

A group of people, including a man in a green shirt and a woman in a pink jacket, are standing in a field of tall green plants. In the background, there is a dense forest of trees. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a natural area.

Small Woodland Owners' Group Newsletter August 2017

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Woodland Creation Grant confirmed for 2018

With woodland planting statistics at a low point, and given the uncertainty surrounding woodland grants in the light of Brexit, it is good to hear that Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey has confirmed a £13 million fund to help landowners plant more trees to protect wildlife, boost the timber sector and reduce flood risk.

Farmers, foresters and land managers across the UK will be able to apply for up to £6,800 per hectare to plant, weed and protect more trees when application forms for the next round of the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant are made available in September.

Eligibility

Woodland owners must have a Forestry Commission-approved management plan to be eligible for a grant, and although the system is not utterly simple, it is worth persevering as the grants are valuable. There is a **helpful decision tree here**, which explains the whole process.

More information about eligibility for the



grant is available via the **Forestry Commission website here**.

Woodland is one of the scheme's priorities and funding is available to:

- create new woodland
- support the preparation of management plans
- address tree health issues
- improve existing woodlands

Application forms and guidance are available from the Forestry Commission in September and the application window opens in January 2018.

Planting for the future

If you are unsure what to plant in your woodland or would like advice about the best species to resist pests, diseases and climate



changes, take a look at the Forestry Commission's pages on **Managing England's Woodlands and Climate Change**. John Weir, a forester of many year's experience, is the FC

advisor for woodland creation and resilience. He writes, 'Over the last ten years there has been a significant increase in the number of pests and diseases attacking our trees, and this is compounding the challenges of adapting to a changing climate'.

The forestry industry in England is reliant on relatively few tree species. Five conifer species account for 88% of the softwood forests and five broadleaf species (oak, ash, beech, sycamore and birch) make up over 72% of the hardwood woodland resource. Many productive broadleaf trees, such as alder, small-leaved lime, hornbeam and poplar, which declined in popularity, could play a larger part our planting mix. It is therefore vital to plant thoughtfully, taking into account diversity of species, and predictions for future climatic conditions.

Grown in Britain Week 2017

Grown in Britain launches its fifth annual celebration of the British timber trade with a week of events on 9 October. This year's conference focuses on adding value to woodland assets and will take place at the Blackstock Estate near Hellingly in East Sussex. Jointly organised by the CLA, the Forestry Commission, and Grown in Britain, it will provide practical advice ranging from woodland creation and funding options, to tree health and commercial markets for forest products.

During the afternoon, a series of practical workshops will be held on tackling tree pests and diseases, timber supply for the Kent Renewable Energy Project and making woodland part of your profit and loss account. There will also be a small exhibition area featuring organisations and businesses involved in woodland and forestry.

Grown in Britain CEO Dougal Driver, adds: 'This conference, alongside our recent video for on "Realising the value of Your Hardwoods," illustrates the potential for landowners in actively managing their woodlands for



environmental and economic benefit.'

The conference is aimed at landowners with woodland not currently in active management, also those considering investing in woodlands or woodland creation, and managers of established woodland. The conference, which is sponsored by Euroforest, will cost £50 per delegate with a special rate of £35 for CLA members and Grown in Britain licence holders. To book a place online go to www.cla.org.uk and search for South East events or call the CLA South East office on 01264 313434. To learn more about events and activities during Grown in Britain week 2017, visit the **website**.

2017 BRITISH WOODLANDS SURVEY

Take the survey

The Sylva Foundation developed the British Woodlands Survey to provide a voice to the thousands of woodland owners and forestry professionals in Britain, with the aim of influencing the development of policy, practice and research which is fit for purpose.

The survey is open until the end of September. BWS2017 is led by researchers from Forest Research, Sylva Foundation, University of Oxford and the Woodland Trust. Take the survey here:

www.sylva.org.uk/bws2017



Charter for Trees, Woods and People

In November we will celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest with the launch of a new **Charter for Trees, Woods and People**. Help shape the future and support Britain's trees and forests by signing the Tree Charter. More than 74,000 people have already lent their support to the campaign and there's still time to join in. Visit the website, sign the charter, and in return the Woodland Trust will plant a tree for every signature.

The latest edition of the campaign's *Leaf* magazine can be downloaded free from the **Common Ground website** here.

SWOG's big butterfly meetings

SWOG has been delighted to be able to organise three butterfly-themed workshops with the aid of Steve Wheatley and Neil Hulme of Butterfly Conservation.

Rich Hare, now our resident lepidopteran expert, went along to them.

About a dozen SWOG members, owners and other interested parties joined us at Plattershill Wood in West Sussex on a close to perfect day in early July for spotting butterflies. It was warm and sunny with a very light breeze. If anything, it was a little too hot early on, but as the afternoon went by, it cooled slightly.

Among the 13 or so species we identified, the most abundant was probably the Silver-washed Fritillary. Others included White and Red Admirals, Meadow Browns, Commas, Grizzled Skippers and Large and Small Whites.

