



## In the Newsletter this Month

I am very sad to say that this will be my last newsletter in charge, at least for a while. This is largely a result of the steady upturn in the business we run from home, which now means I have to spend more time on that, and less on the newsletter. I have therefore decided to take a break from editing the newsletter for the time being, and hand over the reins to Judith. I have thoroughly enjoyed editing the newsletter for the last three years, and hope you have enjoyed reading it too. I know Judith will do a fantastic job!

This month, I review my experience with the Stealth Gear portable chair hide—useful for wildlife watching, whether or not you take photographs, but if you do, then there are some tips for getting the best out of it.

Rich has reviewed a wonderful book about ancient woodland, and Andy Brown has written a wonderful article about his farm, and how he has made his woodland productive to support him and his family.

There is also a summary of results from a student project on coppice deadwood that some members helped with last year. It seems that we could all do more to promote deadwood habitat in our woodlands.

There is lots of news this month, and lots of upcoming courses too. If you are attending a course or event, please do consider writing about it for the newsletter.

*If you have any enquiries about SWOG, or stories for the June newsletter, please contact [Judith@swog.org.uk](mailto:Judith@swog.org.uk) and if you have anything for the web site, please contact [rich@swog.org.uk](mailto:rich@swog.org.uk)*

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## Photography with a portable chair hide



*Sarah reviews the Stealth Gear One-Man Wildlife Photography Chair Hide, and provides some tips and hints on using one based on her experience.*

If, like me, you are keen on wildlife photography, or if you like just sitting and watching the birds and wildlife, then a small, portable hide can be really useful. The question is which one to get, and are they any good?

I love photography, and in particular taking pictures of the birds and other wildlife in our woods. Even with good long lenses, it is difficult to get close enough to the subjects without having to crop the images, thus losing definition and detail, even with the best of cameras and lenses. With a good, fast 300mm lens from Canon or Nikon costing upwards of £5k, and longer lenses costing considerably more, the realistic solution for most of us is getting closer to the subject rather than buying a longer lens.

There are a wide variety of hides available. You could build a semi-permanent hide using camo tarps and a wooden frame, or even from straw bales, and we considered this. The problem is, at least in our woods, that the feeders are close to the building (so we don't have to lug feed over the whole 20 acres to top them up) and any semi-permanent structure is an invitation to people to come and do harm. It also isn't portable – but a lot of the birds don't come to the feeders and we have to go to the birds, rather than having the birds

come to us. Many birds are territorial, so you have to be able to move around the different territories in the woods, particularly if one breeding pair has decided to nest in a location that is hard to photograph.

There are a range of portable pop-up hides available, similar to lightweight pop-up tents. Although they are portable, unless your knees are made of steel, you will also need a chair to sit on to make use of them.

Added to the not-inconsiderable weight of photography gear (camera, lenses, tripod), this can make quite a burden.

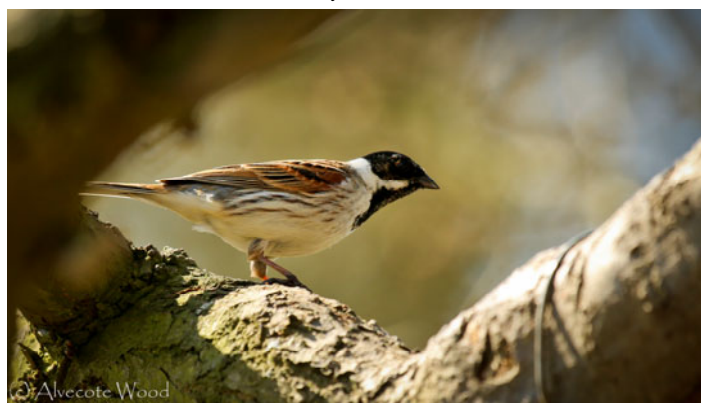


So I ended up looking at the pop-up hides based around a chair or chairs. Stealth Gear supply one-man and two-man hides. The advantage of the latter is that you can either have somebody in there with you, or you have some extra space for your clobber. But it is bigger and heavier and more complicated too, and since I am usually the only person who is daft enough to sit out in all weathers trying to get that one wonderful shot, I opted for the one-man hide, costing around £85 online.

The hide is based on a standard folding canvas chair, with canvas arms and the usual drink holder in one of the arms. To this has been attached a clever folding canopy, which can be unfolded a bit like a slinky toy to give a chair with a camouflage covering. In the covering are various windows of varying sizes. Each window is covered with camo netting, so you can observe without being seen. The window can also be unzipped to allow you to poke out a lens, binoculars (or even an air rifle if you are after rabbits or squirrels). The front also unzips to give a much larger field of view, but with the disadvantage that you are much more visible. The canopy can be pinned down with tent pegs to minimise flapping, reduce drafts (very important in winter!) and stop it blowing away. The lower front opens to allow you to crawl in, but I have found it easier to flip the front up, sit down, then pull the front back down again and secure the pegs from the inside.

It isn't completely waterproof – there are little gaps here and there where the zips have been stitched in – but it is a million times better than standing out in the open, or trying to stand under a camo net or tarp that you have erected yourself. It is pretty windproof unless you open the windows, although there is a bit of a draft underneath, which can make it pretty cold around the feet and your bottom after a while.

The chair is quite small – you wouldn't want to be a very well-built person – but large enough. I am only 5ft 2ins, but it seems to have enough room for my husband who is larger. However you can't store stuff underneath it, so you need the room at the front of the hide to put your camera bag down. The problem with that is when you use a conventional tripod, there isn't a lot of room for the tripod, your feet, your camera bag and a nice flask and box of sandwiches. I have switched to using a smaller tripod that has a large central column and takes



## 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://courses.cat.org.uk/>

### 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>



less floor area (made by 3-Legged Thing), and this is great – I have room for my feet, a camera bag and my lunch.

