

A photograph of a wood fair. In the foreground, a large swing set with blue and yellow seats is in motion, with several people swinging. In the background, a steam train is visible on a track, surrounded by a crowd of people. The scene is set in a grassy area with large trees in the background.

# Small Woodland Owners' Group

## September 2016

All the fun of the woodfair!



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



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There's still time to secure discounted entry to both APF and Bentley – see the back page for details and we'll see you there!

Rich muses about using locally grown timber instead of the well-travelled products from DIY stores, Gerrit provides a full account of the SWOG meeting in his wood and we have a new report about about flooding, climate change and woodlands.

The Small Woodland Owner's Group has been formed to aid the enjoyment, diversity and conservation of British woodlands. The company Woodlands.co.uk sponsors the group, so membership is completely free and events are

free of charge unless otherwise stated. SWOG is open to anyone interested in the management or the enjoyment of woodland.

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## SWOG COURSE LIST 2016



Courses are listed by location. You can search the lists by entering a key word.



## SWOG Course Listings

Anyone who buys a wood from Woodlands.co.uk is given £300 towards a woodland course to help towards owners' enjoyment and knowledge. These courses can encompass anything from basket-weaving, green woodworking or pole lathe turning, to chainsaw tuition and woodland management. Buyers are asked to write a short resumé of their course, noting how effective they

found it, and whether they would recommend it to others.

We are gradually incorporating all these valuable comments into a database listing which can be searched by area or course topic. We hope it will be useful to anyone searching for help and guidance in choosing a woodland course. View it on the SWOG website here:

[www.swog.org.uk/courses-4](http://www.swog.org.uk/courses-4)



## SWOG visit to a Shropshire woodland

*Gerrit Groenewold, who hosted the August meeting at his wood in Lilleshall, has been kind enough to send in an account of the day. Thanks to other Ian Maley for the photos.*

Thanks to all of the guests, both two- and four-legged for their interest and enthusiasm during our day together at Limekiln Wood. There were 17 of us: 14 adult guests, one child and two dogs. The group's experience of managing woodland was wide-ranging, from just receiving the keys, to very experienced woodland managers, so there was a great deal of knowledge and experiences to share.

Every wood has unique qualities and in this case there are historical features, a large pond, steep tracks, undulating terrain and it is situated in a rural village.

We had a walk in the morning round part of the woodland, stopped for a packed lunch and continued to a different part in the afternoon, fuelled by my wife's banana muffins and Mars Bar cake. Guests shared information, knowledge

and questions during the walk. It's fair to say the group had a enjoyable day and we all learned something new. We were really only able to skim the surface of lots of topics. It will be interesting to visit other woodlands to hear about owner's challenges and to see their solutions.

Finally, the group were asked to complete a feedback questionnaire and I would like to thank all for their very generous feedback. In summary, members were most interested in forging new connections and learning about woodland management planning. They all agreed that the host was well prepared and the whole day met their expectations.



Above: Bob the Bodger shares his experience.  
Left and below: Gerrit describes various aspects of his wood.





### EU funding and woodland grants

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, has announced that the government will honour EU grants until 2020, a move that has given the forestry sector some certainty and has enabled the Forestry Commission and Natural England to announce plans for the future.

For Forestry and Woodland grants, including Countryside Stewardship (CS), this welcome news means that they can start issuing agreements once more. In addition, all Forestry Commission legacy agreements will continue to be honoured.

Any Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (Woodland Improvement and Woodland Creation maintenance) agreements agreed (signed or in place) before the government's

autumn statement will be fully funded – even when these projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU. More information on this will be available before the autumn statement.

FC Woodland Officers will continue to process these applications to submission to Natural England Technical Services in line with published deadlines (26 August for Mixed applications and 30 September for Woodland Only applications).

More information is available on the Forestry Commission website [here](#).

Owners of small woodlands would probably like the whole process to be simplified and we can only hope that this will be one of the 'unintended outcomes' of Brexit.

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### Ascott House: trees and topiary

If you're in search of inspiration, or simply fancy a break from working in your wood, follow the example of the Bernie and Theresa and visit your local National Trust property.

Ascott House, near Leighton Buzzard has been owned by the Rothschild family since 1873, and as you would expect, has an impressive collection of fine art, furniture and ceramics within the house, parts of which are Jacobean. Outside, the gardens are delightful and include some fine trees within the 300 acres of woodland.

The Madeira Walk, leading to a classical pavilion and lily pond, is bordered on both sides by a tall beech hedge. Topiary is magnificent, with a full sundial, incorporating roman numerals, made entirely from clipped yew.