Plattershill Wood had benefited from the track and ride improvement scheme last year, and the ride was cleared of imposing and overhanging trees, letting in the light and encouraging new growth and new species to thrive. New species of ground and shrub layer flora is one of the major drivers in encouraging



The ride at Plattershill.

butterflies into your wood, and it was great to see the almost immediate benefits of the work.

Steve Wheatley from Butterfly Conservation, who led the workshop has put together a handy ID chart showing the species we saw and those that could potentially be found in the area (see link on page 5).

Drizzle in Tottington

If conditions at Plattershill proved to be almost perfect, those at Tottington two weeks later were exactly the opposite. It was promising sunshine as I drove along the bottom of the South Downs to the event at a woodland close to the village of Small Dole in the Adur Valley, but as soon as we got out of our cars it started to drizzle, then fluctuated between a light rain and heavy mist for the rest of the afternoon.

All was not lost however! Leading the meeting was butterfly expert Neil Hulme, whose special interest is in fritillaries. We visited one of the areas where work is in progress to create a perfect habitat for the rarely seen Pearl-bordered fritillary. According to Neil, these were in abundance when he first became interested in the subject in the 1970s, and the much larger Silver-washed fritillary was then in decline. It is now common to this and many other woods in the area.

Neil is a very enthusiastic proponent of any



A male Silver-washed Fritillary.

woodland management. He maintains that even the smallest tweaks can make a difference. The felling of a carefully selected oak or ash standard or some coppicing and scalloping can allow enough light in to make a huge difference, not just to the butterfly population, but for wildlife in general.

SWOG members clearly enjoyed the workshops. Peter Rossiter, who attended the Plattershill meeting, said, 'We found it most informative and interesting and the small group size allowed us plenty of opportunity for discussion with the experts leading the group. It was also good to meet fellow small woodland owners for the first time and to hear their experiences'. Nicholas Harris, who shared the damp conditions at Tottington, enjoyed 'a fascinating meeting with many informed and delightful people. The rain didn't matter!'

Thanks to all those SWOG members in Plattershill, Combwell and Tottington woods for kindly granting access to their woodlands. We are also grateful to Steve and Neil for sharing



Neil Hulme leads the workshop at Tottington.

their expertise and enthusiasm. They have produced three ID charts with information about the butterfly species which can be encouraged in these woodlands and useful advice about management techniques which will support butterfly populations. They can be downloaded from the **SWOG website here**.

Neil can also be spotted on **Countryfile**, discussing how to improve conditions for Purple Emperors. The episode is from 9 July and Neil appears at 48 minutes in minutes in **here**.



*Click on the titles to be taken to the full blogs or videos on the **Woodlands.co.uk** website.*

Bird and bumblebee decline

There are many reasons for a decline in the number of birds and bumblebees. A lack of suitable nesting sites can be a problem for bees as well as birds. Bee species vary in their requirements and nests can turn up in unexpected places, from lofts to compost heaps to long grass.

Rivers, rainfall abstraction and pollution

A dry winter and spring has led to low river levels and poor water quality. This in turn affects animal populations. Numbers of water voles, for example, have declined by 90% since the 1970s, because low river levels make them more vulnerable to predation.

Foliar feeding - the Venus flytrap

Native to the wetlands of North and South Carolina, the Venus flytrap has long fascinated scientists.

Woodland goats

The volunteers at Tortworth Arboretum are working to restore the small woodland with its

profusion of magnificent trees. Unfortunately, they have to deal with generations of brambles and undergrowth. Time to call in the experts: a couple of goats.

Woodland birds and deer

British woodlands support large populations of free-roaming deer, which graze on young trees and shoots, thus decreasing foliage. One impact of their destruction is the decline in bird populations, who are deprived of habitat.

Tar spots

As summer moves on, many of our plants and trees begin to look a bit past their best - some wither or dry and others, especially sycamore, planes and maple, acquire tar spots.

TV

Bushcraft tools: the knife

In this new series of videos Annette Stickler guides us through some of the most common tools needed for bushcraft skills in woodlands. Often the first tool most people want to know about, a knife is vital. Annette answers questions on what type of knife to use, how much a good bushcraft knife costs and what is the best knife for use in the woodlands.

Ancient oaks

Julian Hight has travelled extensively in his quest to discover more about some of the world's ancient trees – researching their history and the legends behind them, sourcing engravings and old photographs, as well as producing new documentation to tell the stories of these important trees. Here he celebrates a few specific ancient oak trees in the UK – calling for their preservation and also for the planting of new oaks.