So are the birds fooled by it? Amazingly, yes, provided you have sited it such that the camouflage works. Set it against the light, and it will be a looming object that the birds don't like. Set it into an existing bush, or so that the light shines onto it from the perspective of the bird, and it blends in surprisingly well. Indeed, I have had a robin sitting on top, singing away (quite deafening), and lots of blue tits and great tits perching on top of the hide too. It is worth putting the hide up a little while before you go into it, so the birds can get used to it.

You DO have to keep quite still. This means largely keeping your hands on the camera for the birds can see your hands move rapidly up to the camera if something interesting comes along. You have to move slowly, and not swing the camera too quickly either. Opening the side windows also lets light in, and lets the birds see you, so it isn't

a bad idea to wear camo gear inside the hide. Keeping still inevitably means you get cold, and in the winter I took to wearing ski gear to keep warm (as well as a flask of coffee). I also found that a gimbal or ball-and-socket head on the tripod was much easier to control than a standard pan and tilt head as you made less in the way of movements of your hands.

And when you want to move, it folds up and clips together such that it fits into a bag that you can carry like a rucksack.

And it works. It is a relatively cheap way of getting closer to your subject, massively cheaper than buying a long prime lens, and massively more convenient than making your own. You are somewhat limited in the viewpoint you take (all your pictures are from sitting height). You definitely get much closer than you can just sitting there with your telephoto lens on the camera. Indeed, I have been *too* close on occasion, a few birds coming within the minimum focal distance of my lens (1.8 metres). It may or may not be robust – I have yet to use it for a whole year, so can't comment on that – but I think it has already proved its value.

Some tips for taking good photographs from the hide

1. Site the hide about an hour before you get in it to let the birds get used to it.
2. Site the hide where it blends in, and doesn't give a looming presence from the perspective of the birds.
3. Try and site the hide where there is a good background (not too confused), and where the lighting is good (I find side or sometimes back lighting is good for getting definition on the bird's feathers, rather than flat straight-on sunlight)
4. Go for places where there are birds (do your homework). Either where you know birds are hanging out or alternatively put up feeders. If you do the latter, you will find it almost embarrassingly easy to take pictures of birds on feeders. Try and observe where the birds are approaching from and what intermediate perches they are using. Then you can get pictures of them on the way to or from the feeder, in a more natural setting.
5. Use a good tripod with a ball or gimbal head. A gimbal head allows you to move the camera naturally as if you were holding it by hand, but provides all the support you need, at least up to 400mm.
6. Unless your camera has very good autofocus, go for manual focus and pre-focus on the favoured perches.
7. Use exposure compensation – your birds will often be backlit, or appear against a bright sky, and you will need to over-expose by usually 1 to 1 1/3 stops to avoid the birds appearing as dark little bird-shaped silhouettes. Learn





how to use this feature on your camera without looking at the controls. You won't always be able to check the exposure on the screen, so use a best guess or bracket the exposures.

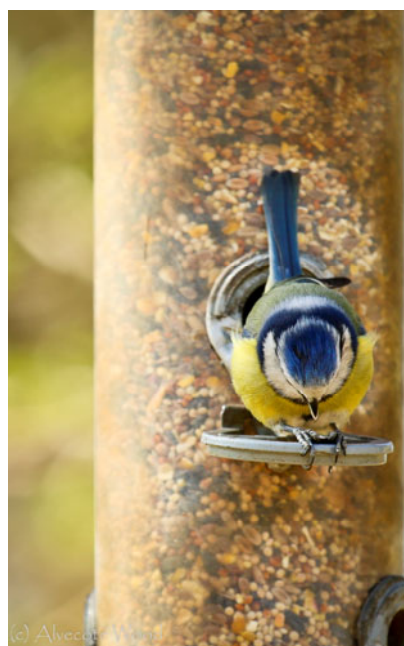
8. Try and get the birds doing something interesting: fighting, flying in or out, in a natural pose (such as the head-down pose of the nuthatch), about to take off, with a seed in their beak, or even with a



dynamic pose or interesting expression.

Enjoy the common birds as well as the rare ones and take lots of photos of them – that way you will get use to photography in the hide, and won't mess up when the rare bird makes a fleeting appearance. I must have taken thousands of photos of blue tits, but I love these little birds, and could watch them all day. It means when a reed bunting, or yellowhammer, or willow tit flies in I'm on the ball and used to taking photos, and can get a decent result, rather than an over-excited, under-exposed blur. The photos in this article were all taken in a single afternoon. Before buying the hide, it would take weeks to get just one shot as good as some of these. My verdict – if you like your photography it is worth the money.

Link on Amazon [http://www.amazon.co.uk/Stealth-Gear-Chair-Hide-Foldable/dp/B0077B4L0K/ref=sr\\_1\\_15?ie=UTF8&qid=1366650176&sr=8-15&keywords=stealth+gear](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Stealth-Gear-Chair-Hide-Foldable/dp/B0077B4L0K/ref=sr_1_15?ie=UTF8&qid=1366650176&sr=8-15&keywords=stealth+gear)



## Living with Nature—by Andy Brown

*Andy Brown, a SWOG member from Kent, describes the hard work that has transformed his small holding and woodland into a viable business. A SWOG meeting on his site is planned for August – the date will be announced nearer the time.*

I was brought up on a farm and have always viewed the countryside as my buddy. Like a wild animal, it needs to be handled gently, but kept under control. I accept that there is a need to develop some green

areas as our society grows, but why we have to build thousands of houses in one place is beyond me. In my opinion, mechanisation has destroyed large areas of hedgerows and woodland, probably as much as housing. Mechanisation forced me out of farming and



**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.malvernco-picing.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/therevents.asp>

**Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events** The programmes for April 2013 can be seen at

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2013/04/01/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>



into a different direction.

After several years chasing the dollar, an opportunity to own a small parcel of land presented itself. My wife Kirstie decided to invest in a few alpaca and set up a new business. We soon outgrew the space, so in 2009 we borrowed some money and bought a 20-acre patch of mud near Sittingbourne in Kent.

