

Small Woodland Owners' Group

Newsletter December 2017

Launching the Tree Charter
Christmas book offers
Woodland creation grants



Woodland creation grants in the Midlands

The HS2 railway line remains a controversial subject, but qualifying woodland owners and managers within a 25 mile radius of the proposed route can benefit from a new woodland creation grant, designed to mitigate the habitat loss that this infrastructure project will cause.

As part of the construction of HS2, a green corridor of connected wildlife habitats is being created alongside the railway. This includes around 7 million new trees and shrubs on phase one of the railway, from London to the West Midlands.

In addition, a separate £5 million fund has been established to support the restoration of existing ancient woodland sites and the creation of new woodlands. The first £1 million of funding is being managed by the Forestry Commission on behalf of HS2 Ltd and



applications for grants will open in January.

The minimum plot size for woodland creation is 5 ha, but grants for PAWS restoration are available for plots as small as 0.5 ha.

Full details of the grants and a map of the relevant area are on the **Forestry Commission website here**.

Just like the Forestry Commission's Countryside Stewardship scheme, funding is also available for capital items such as tree shelters, deer-proof netting and gates.

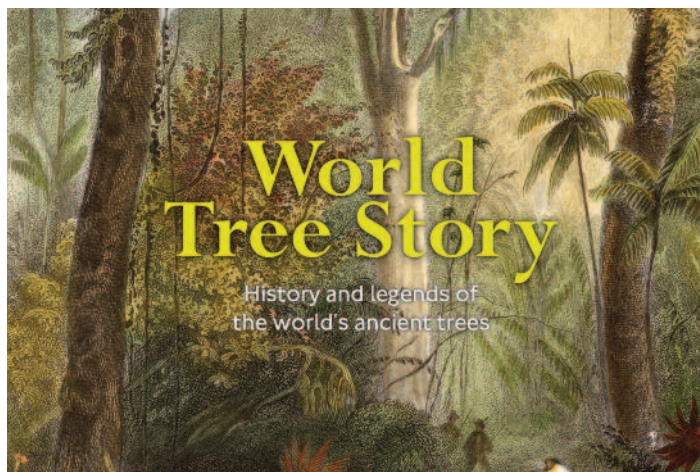
Veterans of previous FC application processes will not be surprised by the level of detail needed in the application, but it is worth persevering. Owners could also consider employing a land agent to help out.

More grants for Oxfordshire and Berkshire woodlands

TOE² (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) is another source of woodland grants. Network Rail is making funds available for biodiversity following the habitat loss resulting from the electrification of the Great Western Railway line. Working with TOE², the aim is to support biodiversity projects that provide long lasting improvements to wildlife habitats, which includes woodland improvement, linkage and creation. For more details, take a look at TOE²'s website **www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk**



Click on the map to see it full size on the FC website.



World Tree Story – history and legends of the world's ancient trees

Following the success of *Britain's Tree Story* published by the National Trust in 2011, Julian Hight set out on a photographic odyssey to capture 100 ancient, historic trees across 39 countries around the world, sourcing the subjects from archive engravings and photographs, and re-photographing them in the present day to add historic context. The result is **World Tree Story**, a lavishly illustrated 256-page hardback book celebrating some of the world's oldest, largest and most famous trees (and sometimes not so famous). It also tells the human tale, and ultimately calls for their preservation.

SWOG members can secure a signed copy of *World Tree Story* with an exclusive 15% discount (refunded following purchase) by entering the code SWOG when ordering here: www.worldtreestory.co.uk/shop

Green Gold: The lost journals of John Jeffrey

We are looking forward to reading Gabriel Hemery's forthcoming novel, *Green Gold: The lost journals of John Jeffrey*, which will be published by the crowd-sourced publisher Unbound. *Green Gold* tells the story of Scottish tree hunter John Jeffrey who was dispatched in 1850 to seek highly-prized exotic tree species in North America. Jeffrey gave his name to the Californian *Pinus Jeffreyi* but three years after setting out, he disappeared without a trace. Was he lost to love, violence or the Gold Rush? Hemery, author of *The New Sylva*, has provided a fictional biography based on a remarkable true story.