Within the park there are fine specimen trees, including several oaks, cedars and large horse chestnuts, as well as range of exotic species. The Barrowers suggest taking a picnic and a good book on tree identification to fully enjoy the gardens and the wonderful views over the Chiltern Hills.

Ascott House is open to the public from March to September. Details are on the **National Trust website** [here](#).



## Woodland owners – be part of the Tree Charter

*'Henceforth every freeman, in his wood or on his land that he has in the forest, may with impunity make a mill, fish-preserve, pond, marl-pit, ditch, or arable in cultivated land outside coverts, provided that no injury is thereby given to any neighbour.'*

In 2017 we will celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Forest Charter. Signed in the wake of Magna Carta, it restored the liberties of the common people and allowed them access to the royal forest, to forage and graze animals. Incidentally, not all this land was forested. Heathland was equally valuable for grazing animals.

800 years on, more than 50 organisations, co-ordinated by the Woodland Trust, are leading a call for a new charter that will ensure that people and trees can stand stronger together in the future.

### Sylva survey of owners

More than two-thirds of woodlands are held in private hands, so it is vital that the voices of woodland owners and custodians are captured.



*A Hunter and a Dog Tracking in a Forest  
(Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program).*

Add your views to the Charter by taking part in a survey for owners hosted by the Sylva Foundation.

Small woodland owners play an important part in woodland management to support wildlife, produce home-grown timber and improve biodiversity. Responses so far have been heartfelt, with owners recounting how dedicated they are to improving their woods and their delight at the results.

The survey really does take only five minutes, and who knows, your answers might be examined in another 800 years! To take part, visit: [sylva.org.uk/myforest/charter](http://sylva.org.uk/myforest/charter).

The 2017 Charter is for everyone who cares about trees. The website has been refreshed and more than 10,000 stories have been collected from people from all walks of life around the country. It's an amazing and ambitious project which SWOG is pleased to support.

The final outcome will be a lasting document which will guide practice and policy makers in the coming years, with visual reminders sited around the UK.

During 2017 carved 'story poles' will be installed in 15 sites around the country. These poles will be a lasting reminder of the charter and the importance of trees in our lives. Stories can be carved into and written on these poles, helping to spread and continue the legacy of the tree charter. Get involved – read some of the stories and blogs and share your own via the **Tree Charter website**.





## Local timber for local projects

*Rich Hare explains why it is more satisfying, ethical and sustainable to use timber that is locally grown and buy products that are both grown and made in Britain.*

Here in the south-east of England we've got lots of woods! Actually, we are almost spoilt with the amount of semi-natural ancient broadleaf woodland. (We planted quick growing conifer on some of it about 40 or 50 years ago, but that's another story). I think it is one of the most densely wooded areas of the country. On top of that, it is also one of the most densely populated and affluent areas. If you add all this together, with the fact that many of these woods have been left unmanaged for decades, it seems to me that there should be room for opportunity.

Opportunity to breathe new life into our neglected woods, to bring back into management overstood coppice stools and derelict woodlands. To radically improve the biodiversity of species we find in these dark spaces. And perhaps most important of all, (because it makes the rest viable) an opportunity to provide employment and turn a profit.

### Local vs global

However, we live in a world of globalised trade where you can buy charcoal briquettes from Malaysia cheaper than a charcoal burner can make proper lumpwood charcoal in Sussex. You can buy a piece of flat-packed, chemically treated softwood garden furniture cheaper than it would cost to mill out its constituent parts in naturally durable coppiced chestnut or oak.

But these are totally different products. Items made locally, from nearby woodlands use less fuel to get them to market, provide jobs for the rural economy, and help keep our woodlands managed sustainably as they have been for hundreds of years. The product is superior, that's for sure, but the provenance and the whole ethos of producing things that we need for the local market, from a locally sourced sustainable product, is just that: sustainable - it is repeatable as long as the sun rises, the seasons change and the coppiced wood returns.

### Educating the public

It's not surprising that people don't always buy locally. Sometime it is difficult to afford a premium product over the mass-produced price.





But I don't think it is just that. More often it really is about educating people about the whole process. I recently went into Brighton with a trailer-load of freshly milled waney edge chestnut boards. I was using it to make a small custom built shed. I had several people stop me and ask where I got such beautiful timber from. 'Well . . .' I said, 'it's growing in a wood, not even 20 miles from here. There's loads more of it and if someone doesn't help me cut it soon, it will all fall over and become unmanageable.'