Our site had a large mass of woodland to the west and a nature reserve to

the east; the 600 metre-long southern boundary was totally exposed, and split the two habitats; to the north was the M2. We were unable to use the land for 12 months whilst the grass grew under our feet, and it was during this time we were contacted by a conservation student looking for work experience. Jerra has definitely changed our life for the better. She helped us shape the site to benefit nature, whilst retaining enough grazing for the business to develop.

In February 2010 we sold our small plot of land, bought a caravan and moved our Alpaca and horses onto the new site. We immediately set about planting up the southern boundary with a 10-metre wide corridor of trees which would, in time, link the two wooded masses. We contacted the Woodland Trust who could provide native trees at a very reasonable price, and my sons and I planted them. Unfortunately the spring of 2010 was extremely hot and we lost quite a few, and although they have now been replaced, we have lost two years of growing time. Throughout 2011 and 2012 we continued to add new planting and to coppice the mature ash, while building up our breeding stock at the same time.

We expanded our business into pig breeding, so we have planted several small pear and apple orchards, which will help feed them in years to come. We are still in the early years of growth and looking forward to some warm weather so we can assess what has grown and what hasn't.

The good news is that we have been granted planning permission to live on site to run our business. We are hoping to install renewable energy sources to completely eliminate our carbon footprint. We hope to generate enough power to provide energy for the holiday let we would like to open up to terminally ill and disabled children so that they can enjoy our land and animals.

Not only have we managed to create a home and a future for our family, but we have also been able earn a living off the land. We have tried to work with nature and have noticed increases in all kinds of insects and birds of prey and also hope to improve the habitat for butterflies

Unfortunately, the bees that were being bred on site have just been removed, but we hope that our beekeeper will be able to return soon as they are vital to nature – and the honey tastes great on our home produced gammon. We are hoping to open up our farm to SWOG members in August, to share our land and to demonstrate what we have done.

For a closer look at the alpacas, visit Andy's website, <http://valleyviewalpacos.co.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. <https://www.kingcombe.org/courses/intro.aspx>

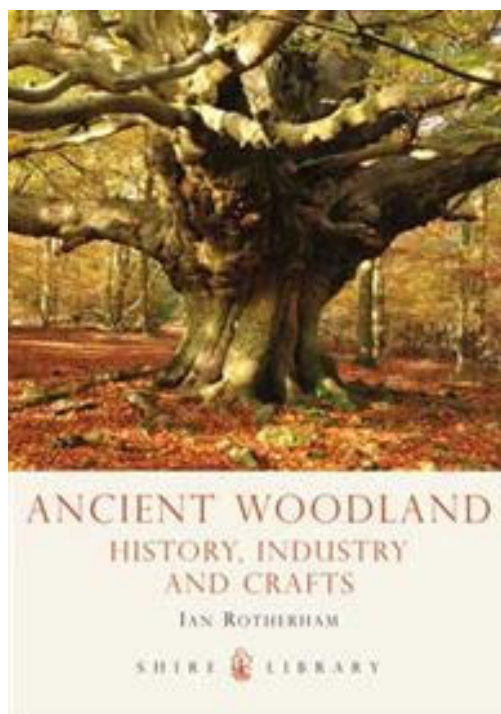
### **Plantlife**

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

[http://www.plantlife.org.uk/things\\_to\\_do/activities/](http://www.plantlife.org.uk/things_to_do/activities/)



## Book Review: Ancient Woodland—History, Industry and Crafts—by Rich



Shire Publications', latest offering by Ian D Rotherham, *Ancient Woodland—History, Industry and Crafts*, is a small unassuming paperback, only 64 pages, but packed full of delightful illustrations, original photographs and text. The cover is of a wonderful old, once-pollarded beech which would have been harvested for fuel at one time and has now stands as a magnificent monument to its more practical history.

The book starts with a look at what is meant by 'ancient woodland' and defines some of the terms we sometimes use interchangeably, like forest, wood pasture, deer park, commons and copse. It gives a brief indication in what to look for and the differences in their features.

The discussion continues with a comparison between the openly grazed medieval parks and the enclosed coppice, highlighting the difference in landscape and ecology which each have created. The importance of timber and the many timber products the country was reliant on in the pre industrial age is emphasised along with the social and political unrest brought about by such a valuable resource.

The book moves on to talk about the crafts and other industries that would have been common and makes the point that the managed wood of only a few decades ago would have been a busy place and

barely recognisable from the over stood, unviable, once coppiced woodlands we commonly see today. This section has some really interesting early photographs of woodmen, bodgers and other craftsmen probably from the early part of the last century. It may be that these old photos wouldn't stand up to enlargement well, hence the diminutive size of the book.

It finishes by giving a brief mention of the woodland crafts which have been 'rescued' and notes the difficulty in keeping them alive with the onset of cheaper mass produced products.

In such a short book, it does well to give a taste of the history, ecology and archaeology of our ancient woodland, together with a more detailed look at the woodland crafts and industries born out of them. It probably wouldn't satisfy an enthusiast for any of these subjects, but the book is well indexed and provides a list of further reading and a list of places worth visiting.

**SPECIAL OFFER:** 20% off ALL Shire titles for SWOG readers in May via the Shire website, [http://www.shirebooks.co.uk/store/Ancient-Woodland\\_9780747811657](http://www.shirebooks.co.uk/store/Ancient-Woodland_9780747811657) Enter the code SWOG at the checkout.

## Dead Wood in Coppice Woodlands — Summary of results from Thomas Kenny

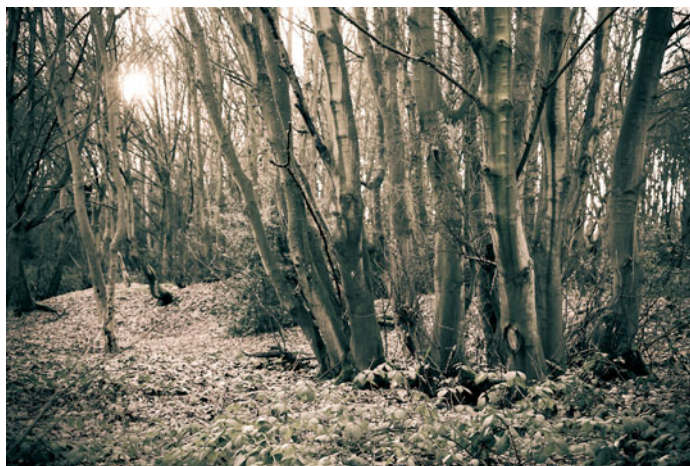
Last year, a number of our readers helped Thomas Kenny, who was studying for a Foundation Degree in Forestry and Woodland Management at Plumpton College, with a survey for his dissertation on management of dead wood. The survey had 100 participants, although not all questions were answered by all participants. Distribution was through forestry, coppice, woodland owner and conservation groups and authorities in England. Participants were anonymous, so it was not possible to break down results according to region. The results were interesting, and Thomas has permitted us to summarise them here.