Subscribers' names will appear in the list of supporters in the published book. This makes a great present and Gabriel has provided a gift card so that there is something physical to put under the tree. To learn more about this fascinating story, visit **Gabriel's website** and to subscribe for just £20 visit the **Unbound website here**.

Green Gold

The journals of John Jeffrey

1. Visit unbound.com/books/green-gold
2. Choose ebook or paperback
3. Pick your Reward
4. Follow the book's production
5. Receive your book
6. Enjoy your Reward

Subscribe
Offer

Launching the Tree Charter

We have reported on the progress of the Charter for Trees Woods and People regularly over the past two years, so it was great to celebrate the launch at Lincoln on 6 November. More than 70 organisations have worked collaboratively under the leadership of the Woodland Trust to create a charter that aims to put protection for trees and woodlands at the heart of government environmental policy and to celebrate the role that trees play in all our lives.

Forest Law

The launch coincided with the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest, the world's first piece of environmental legislation which was a vital successor to Magna Carta. In the 13th century the royal forest covered nearly a third of southern England, and the rights of the common people to gather firewood, hunt or graze their livestock were severely restricted. The Forest Law, introduced by William the Conqueror, and extended by his successors was, unsurprisingly, deeply unpopular. Infractions were punishable by brutal corporal punishment, imprisonment or death. The 1217 Forest Charter restored the rights of freemen to access and use the forests for gathering firewood and grazing.

A charter for small woodland owners

The Charter of 2017 has ten principles and SWOG is proud to have played a part in contributing to it. Small woodland ownership is covered in the principle, 'Grow forests of opportunity and innovation', which is dedicated



A candlelit procession from Lincoln Cathedral to Lincoln Castle signalled the start of an evening of entertainment and speeches.

to the forestry industry and the sustainable management of woodlands. The final clause is the key one: 'Encourage and support sustainable woodland management.'

'The majority of woodland in the UK is privately owned, and the way it is managed has an impact on the national economy and environment. Policies around woodland ownership should encourage sustainable management practice and cooperation between owners and managers of woods, in order to ensure quality and consistency of woodland management across the landscape.'

The Charter is a reminder that trees are a vital part of life for all of us: the environmental benefits of trees are well known, studies have proved that time spent in woodlands is good for our health, and woodlands and forest are vital habitat. Forests and trees are celebrated in cultures around the world and trees have

inspired artists and writers for centuries.

The Charter is intended to inform legislators and to promote woodlands, forests, timber and woodland crafts. Tree Charter Day will be celebrated on the last Saturday in November with ‘events that celebrate and reinvigorate the relationship between people and trees’.

Charter Poles

Charter poles are being installed at 11 sites around the country in addition to Lincoln. All will be in place by spring 2018. Carved by the artist Simon Clements from wood supplied by the Crown Estate, they are located at

