



In the Newsletter this Month

Daffodils starting to show through, primroses and even the tips of bluebells. Despite the cold weather, there is a touch of spring to the woods at the moment, and at least in our wood we are working frantically to finish our winter tasks before the birds nest and the leaves start to sprout. Having felled some larch trees, we hope to report next month about a visit from a horse-logger to extract the timber from our bluebell area.

This month we feature the Government response to the Independent Forestry Panel report—this is of interest to all woodland owners, as the resultant forestry strategy will shape policy, grants and advice and support available to small woodland owners, as well as the way in which markets are opened up, and planning applications are considered for woodland businesses.

There is also a really great article on the Gower Charcoal Project, and a feature on the forthcoming horse logging festival in Scotland on 18th May. There is also a list of the dates for the wood fairs taking place this year for which we have dates and links. Finally, we have a lovely article about a SWOG group who met with the

Forestry Commission to talk about woodland management and grants in the North East. It is really lovely to hear about SWOG members banding together to organize meetings that produce real benefit for the woodland owners concerned.

If you have any stories from your woodland, please send them to us at sarah@swog.org.uk. If you have any enquiries about SWOG please contact Judith@swog.org.uk and if you have anything for the web site, please contact rich@swog.org.uk.

In this issue

- Feedback on Rhododendron article
- Government response to Independent Forestry Panel Report
- Gower Charcoal Makers Project
- Horse Logging in the Scottish Borders
- SWOG meeting with Forestry Commission in the North East
- News for small woodland owners
- Upcoming courses and events
- 2013 Woodfairs listing
- On the Blogs and woodlandsTV
- Care of Tracks
- On the SWOG Forum
- How to contribute to your newsletter

Feedback on Rhododendron Article

We had some feedback on our article about Rhododendron from last month's newsletter—here is a selection from two of our readers.

Vivian Cruickshank wrote:

It was interesting to read the article about *Rhododendron*, particularly the mention of bees. I keep bees in my woodland and fortunately do not have any *Rhododendron*, but my neighbouring woodlands do have some. I do get seedlings coming up, but pull them up straight away. My point is that as you say, the honey resulting from bees foraging on the plant is poisonous, but it can also kill the bees. If I did have the plant on my ground, I would attempt to cut off every flower, in order to stop the bees from foraging.

I have nothing good to say about the plant except that it makes good charcoal. It poisons the ground in order to stop other species and even if eradicated, the ground will contain the poison for up to seven years. I feel it is as big a scourge as the dreaded Japanese Knotweed, except that the Knotweed is not poisonous.

And from Stefano Manucci

I have read your article on *Rhododendron* with much interest. In June last year I purchased a 5 acre self seeded woodland adjacent to the house. The land had been neglected for many years and was overgrown with large *Rhododendron* (stems 5 inches plus in some cases). I considered a number of methods (poisoning, mechanical) for clearing the rhododendrons and settled on for the most part cutting them back to a crown in the hope that they will eventually re-grow. My prime driver was that many of the plants were planted with purpose along a track (to be reinstated) and therefore for now at least it would be worth

keeping them albeit in time there may be some plants that I will want eradicate.

The proposal to manage the *Rhododendron* as fire wood in my mind makes good sense (and no requirement for a felling license either). Whilst I have managed to salvage the 'logs' from the cutting back I have a number of very large piles of branches to dispose of. Conversion to fire wood seems very sensible especially against the alternatives of burning on site or chipping.

Government Response to Independent Forestry Panel Report

On Thursday 31st January 2013, the Government announced its long-awaited response to the Independent Forestry Panel (IFP) Report. And with it came the good news that there would be no sell-off of the Public Forest Estate (PFE) in England, and that the Government accepted many of the recommendations of the (IFP). But the devil is in the detail of this report, and after taking time to read it, a lot of questions remain, because it is not clear whether or not this response really is good news, nor is it clear what they are going to do, by when, and who is going to do it.