77% of responders managed woodland as coppice with standards, with the remaining 23% as simple coppice. The majority managed coppice either for timber with conservation interest (39%) or conservation with some timber production (38%). Almost all managed coppice for a variety of species (94%). Only just over half responders were aware that the lack of deadwood threatened more species than the lack of coppice management (53%).

Although almost all managers had heard of the various forestry standards, only relatively few actually managed woodlands under one of the forestry certification schemes—29% UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS),

30% UK Forestry Standard (UKFS), and 51% English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS). Only 35.5% were aware of the UKWAS recommendation for deadwood retention per hectare (5 cubic metres, 15-20cm diameter per hectare).

The majority of managers only retained a small amount of deadwood over 15cm in diameter, or none at all, in situ as deadwood habitat (the figures being 30% and 36% respectively). Under half of managers retained the recommended amount of deadwood per hectare (48%). Where timber was retained, few configured it optimally as habitat, the majority leaving it either where it fell (39%) or stacked it into piles close to where it was felled (57%).



However only 11% of managers did not retain standing dead timber on safety grounds, the remainder leaving all dead trees and deadwood on living trees where safety allowed. The majority of managers felt that the amount of deadwood habitat had either increased (39%) or stayed the same (45%) since they started managing their coppice.

The conclusions Thomas reached were as follows:-

1. Despite current standards and schemes promoting the sustainable forestry movement i.e. UKFS, UKWAS, FSC, PEFC, none of these actually recommend high enough deadwood retention levels as those observed in old growth forests. This raises a question; could this lack of deadwood requirement be a precautionary



measure? If required/recommended levels were indeed higher, would any organisation or individual managing a woodland or forest be able to, or even be willing to, qualify for sustainable certification? With the above in mind, can forestry practice following these lower specifications be considered sustainable at all?

2. Assuming global warming progresses as most scientists say it will, the increase in summer droughts for the UK will heavily decrease the range of habitats for species requiring deadwood, as most of those found in the UK are found inhabiting moist/damp habitats. So if you know of a damp spot in your wood, and have tonnes of spare wood, you know what to do! ;)

3. Despite evidence that actively managed coppice woodlands generally lack deadwood levels, even by those standards named above, all is not lost - especially in those woodlands that actively preserve large stools, as well as standards with the intention of becoming veteran trees. In the words of Oliver Rackham, "A single 400-year-old oak, especially a pollard with its labyrinthine compartment boundaries, can generate a whole ecosystem of such creatures, for which ten thousand 200-year-old oaks are no use at all".

4. Some literature is inherently sceptical regarding management practices to increase rare saproxylic species, feeling that if those species have not been present in the area for a long period of time, they are unlikely to reappear following adequate habitat creation. Luckily, research conducted in France has demonstrated that promoting an overstood/unmanaged coppice system could actually attract these, notably some red-listed saproxylic beetles.



## News for small woodland owners

### Scottish Government launch public consultation on deer management on public forest estate

The Scottish Government have launched a formal consultation on management of deer on the public forest estate in Scotland, and they are seeking public views. The document outlines the current position regarding deer population and impact, and potential future management, including culling. The consultation closes on 8th July 2013. If you would like to respond, please go to

[https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/forestry-commission-scotland/deer\\_management](https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/forestry-commission-scotland/deer_management)

### Identification Guides from Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum produces some excellent species guides and identification guides available free online. These cover trees, hedgerows, orchids, ferns, dragonflies and damselflies, lichens and many more. Although they are aimed at children, they are pretty useful for all ages, and also provide good activities for children in the woods.

<http://www.opalexplornature.org/Identification>

### Ancient woodland restoration in Yorkshire

The BBC has reported on a £1 million scheme to remove non-native trees planted in the 18th and 19th Centuries and restore ancient woodland, being carried out by the Forestry Commission in Yorkshire. The work is being carried out in woods near Holmfirth, Sheffield and Ripon.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-22169270>

### New Forest School Association web site

The Forest School Association has a new web site. This is the professional voice for Forest Schools in the UK, and seeks to promote best practice. It provides information about what Forest Schools are, and how to select a good trainer. There is a members' network available too.

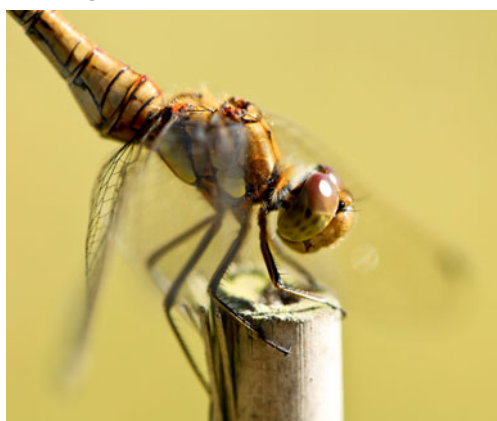
<http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/>

### Grown in Britain – supporting British wood and wood products

The Grown in Britain campaign is part of the response to the Independent Forestry Panel report, seeking to grow markets for British wood, and unite wood producers with suppliers. It is seeking to look at both demand and supply side, collating demand into potential action by woodland owners and managers.

Although a lot of the talk on the web site is about corporate input, it is aimed at all woodland owners. If you want to have your say, and have an input, then please look at the web site.