They had no idea of the process involved, the type of timber it was or where it might have grown. To many people, timber comes from a DIY superstore, it may be stamped with an accreditation or two, but the rest of the back story, the miles that tree has come, from which country, is really unknown.

So although it has sometimes been difficult, it is a very rewarding when I get an order for a new piece of work and something clicks, as the customer suddenly starts to understand the process. Maybe they start to appreciate the fact that their order is in some small way supporting the local economy. That without it many of the woods in the area would remain derelict and unmanaged. That actually the trees that are cut to make their product are already growing back to make another product in 20 or 25 years time. That the birds and the bees and the butterflies, the ground flora and all the other wildlife is given a new lease of life as the woodland opens up to the light. That there is no 'green wash' here, that their order really does make a difference and it really does have 'built-in sustainability'. It's almost like getting paid twice, but don't tell anyone that!



*Above: freshly milled waney boards on Rich's trailer.  
Below: the finished shed, in situ, 20 miles from where the timber was grown.*



### Grown in Britain

The Grown in Britain campaign works to



**Grown  
in Britain**

increase the supply of British timber destined for use by local people and businesses.

Whether it's to heat homes, for the construction of new buildings, or for retailers to create wood products that shape our everyday lives, the opportunities and the benefits of Grown in Britain are endless, for the environment, for people, wildlife, and local economies. **Grown in Britain week** is 10–16 October 2016 – more details on the website.

# Climate change and woodlands

*Dr Suzanne Martin, Research Liaison Officer with the Forestry Commission at Alice Holt has written with news of the recently published LWEC Report Card covering forestry.*

The report provides an accessible and authoritative summary of the latest scientific evidence about the impact and future risks and opportunities of climate change for forestry in the UK. It is aimed at anyone who works with, or has an interest in, agriculture, horticulture and forestry. It aims to improve understanding of the scale of possible change and to help inform land management decisions that will help us to better cope with climate change.

## Reasons to adapt to climate change

What does the latest scientific evidence tell us about the climate change impacts for forestry? In July an *Agriculture & Forestry Climate Change Impacts Report Card* was published by the Living with Environmental Change Partnership (LWEC). It is the latest summary of the scientific evidence of how climate change is affecting agriculture and forestry in the UK. It also explains how climate change might affect these land uses in the UK in the future.

The Report Card is based on the findings from nine detailed peer-reviewed papers prepared by leading experts, including those in Forest Research (who also acted as the lead author for the forestry sector).

## The Report Card highlights:

- New and emerging pests and diseases as particular risks.
- In the next 20-30 years timber yield potential is likely to increase in the cooler, wetter uplands and the north and west of the UK but in drier areas, on lighter soils or for species that are

sensitive to drought, there will be reduced growth.

- In the longer term reduced water availability and more frequent extreme weather events are likely to reduce both growth and yield potential in many areas.
- Biodiversity in semi-natural and managed woodlands is expected to adjust as a result of a changing climate.
- The range and quality of the other ecosystem services that forestry provides and relies on will also change. These include climate control, flood regulation, pollination and nutrient cycling.

## What does this mean for woodland owners?

It highlights the importance of actively managing woodlands to help them cope with our changing climate, for example by improving forest structure, diversifying tree species, and increasing their ability to cope with greater weather variability and extreme events such as drought, wildfire and wind storms.

The full report and technical documents can be accessed via the **Forest Research website** [here](#).



*The Thames flooding at Wallingford, Oxfordshire.*



*Click on the titles to be taken to the full blogs or videos on the [Woodlands.co.uk](http://Woodlands.co.uk) website.*

### TV

#### How to fit a woodburner in your caravan

With the nights drawing in, Tom Smith explains how to fit a wood burner in your caravan safely.

### Blogs

#### Pollen-picking bumblebees

It has been known for some time that bees and bumblebees are attracted to flowers by their colour(s), scent (volatile oils), shape, nectar and indeed electric fields. However, it has now been shown that bumblebees can pick a plant on the basis of the nutritional content of its pollen.

#### Biofuel from trees

Ethanol can be used as a fuel (in its pure form) for vehicles or used as a petrol additive to increase the octane ration / improve emissions. It is widely used in Brazil. Ethanol has been produced from a range of plant materials, for example, sweet sorghum, maize, wheat, sugar beet, sugar cane, Miscanthus (elephant grass) and wood pulp.

#### Unusual or exotic trees – Ginkgo biloba

The maidenhair tree, otherwise known as *Ginkgo biloba*, or just Ginkgo, is native to China, but is widely cultivated through the world. It is an unusual tree and is sometimes referred to as a 'living fossil'. Recognisable forms of Ginkgo date back to the Permian period – some 270 million years ago.