Reading the Executive Summary, it all looks very promising. In particular, the Government agrees with the panel on



“The need to develop a new woodland culture and a resilient forestry and woodland sector,

The value of the Public Forest Estate, which will continue to benefit from public ownership, be held in trust for the nation and be managed by a new, operationally-independent body,

The importance of protecting our woodland assets,

The need to bring more woodland into active management and increase the extent of woodland cover in England,

The need to help the sector to find its voice and improve its economic performance,

The importance of preserving and maximising the social and environmental benefits provided by trees and woodlands, particularly in and around our towns and cities,

The scope for developing new markets based around a better understanding of the value and potential of our trees, woods and forests,

The value of retaining a skilled cadre of forestry experts within the public sector.”

But what are the Government actually saying, and what are they actually going to do? I have drilled down into a few of the areas where I have concerns that this policy will deliver on the ground what the IFP proposed, and whether this policy document follows the spirit of the IFP report.

Ownership and Governance

The great news is that the PFE is going to remain in public ownership, overseen by a new body that will evolve from the commercial arm of the Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise. This will hold the public forests in trust for the nation and be charged with maximising the economic, societal and environmental benefits of the PFE.

Course Directory

Institute of Chartered Foresters

Forthcoming events are on

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

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

A large range of courses for woodland owners

For *BTCV Short Courses*

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/536/level>

For *BTCV long courses*

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level3/561/level>

Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)

To see upcoming courses for 2013 visit

<http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/>

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

To see courses for the coming year visit

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/events/courses.aspx>

LILI Courses

For the full range of courses from the Low Impact Living Initiative, please see

<http://www.lowimpact.org/courses.htm>

Wildlife Trusts

All 47 UK Wildlife Trusts run events of potential interest to woodland owners. For further details please see

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/whats-on>

It is also intended that the new body will not have to sell off land to balance the books, although it may buy and sell land as part of its role in maximising public forest benefit. So far so good. However there are some concerns over the way in which this will be implemented.

First, there is the language of the response. Throughout the IFP report, the benefits of forests and woodlands have been listed in the following order – environment/biodiversity, societal/community, economic. Throughout the response, *the order has been reversed*, giving economic benefits apparent priority, a feeling which is enhanced by the imperative for the new body to become more financially independent, and to develop new entrepreneurial ways of managing forests. While this is not a bad thing, and indeed was mentioned in the report, it was not the first element of Recommendation 26, which included a provision for intervention in the event of market failure, something that the Government response has omitted in favour of a market-driven approach.

Recommendation 28 of the IFP report clearly stated that this new Public Forest Management body (PFM) would be independent from Government direction “*except in matters where it delivers international obligations on behalf of the Government or in cases where Parliament feels the body is acting outside of, or failing to deliver its mandate.*” In the response, however, the Government intends to retain oversight of the new body and give it direction, making it more likely to be centrally directed than was the intention of the IFP.

The role of the PFM body was outlined in Recommendation 26, and this was a very strong recommendation which was very specific about the role. However the response is that these recommendations are only a starting point for further discussion with stakeholders (without defining who those stakeholders are). These are the nitty-gritty of the IFP report, and the Government response leaves us wondering which if any of these intended purposes the new PFM body will actually have. The response tells us the PFM body *could* have these roles, but not that it *will* have these roles. Important roles, such as: Maximising public value in terms of wildlife, recreation, education and cultural heritage, exemplar of sustainable woodland management, exemplar of conservation of wildlife in woodlands and associated habitats, promoting quality access, managing market failure. All these roles are up for negotiation.

There is also the issue of governance of this new body. The intention was that this would be overseen by a panel of Guardians, and with stakeholder and community consultation at the heart. The Guardians would be responsible for overseeing the new body, for ensuring that the public benefit and statutory duties are delivered via the Charter, and the Guardians (or Trustees) would be accountable to Parliament. This isn't what the Government says will happen. The new body will have a Board that will report to the Secretary of State at DEFRA. The Guardians are seen as an add-on, a sort of expert panel who will advise on and support the new PFM body remit. Indeed, there is not a commitment to establishing Guardians in this review (if you read it carefully they are “*exploring the scope for establishing a separate group of Guardians...*”). The role of Guardians seems to be substantially watered-down when compared with the intention of the IFP report. And we don't even know who they will be – what will be the balance between large and small, industry and community, environment and economics, and where will the involvement come for those at the grass roots who live and work in the woods themselves?