<http://www.growninbritain.org/index.jsp>



**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 2013

<http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/page/trainging-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](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>



### Lovely habitat explorer from the Wildlife Trusts

A Woodland habitat explorer that outlines the woodland ecosystems of the UK in a nutshell. This is really useful to find out the basics of a habitat and what you might expect to see. Particularly useful if you are venturing into a habitat that is different from your own woodland.

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/habitats/woodland>

Alongside these habitat guides, there are some excellent species guides available on the Wildlife Trusts site. You can drill down through categories of animals, plants and marine wildlife to find more information about common species. They have a comprehensive set of guides for trees, but also for wildflowers, birds, butterflies and lots of other wildlife. <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife/species-explorer>

### Buglife Poetry Competition

Are you a budding poet? Compose a poem about “bugs” and submit it to Buglife before 8th May, and you could win a prize including having your poem read at a London poetry night.

<http://www.buglife.org.uk/getinvolved/Bug+poetry+competition>

### This generation may be the last to see the English Bluebell



Native bluebells may be under threat because of widespread hybridisation with Spanish bluebells, raising the prospect of overtaking English bluebells within one generation. This is worrying, because the UK is host to more than half of the world bluebell population. The native bluebell is a symbol of ancient woodland, but has bred with the Spanish bluebell following its introduction to ornamental gardens over 100 years ago. Varieties of hybrid and Spanish bluebell can be seen growing amongst the native bluebell in woodlands across the country.

Mark Ballard, Curator at the Forestry Commission's National Arboretum at Westonbirt commented: “Growth of hybrid bluebells is vigorous and overtaking the native variety in many places. This means the British bluebell landscape, however beautiful, is changing. Native bluebells may be much harder to find for the next generation of woodland visitors.”

Native bluebells are more commonly found in mature broadleaf woodlands or along hedgerows. Whilst hybrid or Spanish bluebells are the hardier variety and grow in more prominence near to gardens. Native bluebells have dark blue, scented flowers that grow from only one side of their curved stems. Their stamen and pollen are cream coloured and their petals usually curve backwards or inwards. Hybrid varieties can be identified by their unscented flowers, blue stamen, curved petals and lighter blue flowers that grow on both sides of the stem.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/All-ByUNID/99F931300D55ED3A80257B500040DB99>



### Woodcraft School

have published their timetable for woodcraft and bushcraft courses

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

**Acres Wild Woodland** have 2013 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 wood-working, coppice management, charcoal making, living willow and introductory blacksmithing. See

[http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/at\\_a\\_glance.html](http://www.underwoodsman.co.uk/html/at_a_glance.html)

**FloraLocale** run a wide range of courses of interest to woodland owners

[www.floralocale.org](http://www.floralocale.org)

## Natural History Museum Bluebell Survey

If you want to help with a national bluebell survey, this one from the Natural History Museum has been going for several years, tracking the arrival of spring, and the presence and absence of hybrids <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/british-natural-history/survey-bluebells/bluebell-aboutthesurvey/index.html>

## More bluebells – Knit your own bluebell hat

From the Woodland Trust, a fun, free pattern for a bluebell hat. [http://visitwoods.org.uk/en/visit-woods/things-to-do/nature/Pages/bluebell-fun.aspx?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=bluebells 2013#.UXqFBUrNmKI](http://visitwoods.org.uk/en/visit-woods/things-to-do/nature/Pages/bluebell-fun.aspx?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=bluebells%2013#.UXqFBUrNmKI)

## Recent Forestry Commission Publications

Includes ecological modelling of grey squirrels and species preference of small mammals for direct-sown tree and shrub seeds. These are available from <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B>

Also on the FC web site, the latest Woodland Carbon Code Statistics are now available online at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-93vjte>

Forthcoming Forestry Statistics are also summarised on FC web site <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-8ujdd3>

## Forestry Commission Wales now part of Natural Resources Wales

Formed from the Countryside Commission for Wales, the Welsh Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission Wales, this new body takes control of a wide range of environmental and countryside activities in Wales. They have a new web site at <http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/?lang=en>

## CONFOR seeks views on species diversification

The UK is losing several of its major tree and timber species to pests and diseases and more are threatened. Confor is seeking industry views on the guidance required to inform future planting/replanting decisions.

The Forestry Commission lists 14 new tree pests/diseases that have arrived in the last 16 years, plus five more waiting in the wings. How can forestry manage threats, while providing for financial sustainability? Do the UK's forest managers have sufficient information to make appropriate decisions on planting/replanting? What conifers and broad-leaves should we plant that will thrive and provide marketable timber? Will introduced provenances dilute Britain's uniquely valuable gene pool, or enrich an impoverished one? There are more questions than answers, but foresters are already being forced to consider alternative species. If you would like to participate in the discussion, please look at the Confor web site on

<http://www.confor.org.uk/NewsAndEvents/News.aspx?pid=23&id=1468>

## FC Alert over Oak Processionary Moth

People in parts of London and Berkshire are being reminded by the Forestry Commission, Public Health England and local authorities not to touch caterpillars of the oak processionary moth, which are beginning to emerge in oak trees in these locations.

They are also advised to keep children, pets and livestock away from the caterpillars and their nests, and to report any sightings. The affected areas are several boroughs in West and South-West London, Bromley and Croydon in South London, and Pangbourne in West Berkshire. For further information about this moth, please see the Forestry Commission news release. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/AllByUNID/69E627572191E5B680257B55005867DC>



**Courses from The Mammal Society** – a wide variety of courses, at various venues and dates. 2013 dates now announced.

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

**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 protected species. They also run online ecology courses.

[www.acornecology.co.uk](http://www.acornecology.co.uk)

**Forest Garden Shovelstrode**

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

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



## Help needed with survey of non-native conifer management

Forest Research, the research arm of the Forestry Commission, are currently undertaking an evaluation of the extent and methods of conversion of woodland from non-

native conifer to native species (conifer or broadleaf).