South Downs Show

19–20 August 2017

Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Petersfield,
Hampshire

www.southdownsshow.co.uk

Wilderness Gathering

16–20 August

West Knoyle, Wiltshire

www.wildernessgathering.co.uk

Stock Gaylard Oak Fair

26–27 August 2017

Sturminster Newton, Dorset

www.stockgaylard.com

Wychwood Forest Fair

3 September 2017

Charlbury, Oxfordshire

www.wychwoodproject.org

Confor Woodland Show

7–8 September 2017

Longleat, Wiltshire

www.confor.org.uk/about-confor

Belmont Woodfest & Country Fair

9–10 September 2017

Faversham, Kent

www.belmont-house.org



Bentley Weald Wood Fair

15–17 September 2017

Lewes, East Sussex

www.bentley.org.uk/woodfair

European Woodworking Show

16–17 September 2017

Cressing Temple Barns, Essex

www.ews2017.com

Surrey Hills Wood Fair

30 Sept–1 Oct 2017

Birtley House, Guildford

www.surreyhills.org/events

Grown in Britain Week

9–15 October 2017

www.growninbritain.org

European Woodworking Show 16-17 September, Cressing Temple Barns, Essex

This is the best woodworking show of its kind as judged by many well journeyed demonstrators and woodworking aficionados from around the globe. Demonstration-led, with an eclectic mix of workers in wood from furniture makers to basket makers, chair makers to fabulous wood turners, carvers, bodgers, pryographers, knife makers, marionette makers, Japanese joinery and toy makers to toolmakers, it is not to be missed.

Expect to see an eclectic mix of demonstrations and trade stalls with hand tools,

small workshop machinery, sharpening supplies, finishes, tools, timber and much more including horse logging and story telling.

For full details and advance tickets visit
www.ews2017.com



RFS Wise about Woods training course

Royal Forestry Society (RFS) Wise about Woods training courses return in September with a new two-day course on continuous cover forestry in the uplands.

Back by popular demand but in new locations are one-day courses on measuring trees and woodlands, grading timber and an essential guide to caring for your woods.

Spaces are limited to ensure small group sizes. For more information and booking details visit the **RFS website**.

Essentials for measuring trees and woods

Friday, 1 September 2017: 9.30am-4.30pm
Yewfield Baptist Chapel, Yewfield, Hawkshead Hill, Cumbria LA22 0PW



Led by Mike Jones, this course equips you with the knowledge and skill to complete basic woodland measurements that are useful for guiding future management activities.

Continuous cover forestry in the uplands

Two-day course 19 and 20 September 2017
Instructor: Dr Jens Haufe
Woodlands Hall, Llanfrwog, Ruthin LL15 2AN
This one day training course is being run in partnership with the Continuous Cover Forestry Group (www.ccfg.org.uk) and will give a general introduction to the principles of Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF). Indoor sessions will



PROMOTING THE WISE MANAGEMENT OF TREES AND WOODS

cover underlying ecological principles, thinning, stand stability and transformation methods. Practical exercises include thinning, site assessment and development of management plans.

Grading and measuring your timber

Thursday, 21 September 2017: 10am-4pm
Instructor: Gavin Munro
Whitney Sawmill, Old Station Yard, Hereford HR3 6EZ

An excellent hands-on introduction for anyone interested in learning more about timber quality and grading. The course covers the basics of wood anatomy and the growth of high quality timber trees. The course starts with an indoor session and then moves out onto the estate to look at examples of standing trees with various features of note.

Essential guide to caring for your wood

Wednesday, 27 September 2017: 10am-4pm
Instructor: Prof Julian Evans, OBE FICFOR
St Mary's Hall, 8 High Street, Overton, Hampshire RG25 3HA

This course provides an overview of the key considerations and issues when caring for a woodland. It serves as an excellent introduction for those who are new to woodland ownership or interested in the



practical aspects of caring for a woodland. The course includes a guided tour of Northdown Plantation, Julian's own wood.

Supporting ancient woodland restoration



Support from the Woodland Trust for Ancient Woodland

The Woodland Trust has created a select panel of professional forestry and ecological consultants to provide no-obligation advice and support to owners of ancient and PAWS woodland across

the south-east and east of England

What does the panel do?

- Carries out detailed surveys to assess distribution, abundance, and threats to the remnants of the ancient woodland.
- Maps the findings in a specialist report with pragmatic woodland management recommendations to inform a wider management plan.

Who can receive support?

- Landowners whose ancient woodland has been planted with non-native conifers.
- Ancient woodland owners struggling with invasive species such as rhododendron.
- Further consultancy support may also be available for the practical aspects of planning, and management work.

Get in touch

Is your ancient woodland in the south-east or east of England? Has it been planted with non-native conifers (PAWS)? Does it have invasive species? The **Field Studies Council** also has a useful guide about indicator plants.

Email restoration@woodlandtrust.org.uk to find out if you are eligible for support.

Help for owners

One of the best ways to learn about local conditions in your area and to discuss matters of woodland maintenance is to share your experiences with other owners. If you would like to get in touch with your woodland neighbours, but never seem to bump into them while at your wood, SWOG can help. We only share email addresses with permission, but if you email judith@swog.org.uk, she can link you up.

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. View it on the SWOG website here:

www.swog.org.uk/courses



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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