Then there is stakeholder consultation. Recommendation 30 suggests that there should be stakeholder consultation on the annual corporate plan. This should be at *local* level and in partnership with “*friends' groups, charities, businesses and others...*”. The response suggests that this consultation would not happen annually. The Language is also interesting – although there is an expectation that the PFM body will engage with stakeholders and communities, the order is again reversed – “*local businesses, charities and communities...this will involve working effectively with friends groups...*”. Again, the ordering of words puts businesses ahead of local friends' groups and communities. And they will only have a say in a rolling multi-year (not defined how many years) plan, rather than an annual say in the corporate plan, which gives the feel that this plan will become expert-led, rather than community-led, and consultation will lack teeth.

Protection and Conservation

Protection is very much seen in this response as being protection from threats to plant health. This area of the response looks good. Professor Boyd's review of Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity, additional funding for re-



search and a commitment to develop and maintain research in this field.

There is also mention of management of invasive plant species such as *Rhododendron* and management of species that harm regeneration including grey squirrel and wild deer, although the onus is placed on individual landowners and

it is not clear how this will be co-ordinated. There is also a commitment to research appropriate sustainable woodland creation in the light of climate change.

The IFP report stopped short of recommending that ancient woodland (ASNW) and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) gain greater statutory protection under planning legislation, but the intention was there to ensure they have a high level of protection, and in Recommendation 15, that the national forest inventory should inform SSSI designation with the implication that this designation be extended to at least some ASNW. The IFP report felt planning policy should “...*refuse planning permission for developments that would have an adverse impact upon them...*”, (where “them” is ASNW, veteran trees and other priority habitats). But the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) carries the rider “...*unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.*” The difficulty is in defining what clear needs and benefits are. This is likely to come from case law and appeals – something for which developers have much greater available funding to take to appeal than councils have to defend decisions, with the inevitable consequence that some developments will proceed unchallenged. Despite the rhetoric of putting a high priority on protection of ASNW, new infrastructure developments of roads and rail (including HS2) will result in destruction or adverse effects upon over 80 sites of precious, vanishing ASNW. IFP clearly stated an adverse effect should result in refusal of planning permission, but these projects are going ahead despite this. This does not bode well for existing levels of protection under the NPPF.

Recommendation 13 deals with landscape-scale conservation as envisaged by the Lawton Report (2010) and the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP). It is clear that the intention was to put a new advisory body at the heart of delivering this via designation of new SSSI, pro-active identification and management of woodlands, greater connectivity between habitats, and restoration of nationally-important forest habitats. The Government response devolves this all to Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), with a danger that landscape-scale is reduced again to local scale, and the potential benefits of the NEWP are lost, and woodlands are lost within many competing priorities for funding.

Future of the Forestry Commission

All of this brings us nicely to the future of the Forestry Commission (FC). With Forest Enterprise becoming the PFM body, this leaves us with Forest Research (which is going to continue, at least in some form, possibly with increased resources), and Forest Services (FS) which is the branch of the FC with which many small woodland owners are familiar, being the body from whom they get grants and to which they go for advice, and to submit management plans, and to obtain felling licences.

Recommendation 23 was quite positive about a new, more robust, and expanded role for FS, which would take on the duties of the FC and the Forestry Commissioners. It should “... *become a public body, charged with championing, protecting and increasing benefits from trees, woodlands and forests that are good for people, good for nature and good for the green economy.*” It would have a pivotal role in developing ecosystem services, pulling in re-



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 Coppicing.co.uk/>

Yorwoods offer courses for woodland owners and managers in the Yorkshire area

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

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management offer a wide range of courses, some of which are of interest to woodland owners

<http://www.ieem.net/otherevents.asp>

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

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/event/2013/03/01/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>

sources, working with land owners and Government, look at ways to develop profit from woodlands, and to enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem services. This looked like a robust recommendation and an enhanced and expanded role for FS. Alarm bells ring for me at the response. *“The Government needs to retain a core of forestry expertise with the capacity to deliver a range of functions, duties and powers including, for example...”* and goes on to list some of the potential roles including *“Enabling the sector to protect, improve and expand England’s trees woods and forests through light touch regulation, grants, other incentives and advice.”* All well and good, except that no commitment is given to how and where this might be delivered. Natural England (NE) and the Environment Agency (EA) are undergoing a triennial review which will be published in Spring 2013, and the general vibes are that these bodies will both merge and subsume the new FS organisation.