Laura Henderson says “As part of the research we have formulated a brief survey that we hope woodland managers and owners will complete. We are wanting to obtain responses from people who manage woodlands of any size so I am approaching a variety of organisations. I wondered if it might be possible to put a link to the survey on your facebook page or have it sent to your members? ( Please note that we are not including conversion of Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) in our survey).

The results of our research will help us to understand how and why conversion is taking place or its limitations. This will help us formulate appropriate advice for the future.

A link to the survey can be found here if you wish to view it

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/>



### ForestConversion

It is 9 questions long and should not take more than 5 minutes to complete. If you feel that it might be possible to help disseminate the survey in any way I would be interested to hear from you.”

## Forthcoming SWOG Events

### Meeting at Pluckley—11th May



SWOG member Alex Bienfait has arranged a demonstration of a Micro Arb Truc with a selection of handling attachments. SWOG members are invited to attend this demonstration and to explore Alex’s extensive wood, a mixture of Victorian plantation and semi-ancient woodland on Wealden clay. This is a free event and a great chance to take a close look at some useful log-moving machinery. Parking for some 20 vehicles – ground conditions generally suitable for any vehicle.

Good access via public transport from Ashford and London. 10 minutes walk from Pluckley Station. One compost loo.

Limited camping available on Friday night

Food – please bring your own lunch. Hot drinks are available. Dogs welcome provided they are kept on a lead (mainly out of concern for nesting birds). If you would like to attend or have any questions, please email SWOG co-ordinator [judith@swog.org.uk](mailto:judith@swog.org.uk)

### The Field Studies Council

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.fieldstudies-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.dwpp.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/diary.htm>

## Forthcoming Events

### Chilterns Woodland Conference—Friday 7th June

The next Chilterns Woodland Conference to be held at the Clare Charity Centre, Saunderton on Friday morning 7th June. The cost is £20 for the conference, plus £10 for lunch and networking opportunity. Topics to be covered include ash dieback, lessons from Dutch Elm Disease, Pine Martens, Grey Squirrels and use of tree guards. If you would like to go, please contact John Morris, Director, Chiltern Woodlands Project The Lodge 90 Station Road, Chinnor, Oxon OX39 4HA Tel 01844 355503

Or see [www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project.html](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project.html). Please make cheques payable to Chilterns Woodlands Project.

### Forestry Commission European Protected Species Training

The Forestry Commission is running a series of days to raise awareness of European Protected Species and their habitats. This is essential training for woodland owners and managers. The training is designed for woodland owners and agents, with the aim that by the end of the day, participants will be able to identify likely habitats for the key species and how best to undertake work to ensure compliance with good practice, reducing the need for an EPS licence. The training will involve a brief indoor session to remind attendees of the basics of the legislation and habitat requirements for the individual species, with the largest part of the day being based outdoors.

Dates and venues are as follows

1st May: Tottiford Woods, Bovey Tracey, Devon.

20th May: Fineshade Woods, Corby, Northants.

29th May: Hamsterley Forest, Bishop Auckland, County Durham.

5th June: Alice Holt, Farnham, Surrey.

11th June: Wyre Forest, nr Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

To book, please visit the Forestry Commission ticketing web site on [http://purchase.tickets.com/buy/TicketPurchase?agency=FORESTRY2&organ\\_val=33787&event\\_val=EPST&schedule=list](http://purchase.tickets.com/buy/TicketPurchase?agency=FORESTRY2&organ_val=33787&event_val=EPST&schedule=list)

### Tree Health and Woodland Management Workshops

These events are being organised at the Three Counties Royal Show at Malvern on Friday 14th June. Two identical workshops are being held, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and these are free for attendees at the Three Counties Show. They are designed to help woodland managers deal with tree health issues, and to raise awareness of tree diseases.

To register please email [RFSHQ@rfs.org.uk](mailto:RFSHQ@rfs.org.uk) or call 01295 678 588. For directions please visit: [www.threecounties.co.uk/threecounties/](http://www.threecounties.co.uk/threecounties/)

### Cumbria Forestry Festival—Sunday 21st July 2013

The Cumbrian Forestry Festival will take place at Hutton-in-the-Forest Estate, Penrith on Sunday 21st July and will feature, as a main attraction, the annual UK Logging Competition. We will have a large number of exhibitors from the forestry sector in Cumbria and surrounding areas showcasing their various forest machines and crafts. In addition, the nationally recognised logging competition will feature the felling of timber poles, which will be moved around the site using various methods such as horses, an Oxtrac, a Forecat Skidder, and Alstor forwarder to a range of different machinery such as a Woodmizer and a Truncator sawhorse, a Cordmaster firewood processor and woodchipper and blowing machine. This will demonstrate the chain of harvesting a sustainable resource, through to the end uses of wood and to showcase this process.

It's going to be a great event and entry is free! If you would like to come along and exhibit for free at the festival please email [sarah@cumbriawoodlands.co.uk](mailto:sarah@cumbriawoodlands.co.uk)

**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>

**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>



## Forthcoming Courses

### Courses at Orchard Barn 2013

**Orchard Barn** run a wide range of training courses aimed at community, hobby and professional level. These include courses on timber framing, natural building, traditional carpentry as well as working with coppice wood and permaculture.

**Professional Training Courses** - intermediate to advanced level courses delivered by our experienced master craftsmen, providing IHBC accreditation and available to contribute towards your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

**Hobby Training Courses** - beginner to intermediate level courses aimed for those with a general and/or home interest and taught by our own tutors who come with several years restoration and conservation experience on the OBee project

Email [sarah@orchardbarn.org.uk](mailto:sarah@orchardbarn.org.uk) about hobby and professional courses

**Community Workshops** - introductory level practical sessions suitable for learning the basics and for those wanting to contribute to a local community project with an emphasis on group participation and fun.