Bute Park, Cardiff

Sylva Wood Centre, Abingdon

Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool

Belvoir Wood, Belfast

Langs Craig, Dumbarton

Grizedale Forest, Lake District

Sherwood Forest, Nottingham

Manchester City Forest Park

New Forest National Park Visitor Centre

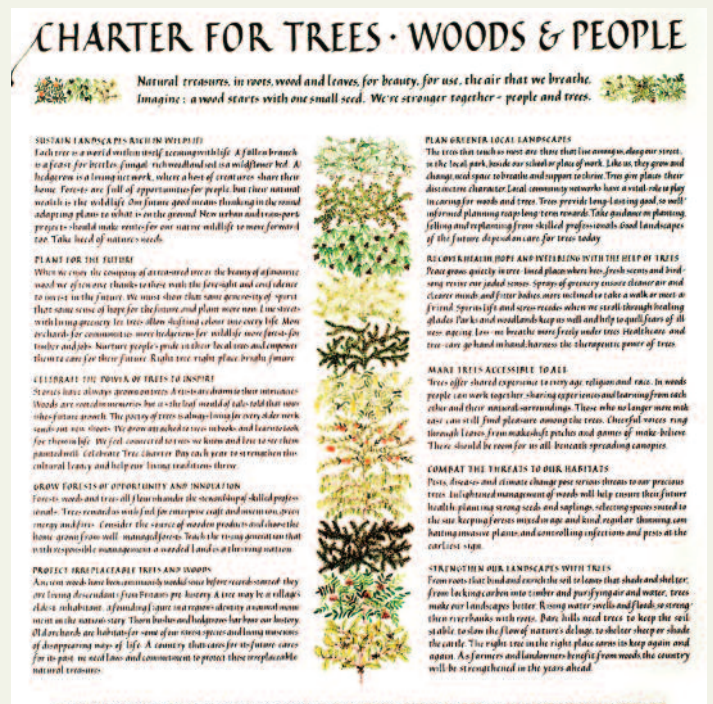
Burnhall Viewing Point, Durham



Once the words had been perfected, they had to be written down and displayed in an accessible form. In keeping with the theme of commemorating the 1217 Charter of the Forest, the 2017 charter has been inscribed in oak gall ink by the renowned calligrapher Patricia Lovett MBE. Unlike the original, it has not been written on vellum, but on archive-quality paper. The central decoration features foliage from 11 common British trees.

Patricia has written a **fascinating blog** about how she got to grips with the commission. The resulting document is simple, clear and beautiful.

More than 126,000 people have signed the Charter and **you can do so here.**



*Click on the charter to see a full screen version
of the charter artwork.*

Woodland first aid

Woodland emergencies are something none of us really want to contemplate, but assessing risks prior to any kind of woodland work is simply common sense.

A simple health and safety assessment should note:

- The exact location of your woodland that can be relayed to the emergency services.
- How will you call for help – is the mobile phone reception adequate?
- Who knows that you're there?
- Think about the access to your wood – is the gate to the road accessible or locked?
- Do you have a first aid kit with appropriate tools for outdoor work?
- Does anyone in your group have first aid or medical training?

Stay safe and get trained



Accidents can happen to anyone, anywhere, regardless of their expertise and in 2018 SWOG hopes to run a couple of workshops on woodland first aid. In the meantime, Roy Hopkins of **Land**

Based First Aid offers his thoughts.

You may be a professional chainsaw operator or at least have had basic training, or the start of your day in the woods could go something like this:

'Have you got all the kit on the truck sweetheart?'

'Good. Have you got plenty of fuel for the chainsaw?'

'Yes, all good let's get going.'

So everything is organised and a great day of activity in your woodland, be it a large or small,



is on the cards. Trees are felled and logs are cut.

'That was a good morning cutting done and the sandwiches are great. I'm feeling a bit tired so I'll just do a bit more after a cuppa and then call it a day. How about stacking the logs?'

The chainsaw is cranked up, when suddenly, it cuts out and a cry of pain fills the air. *'Argggghhh! Oh my god, quick put your hand over it to stop the bleeding; I'll call for an ambulance.'* *'Oh flipping eck! There's no reception! I've got to run up the bank to get a connection, hold on darling I'll be as quick as I can.'* *'Hurry, I'm feeling faint!'*

This story could unfold in many ways, but there are several ways to ensure that the outcome is a good one.

If you are trained in basic first aid, then that's a great help, but when you are remote working there are many others things to consider. Forestry first aid training is a must for anyone who works with chainsaws or any equipment that can cause injury. This is even more true when you are working alone.

Roy Hopkins runs courses in the south of England and generally holds one a month. Contact him for more details via his website **landbasedfirstaid.co.uk** or call 07895 565250. Email: info@landbasedfirstaid.co.uk

Discounted autumn courses at the Woodland Skills Centre, north Wales

A complete list of courses and prices are available on the **Woodland Skills Centre** website. SWOG members can claim a discount of 10% off the advertised cost or 15% if booking more than one place.

January 2018

- 13 Make a rustic stool
- 14 Make a shave-horse (made from sawn timber)
- 20–21 Make a traditional shave-horse



27–28 Introduction to Green Woodwork using a shave-horse and draw-knife make the legs from green ash and fix them into a seasoned hardwood seat)

All these courses are run at the Woodland Skills Centre in Bodfari, north Wales. The programme is regularly reviewed and the full programme is on their **website**.

Discount from Plumpton College on autumn short courses



Plumpton College in East Sussex offers a wide variety of short courses relevant to woodland owners.

The college currently offers a generous 25% discount to SWOG members on many of their short day or half-day courses. The full list can be **seen here**, along with the booking form. Please mention that you are a SWOG member at the time of booking to secure the discount.