The IFP wanted advice to be proactive – for this body to go out, look for under-managed woodlands, and offer advice and help and incentives proactively to manage them (Recommendation 11). Currently, advice is available, as are grants, from the existing FS arm of the FC. It is free to landowners. However the Government response to Recommendation 11 commits only to making sure landowners know where to go for advice and help, not that this advice or help will continue to be impartial or free. For small woodland owners, the requirement to pay for advice would preclude its uptake for many.

Even more worrying is the prospect that this remnant of the FC will be split into two – some functions being subsumed by DEFRA and some going to the new remnant body, wherever this sits. Its future does not look like the new, robust, proactive public body envisaged by the IFP.

Improvement of existing woodlands – delivering the benefits

This section of the response covers economic, societal and environmental benefits. This section starts with some good words, including the potential for realising environmental benefits, including ecosystem services, and the realisation that minimal management can be a positive decision for some woodlands. The aim is to increase the proportion of woodlands in active management to two thirds, eventually to 80%. However this depends on the provision of appropriate, timely, independent and expert advice and help – the Government have commissioned research on the best way to deliver this, but it remains to be seen whether this will continue to be free, an essential feature of current FC advice.

There is also a commitment to a review by Peter Bonfield of the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to develop a ...*“clear roadmap to a new and successful future for England’s forest-based supply chains.”* Looking at the CONFOR web site, through which this is to be delivered, the vast majority of stakeholders participating in this review are large and corporate, with The Small Woods Association being the only voice of those small woodland owners who, individually, do not and cannot produce sufficient to market their products individually. The action-plan for developing markets is very industry-led, and market-led, and there is little evidence of what can or will be done in the event that the market fails to deliver.

There is a great deal here about developing wood fuel markets, and of bringing woodland products to market from publicly-owned woodlands not in FC ownership, including those in Councils and National Parks. There is also a commitment to expand use of wood for construction, although the response falls short of the “wood first” principle envisaged in Recommendation 21 – rather that *“...local planning authorities, developers and their architects should consider how locally-sourced*



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/

materials can make a strong contribution to local character and distinctiveness". This is not "wood first", rather "think about wood".

Recommendation 5 stated that "*Education authorities and early learning centres should ensure that every child has an element of woodland-based learning that will, for example, encourage woodland owners to form a partnership with a local school*". This is not accepted, instead placing the onus on the school to decide what is right for their pupils, and no funding is provided other than the Pupil Premium, for which there are many competing demands, including Forest Schools. The response also appears to equate visits to woodlands with Forest Schools – clearly the two are very different.

Community involvement appears to be limited to the Localism Act, and the designation of Local Green Space "*which could include woodlands*". But these are limited in size, and to urban areas, towns and villages, not rural areas, and offer limited scope for protection of larger areas. Recommendation 8 is robust, and envisages woodland strategies being integrated into Local Plans, as well as encouraging tourism and leisure based businesses. The response is more along the lines that these plans *could* include woodlands, rather than *should*. It is very watered-down.

Access is also a major strand of this response, as expected, given the strong recommendations surrounding access in the IFP Report (Recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 7, plus elements of others). The Woodland Trust Access Standard, and the VisitWoods gateway is seen as the way in which people can find out which woodlands are open to public visits. But many woodlands that are open to the public some of the time are not included on this database. There is a great deal about planting trees close to people and incentivising access, but this is based around encouragement, rather than funding. Opening to the public costs money in insurance premiums, staffing, maintenance, damage repair and tree-safety among other things, and there is nothing in the response about how anything other than encouragement will be used, despite these costs being prohibitive to small woodland owners.