#### Woodland tracks and paths

Tracks and paths are an amazingly important element of any woodland – they



are the arteries along which management tasks will be done and the viewing points from which you will see what's happening in your forest. Usually owners just live with the tracks that have been there for decades, perhaps even hundreds of years, but you can vary the routes or even build new tracks. Woodland tracks are also often called 'rides', presumably because they would have been maintained in order to ride around the woodland on horseback.

#### Bud burst and street lights

Street lighting may make our roads and homes safer places, but it also contributes to light pollution. Researchers at Exeter University have discovered that it has had a significant effect on the timing of bud burst in trees.





## Woodfairs and events 2016



*Woodlands.co.uk and SWOG will be at APF and Bentley.*

### Wychwood Forest Fair

4 September 2016 Charlbury, Oxfordshire  
[www.wychwoodproject.org](http://www.wychwoodproject.org)

### APF Exhibition

15–17 September 2016  
Ragley Estate, Warwickshire  
[www.apfexhibition.co.uk](http://www.apfexhibition.co.uk)

### Bentley Weald Woodfair

23–25 September 2016 Lewes, East Sussex  
[www.bentley.org.uk/events](http://www.bentley.org.uk/events)

### Surrey Hills Wood Fair

1–2 October 2016 Birtley Estate, Bramley  
[www.surreyhills.org](http://www.surreyhills.org)

### Peebles Wood Market

22–23 October 2016 Tweed Green &  
Community Hall, Peebles, Scottish Borders  
[www.forest-festival.com/wood-market](http://www.forest-festival.com/wood-market)

### Grown in Britain Week

10–16 October 2016 Various locations  
[www.growninbritain.org](http://www.growninbritain.org)

### Royal Forestry Society Conference

1 November 2016 Making Woodlands Pay  
[www.rfs.org.uk/events](http://www.rfs.org.uk/events)

## APF SHOW Ragley Estate, Warwickshire 15-17 September 2016

The APF provides owners, foresters, arborists and anyone interested in trees the opportunity to see the very latest machines and technology being used in the industry today. It's a huge show, with machines and demonstrations spread out over a two-mile track. Those interested in traditional crafts will also find plenty to interest them – the woodland area is home to green woodworkers, coppice crafts and Woodlands.co.uk, who will be attending for the first time. The Ragley Estate is just south of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire.

Tickets are £20 on the gate. **Advance tickets are discounted to £18** and groups of ten or more pay £16 each. They are available via the **APF website here BEFORE 5 SEPTEMBER.**

# APF 2016

The UK's largest forestry, woodland and arboricultural exhibition







## Bentley Weald Woodfair – discount tickets

23–25 September 2016 Lewes, East Sussex

The Bentley Woodfair, the annual celebration of woodlands, timber and related crafts, is almost upon us. Once again we can offer a discount to SWOG members. Entry is usually £12 on the day, but we can offer a special discount to SWOG members. Simply **download the voucher** from this link, print it and present it on the gate to secure entrance for a bargain £10. More details are on the **Bentley website here**.

The SWOG stall will be in its usual place, and we look forward to seeing lots of members to hear about how things are going in your woods.



## Wise About Woods one-day courses

*Limited spaces are still available. Visit the RFS website for more details.*

### Course 1: Essential guide to caring for your wood, Wednesday 21 September 2016

Instructor: Professor Julian Evans OBE FICFor  
Location: Ashley Green and RFS Hockeridge Wood, near Berkhamsted, Bucks

### Course 2: Getting to grips with conifer identification, Wednesday, 28 September 2016

Instructor: Matt Parratt  
Location: Lynford Arboretum, Thetford Forest, Norfolk

### Course 3: Essentials for measuring your trees Wednesday, 5 October 2016

Instructor: Mike Jones MICFor



PROMOTING THE WISE MANAGEMENT OF TREES AND WOODS

Location: Ashley Green and RFS Hockeridge Wood, near Berkhamsted, Bucks

### Course 4: Grading and measuring your timber, Wednesday, 12 October 2016

Instructor: Gavin Munro  
Location: Lowther Castle and Estate, near Penrith, Cumbria.

**Prices: RFS member £55, non-members £65**

The courses are open to members and non-members, and will be a great starting point for anyone who wishes to learn more about caring for trees and woods. For more information and to book go to [www.rfs.org.uk/eventss](http://www.rfs.org.uk/eventss).