Subjects include woodland archaeology, practical management using hand tools, different uses of felled timber, generating income from coppice woodland, chainsaw competence and maintenance, and green woodworking. It's a great range and one might make a good Christmas present!

Download the **list of discounted courses** and a **booking form** from the SWOG website. To see the complete list of Plumpton's course, visit their main website, **www.plumpton.ac.uk**.

Free land management visit for residents of the High Weald

Land owners in the High Weald are invited to book a free land management visit with one of the High Weald AONB Partnership's new Land Management Project Officers.

Ross Wingfield and Christine Meadows are now available for free land management visits to all High Weald residents with land greater than 1 acre. The visit is an opportunity to:

- explore historic maps that show the development of your property
- earn more about your property's special landscape, archaeology and wildlife features
- understand their contribution to the beauty of the High Weald



- find out more about specialists that can assist you with land management: undertaking surveys, producing management plans, sourcing grants and finding contractors.

To book your free site visit, please contact:

Ross: ross.wingfield@highweald.org or call 01424 725604.

Christine:

christine.meadows@highweald.org or call 01424 723009.

Visit the High Weald website for more information about the support they offer woodland owners, **www.highweald.org**.

Blogs and TV

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

Ancient oak – who should fund research

Oak trees are threatened by several nasty pests and diseases. Who should fund the research into cures or preventative measures? Landowners? The government via DEFRA, or the public via a charitable appeal? Or perhaps a combination of all three?

The monthly mushroom: Fly Agaric

Instantly recognisable as the classic toadstool of fairy tales, Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) is an ectomycorrhizal fungus and highly toxic.

A year in our very own woodland

Yorkshire woodland owner Mark Vesey reflects on his first year of woodland ownership, planting oaks he had nurtured from acorns in seaside buckets.

Plant pigments – the xanthophylls

Xanthophylls are yellow pigments in plants which are responsible for some of the gorgeous

autumnal colours. They also have a vital role to play in dissipating absorbed light energy in winter, when photosynthesis is difficult.

Wildlife and roadkill

While there are reliable statistics available which record the number of humans killed in traffic accidents, the same is not true for animals and wildlife. The People's Trust for Endangered species (PTES) and Project Splatter that are trying to gather detailed information on

roadkill, both have web sites and apps for recording details of roadkill.

Trees and streams

Streams and rivers are sensitive habitats in terms of climate change, with cold water species being particularly at risk. Researchers at Cardiff University have discovered that trees are important to rivers and streams. They provide shade,

which helps keep the water cool enough for the many species that live there, and they provide an important food source. Trees help keep these fresh water ecosystems 'strong' or resilient to adjust to climate change – particularly rising temperatures.



Woodlands TV

How to light a campfire and

How to put out a campfire

Go back to basics with these videos – useful tips for fail-safe fire-lighting and vital instructions on how to douse the embers safely and leave minimal trace in the woods.

An introduction to forest school

Tortworth Arboretum hosts a forest school that enables children to connect with nature.





Excellence in Forestry Awards 2018

‘It’s only through ensuring high quality woodland management and talking about it to a wider world that we will help people distinguish between excellence and exploitation in forestry,’ said Rachel Thomas, the Royal Forestry Society’s Excellence in Forestry co-ordinator.

‘I really would like to encourage more woodland owners from all parts of the forestry sector to enter the Excellence in Forestry awards both in those sectors where they already excel, be it silviculture, farms woods, community or education or all round excellence and resilience; but also in those categories where they might

not be considered the ‘usual suspects’.

‘The RFS Excellence in Forestry Award is a great opportunity to showcase to the forestry sector, and to a wider world, the benefits that society derives from excellent woodland management.’

In 2018 the awards are being held across the west of England, from Cheshire in the north-west to Cornwall in the south-west. There are five categories: Resilient Multipurpose (Duke of Cornwall’s Award), Silviculture, Small and Farm Woodland, Community Woodland and an Education and Learning Award.

Closing date for entries is noon on Tuesday 6 March 2018. Details are available on the **RFS website here**. The Awards will be presented at the National Arboretum at Westonbirt on 13 July 2018.

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 them 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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