Potential for nature is left until last, and will be delivered via Local Nature Partnerships and Nature Improvement Areas outlined in the NEWP. A new, welcome, Open Habitats policy is to be introduced to protect lowland heath where woodland is encroaching. A commitment to use of biodiversity offsetting is again given: the idea that if a development damages habitat, this can be offset by investment in habitat elsewhere. This opens the way for trading in habitats, including ancient woodland – offsetting loss of valuable habitat in one area by creation of more, lower quality habitat in another makes no ecological sense, since this is like selling the crown jewels for a skip-load of cheap jewellery.

What is good is the acknowledgement that the priorities of economics, community and wildlife can work together by sustainable woodland management that can produce both good wood and timber, and good habitat, and potentially also provide for public access. However where the balance will lie is yet to be determined.

Woodland Expansion and Realising Value

There is a commitment to accelerate the creation of woodland that has been happening through the 20th Century. The response makes much of partnerships, such as those developed in the National Forest. The principle of the right tree in the right place is reiterated. So far so good.

However, the key for privately-owned land, which is the majority of land, is to get landowners to plant trees *where it suits them and their local conditions and priorities*. Such a *laissez-faire* approach is unlikely to deliver the ecosystem and biodiversity benefits that can come from a planned landscape-scale approach. And there is an imperative to make this woodland economically viable as possible. There is virtually no mention of finance other than via private finance, the woodland carbon code, ecosystem services, biodiversity offsetting and philanthropic investment for the purposes of public relations and business im-



age.

In order to get funding for projects that recognise the value that woodlands provide to the ecosystem, we need to be able to value these services properly. This process is in its infancy, and best developed in carbon offsetting. Carbon capture is most prominent in young, fast-growing woodlands such as new plantations, rapid-growth timber and coppice re-growth, and if not carefully managed, this could lead to inappropriate management plans centred around carbon capture that could disadvantage mature and ancient woodlands. Coppicing is not appropriate everywhere. Other services are being developed, such as flood management, but there is a risk that if investment in expansion is market-driven, it will be weighted towards services that can be easily valued, such as carbon offsetting, and thus towards rapidly-growing woodlands.

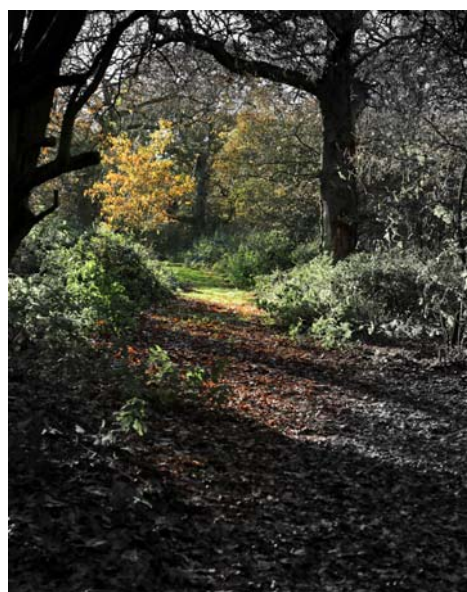
Markets are essential for woodland owners to offset the costs of running their woods, and to develop viable businesses. What is worrying is that the whole approach is market-driven, and there are no checks and balances built in when and if the market fails to deliver balanced expansion of woodland that meets multiple priorities for people and nature, as well as business. In addition, market development may favour larger producers at the expense of smaller ones, yet these are the ones in whose hands much of the privately-owned woodlands rest. Woodlands do need to create produce, and markets are needed for this produce, but the markets need to serve *all* woodland owners, not just the larger estates.

