees have had a hard time this year and honey yields are down. Why is this? Chris explores the reasons for this and the implications for next year.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/back-to-bees-again/>

The million ponds project. ~ by Lewis

What is the million ponds project? Why do we need to create new ponds and what is the best way to go about it? Lewis explores the project in this blog.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/the-million-ponds-project/>

VIDEO: Axe Felling

Not from woodlands.co.uk, but a very interesting video nonetheless from CAT—do you want to fell a tree with an axe? This video from CAT explains how it is done.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiB73Ewr76k&feature=youtu.be>

Woodlands.co.uk on Facebook

Woodlands.co.uk has a Facebook page. “Like” the page and get all the latest direct to your News Feed or mobile device. See <https://www.facebook.com/woodlandscouk>

Woodlands.co.uk Mobile App

There is also a downloadable app for your iPhone or Android device available from iTunes and Google Play <http://tom.woodlands.co.uk/about-us/apps/>



Newsletter - December 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

Contact us:-

Web site:

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Newsletter editor

sarah@swog.org.uk

All other enquiries

tracy@woodlands.co.uk

www.swog.org.uk

On the SWOG Forum

Ash dieback has been a topic for discussion, as expected, given the current situation. **Stephen1** started a thread looking at grounds for hope with this disease, including the emergence of resistant individual trees. There are pointers to useful sources in this thread, so please take time to read the forum on this one.

Alex asked a question about flooding, and whether you can claim stewardship funds for woodland. The situation is complicated as it differs between England and Wales. Can you help?

Ncrawshaw posted about his research into the correct method of using moisture meters. The end-grain is the least accurate, but still close to other values.

Jackdaw asked if it is common to have hazel growing right beside oak. The answer is yes, and it is down to squirrels.

Brown is asking for help identifying a deer seen in an adjacent wood, as it will help with management decisions. Roe, Fallow, Sika—can you help?

Tales from the Wild Wood also drew some discussion on the forum—have a look and see what members thought of this series.

Alex asked for suggestions as to what to plant on a small area in his farm—have a look and see what you can suggest.

Ratcatcher asked for a suggestion for an unusual memorial tree to plant in his woods, but the thread swiftly turned to natural burials and scattering of ashes in woodland. Do you have any experience of this? Please contribute.

Oldclaypaws posted the most beautiful pictures of his dog on the forum—the lovely girl is expecting, enforcing a break from woodland work. If you like lovely doggy pictures, do take a look.

Ratcatcher asked about tree houses in

woodlands—with some links to more unusual tree house structures. If you would like to see some tree houses showing great imagination, have a look at the forum.

Docsquid asked members for their opinion on whether mass tree planting schemes are beneficial or harmful—discussion seems to be coming down on the side of letting nature do the job. Do you have a view?

Wigan Pixie stirred up some strong discussion with her blog about low impact living and her search for a dream woodland. Have a look, see if you can contribute to the discussion.

Woodmonkey has some problems with sweet chestnut trees dying—do you have any experience of this that you could share?

Oldclaypaws shared some photos of some exotic plants he plans to plant on the edge of his wood. Have you ever tried growing tea in UK woodlands?

Fieldarcher is looking for woodland near Eastborne for his group to practice archery. Can you help?

Covertops is looking for a woodland in Staffordshire for hire for airsoft—a lower impact activity similar to paintballing. Can you help?

Gugg is asking for help as to how to respond to a notice requesting removal of a caravan from his woodland. Can you help?

New members **woodmonkey** and **SackEMall** joined the forum this month.

JamesM shared a video of his budget log-trailer/ATV on the forum too. If you have any other equipment reviews or pictures or videos to share, it would be great to hear from you.

Next Newsletter: January 2013

Contributions for the January Newsletter need to be with me by Christmas Day 25th December 2012. Thank you all for reading, and please have a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.