Please see the web site for more information [http://orchardbarn.org.uk/Orchard\\_Barn\\_courses.htm](http://orchardbarn.org.uk/Orchard_Barn_courses.htm)

### Endangered Species Recovery (Jersey)

The Endangered Species Recovery (ESR) course is a two week introduction to the issues and practical skills involved in saving threatened species from extinction. You will develop a critical understanding of biodiversity conservation and the issues it raises, as well as practical research skills. This course is perfectly suited for those wanting an up to date summary, and has also proved invaluable to those considering a career change to conservation as a profession. The course takes place at Durrell Academy in Jersey. <http://www.durrell.org/academy/Courses/Endangered-Species-Recovery/>

### Crafty Camping

Guy Mallinson offers a dream combination of luxurious "glamping" plus green woodcraft courses. The courses run over one, two, three or five days, and include tuition from master craftsmen. They also offer two hour have-a-go courses. Projects range from spoon-carving to chair-making. See <http://www.mallinson.co.uk/> for further information.

### Tree Pests and Diseases Roadshows (Arboricultural Association)

The Arboricultural Association is offering a series of roadshows throughout the UK dealing with tree pests and diseases. These have been running through April, and will continue into May, but are booking up fast. Cost £70 per course for non-members.

<http://www.trees.org.uk/aa/news/Tree-Pests-and-Diseases-UK-Roadshow-140.html>

### Three for two offer from The Green Register

Sustainable building training organisation, The Green Register, is offering one free place for every two booked on its courses on sustainable building techniques.

See <http://www.greenregister.org.uk/events.php> for more information.



### 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>

### The Bulworthy Project

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

<http://www.bulworthyproject.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, Bush-craft courses and Family Holidays.

[www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk](http://www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk) or 01745710626

### Mark Fisher Art

Woodland-based art days for all abilities

[www.markfisherart.co.uk](http://www.markfisherart.co.uk)

### Abbots Living Wood

offers a range of green woodworking courses

[http://www.living-wood.co.uk/green\\_wood\\_courses.html](http://www.living-wood.co.uk/green_wood_courses.html)

## Online Permaculture Courses from Patrick Whitefield

If you've ever wanted to go on one of Patrick's wonderful permaculture courses, but find it difficult to get away and attend, then you will be pleased to hear that he is now offering courses online.

<http://patrickwhitefield.co.uk/sluonline.htm>

## Free Buglife Event – Invertebrates of the South West – 18<sup>th</sup> May

Creykes Court, 5 Craigie Drive, The Millfields, Plymouth, PL1 3JB

A day of talks and discussions to celebrate the special invertebrates of the South West and also engage with some wider issues relating to invertebrates, including the state of moths in the UK and whether we should eat more invertebrates. <http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Documents/PDF/BENHSBuglifeposter18May2013.pdf>

## Courses from Smallwoods

Small Woods have taken the organisation of craft courses back in house. These are the courses that will be taking place during the next couple of months.

### 11 May Willow Hurdle Making

Learn how to make a willow woven panel using a traditional Somerset pattern, ideal as a screen or wind break for the garden. Each participant will take home a hurdle and the skill to carry on practicing.

Course duration - 1 day

Course cost - £75.00

### 20–21 May Woodland Monitoring and Evaluation

Participants will learn about woodland types and associated species, common types of plants found within woodland layers, woodland management and the effects on biodiversity. Techniques for identifying plant species, explanations of methods to plan surveys, record, assess and collate data.

Course duration - 2 ½ days

Course cost - £100

### 31 May–2 June Longbow Making

Learn how to make your own longbow using techniques that have changed little since the Middle Ages. Make a traditional longbow like those favoured by English and Welsh bowmen, who used this simple, yet fearsome, weapon to such devastating effect.

Course duration - 3 days

Course cost - £300

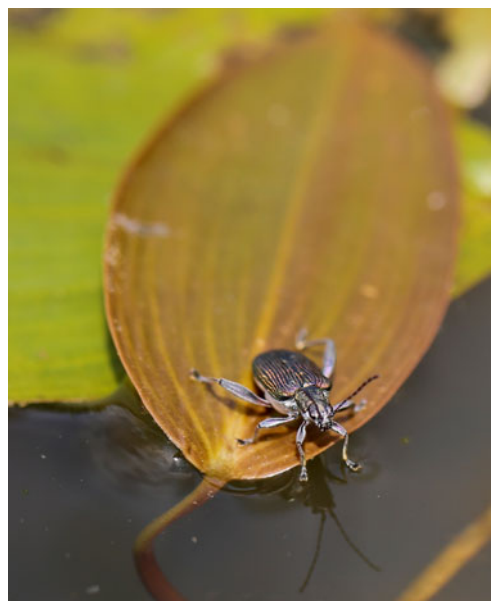
For more information, and to book any of these courses, please see the web site <http://greenwoodcentre.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=8c8c5f6776bc01aff7e07f3ac&id=c7ef4acc43&e=e2a364bf3b>

## Natural History Museum—Half Day British Native Trees Course

A half day course in London, dealing with native trees from the Species Recovery Trust. If you would like to improve your ability to identify British native trees, this could be a good course to attend.

20th June, cost £40.

See <http://www.speciesrecoverytrust.org.uk/Training%20Course%20Info/Native%20Trees%20-%20NHM.pdf> for more information, and book via their web site on <http://www.speciesrecoverytrust.org.uk/Training%20Courses%202013.html>





## Woodfairs in 2013

*These are the fairs of which we have been notified so far. If you know of any events NOT on this list, then please let us know! sarah@swog.org.uk*

### Weird and Wonderful Wood

Unique art and craft fair with wood at its core

18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Haughley Park, Wetherden, Nr Stowmarket

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

### Devon County Show

16-18<sup>th</sup> May 2013

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

### Borders Festival of the Horse 2013

17-27<sup>th</sup> May 2013

<http://www.bordersfestivalhorse.org/> (see also article about horse-logging in this newsletter)

### The Bushcraft Show 2013

Elvaston Castle and Country Park, Derbyshire

25-27<sup>th</sup> May

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

### Blackdown Hills Woodfair

6<sup>th</sup> July 2013

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

### South Downs Woodfair

Horndean, Hampshire, 13-14<sup>th</sup> July 2013

[http://www.woodlandcrafts.co.uk/south\\_downs\\_wood\\_fair.html](http://www.woodlandcrafts.co.uk/south_downs_wood_fair.html)

### New Forest and Hampshire Show

30<sup>th</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013

<http://www.newforestshow.co.uk/website/>

### National Forest Woodfair

26<sup>th</sup> August 2013

<http://www.nationalforest.org/visit/woodfair/>

### Stock Gaylard Oak Fair

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August

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

### Treefest at Westonbirt Arboretum

24 - 26 August 2013

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-8fpnpt>

### Woodworks

Marston Vale, Beds, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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

### Lincolnshire Firewood Fair

Revesby, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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

### Wychwood Forest Fair

Foxburrow Wood, Witney, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013

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

### CONFOR Wood Show

Longleat, 12/13<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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

### Wild About Wood

The Yorkshire Arboretum, Kew and Castle Howard

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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

### Chilterns AONB Countryside and Food Festival

Ashridge Estate, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013

<http://www.chilternsaonb.org/calendar/27/835-Chilterns-Countryside-and-Food-Festival-2013---Ashridge-Estate.html>

### Bentley Weald Woodfair

20-22<sup>nd</sup> September

*Web site details to follow*

### European Woodworking Show

Cressing Temple Barns, Essex, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2013

<http://www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu/>

### Cranborne Chase Woodfair

Fordingbridge, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October 2013

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

### Surrey Hills Woodfair 2013

5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> October 2013

<http://www.visitsurrey.com/events/surrey-hills-wood-fair-2013-p840761>

### SCOTLAND

#### Royal Highland Show 2013

20-23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013

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

#### Tweed Valley Forest Festival

19-27<sup>th</sup> October 2013 with Peebles Wood Market on 20-21<sup>st</sup> October

<http://www.forest-festival.com/content/peebles-wood-market-and-tweed-green-experience>

### WALES

#### Woodfest Wales

Kimmel Estate, St George, 31<sup>st</sup> May-2<sup>nd</sup> June 2013

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

## New blogs and videos from woodlands.co.uk

*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.*

### Natural Resources Wales ~ by Chris Colley

A blog about the formation of the new body overseeing environmental and countryside issues in Wales from three previous bodies.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/natural-resources-wales/#more-17084>

### Red Squirrels ~ by Paul

A blog from Paul, who is a member of the Red Squirrel Group based in North East Cumbria, which explains why the red squirrel has declined in the UK, and what can be done about it.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/red-squirrels/>

### Gorses. ~ by Chris

Gorses are often overlooked, but in this blog, Chris examines the gorse species in detail, and looks at their habitat and ecological value.

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



### Firewood – the real challenge is moving the logs to where you need them ~ by Angus

The title says it all! Moving wood around in a way that is not unduly expensive in either time or money is the key to making the most of firewood produced in a sustainably-managed woodland. How can this be done? Angus takes a look.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/practical-guides/firewood-the-real-challenge-is-moving-the-logs-to-where-you-need-them/>



### Biochar and biofuels ~ by Lewis

What is biochar? And biofuel? Lewis explains these terms, and how they can be produced, and the issues surrounding their production and use.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/biochar-and-biofuels/>

### Wood Anemone – Anemone nemorosa. ~ by Stuart

This relative of the buttercup is an indicator species for ancient woodland. Read more about this lovely little white flower in this blog post.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/wood-anemone-anemone-nemorosa/>

## A couple of gratuitous spring pictures—from Sarah at Alvecote Wood



(c) Alvecote Wood





## Newsletter - May 2013

### 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 Judith your details (name, address, email) to be put on the list. We will not pass your information to anyone else.

Please do join with us and share your wealth of knowledge and experience with others, as well as your joys and moans. We have members from all over the country. We are also on Facebook if you like to communicate that way! See [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61487332523](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=61487332523)

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

## On the SWOG Forum

**DavidM** joined the forum—he is from Essex, and also has a business selling forestry tools. **Compo** joined also—he has three plots of wood in the Midlands. Finally **d198594t** (Rob) joined us from Blackburn.

We have been busy in our woods this month holding Open Days (**docsquid**), putting up nest boxes (**SimonFisher**), building wood stores and clearing fencing (**TheBarrowers**), attending bushcrafter meetings (**MattF**) and splitting, coppicing and storing (**Trecreation**).

**SitkaSpruce** asked how far behind our trees are this year, with the cold spring. **Bearwood** reckons about a month behind (*Editor: I reckon the same*). **Rankinswood** showed some Oxfordshire Woodland Group phonological information to show stark contrast with last year.

**Mattwebster** is looking to meet other owners in Sand Hutton wood in Yorkshire, and **Forestskillsltd** is looking to buy a small plot of woodland in Cheshire—can you help?

**Jackdaw** posted a photo of some amazing tree roots searching for soil and water

among block paving. **Landpikey** shared with us a photo of some horrendous pollarding work done by a local council.

**SolarWood** wants to know the best areas in Portugal to visit to see the traditional cork oaks—can you help?

**Jackdaw** started a thread “You couldn’t make it up” with some amusing images of people doing really quite interesting things with equipment—do you have any to add?

**MattF** experienced theft of wood that he had recently cut from his own wood. This led to a healthy discussion of the difficulties of owning woods with a Public Right of Way running alongside or through them, particularly if misleading signage results in the public thinking it is owned by the Council. Theft of cut wood is a big problem for members. Can you help with any ideas?

**Bearwood** asked for advice about constructing tracks in the woodland which are vehicle capable (tractor/car). Can you help?

*Please visit the forum and have a look at the discussions! There is a wealth of experience on the forum, and we’d love to hear from you.*

## Next Newsletter: June 2013

*Contributions for the May Newsletter need to be with Judith by 25th May 2013.*

*Everything is welcome: reviews, news from your woods, activities, courses, meetings, photos. We are particularly keen to hear about what you are doing in your woods, and also to have reviews of equipment that you have used.*

*We would also love any photos you can send of your woods, and what you are doing there.*

*Likewise, if you have attended a course, it would be great to read about your experiences. Please send articles to [judith@swog.org.uk](mailto:judith@swog.org.uk)*