Funding

The document is, as expected, not explicit on commitments to this except in small areas such as Forest Research. It is hard to blame the Government here, as the amount of money available under the next Rural Development Plan for England (RDPE) will not be known until the outcome of negotiations on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is known. What appears to be clear is there will be less money in 2014-2020 than before, and thus the availability of help, advice, grants and incentives that are free to landowners is likely to be reduced. Indeed, the PFM body will see funding progressively reduced as their commercial activities ramp up. Funding for the PFM body will be maintained in the current spending review period to avoid the need to sell off assets and maintain high levels of benefit. But what about the rest? The IFP Report was ambitious in that many other landowners and other sectors would be engaged in maximising public benefits from woodlands and forests, but for many this would be dependent on grants and free advice. Partnerships can boost this funding, but will it boost it to the level required to maintain and build on what the FC currently deliver? Particularly if it is cut under the CAP review.

Conclusion

The major triumph of the public outcry over the plans to sell off our woodlands and forests, and the IFP Report, is that the PFE will remain in public hands, held in trust for the nation. There are also good elements in this response: looking at ways to bring money in to woodlands, looking at ways to involve communities, looking at ways to improve access, looking at ways to protect trees against diseases and climate change. The commitment to develop and open habitats strategy is also good. It is perhaps understandable that the Government cannot commit to funding when the outcome of CAP reform is not known. But there is a worrying dependence on a market-driven mechanism for delivering this policy. The roles of the Guardians of the PFE, and of stakeholder consultation have been watered-down. A stated commitment to protection of ancient woodlands is not backed-up by the NPPF, and nothing here is changing that. The role of the new PFM body is very much up for discussion. From the point of view of a small woodland owner, how can an owner with few resources of his or her own get access to free advice, to grants, to support for tapping in to local markets and local partnership funding? And how are public voices to continue to be heard? Stakeholder input to the PFM body is watered-down, and there is limited scope for communities to influence local plans, particularly where they involve woodlands and forests not currently in public ownership. It all looks like a top-down, rather than grass-roots solution. Perhaps most worrying is the failure to commit to woodland-based education for all children. Without a next generation of children who understand woodlands, their value, their management, and their contribution to the ecosystem, the future of our forests and woodlands remains uncertain.



For more information, please see

- Written Ministerial statement http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/January_2013/31-1-13/7.DECC-Govtpolicywoodlandsforestry.pdf
- Policy Statement incorporating Government Response <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13871-forestry-policy-statement.pdf>
- IPF Original report <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/files/Independent-Panel-on-Forestry-Final-Report1.pdf>
- 38 degrees campaign timeline <https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/page/share/forests-timeline-graphic-share>
- Woodland Trust response <http://wtcampaigns.wordpress.com/2013/02/05/the-future-of-englands-forests-a-new-chapter/>



Gower Charcoal Growers' Project

This is a lovely article from Paul Thornton, Senior Wildlife Trust Officer from Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales. Photos are by Paul Thornton. This project has been part funded by the Welsh Assembly Government Sustainable Development Fund



In the spring/summer 1999 edition of Glamorgan Wildlife magazine (3 years before The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales came into existence with the merger of Glamorgan Wildlife Trust and Wildlife Trust, West Wales) there is an article by Hazel Forrester entitled “A Woodsman’s Tale – Adding Value to Our Woods”. At the foot of the page there is a picture of me in chainsaw gear with my old dog at my feet (I was 25 years old). My debut appearance in any Wildlife Trust communication.

The article explained the work of the Gower Charcoal Company founded by Matt Carroll and expounded the need for our woodlands to be worked for the benefit of wildlife and the local economy. I was one of Matt Carroll’s 2 employees and was described as “seeing his future down in the woods”. The previous winter we had been thinning and coppicing at Gelli Hir, Priors and Kilvrough nature reserves. Things in the woods change slowly but in life things change a little faster, in 2001 I left the employment of the Gower Charcoal Company but Hazel Forrester’s prediction was right, my future was (and is) down in the woods, in 2007 I was lucky enough to gain employment with The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales and now I am again managing our fantastic woodland and grassland nature reserves.

“Fell to waste” – a term I first came across when working in utility arboriculture for National Grid, felling trees beneath the power lines to ensure the safety of the public and the network. This work may at first appear to be destructive but along with the vegetation management works carried out on the highways and railways is actually maintaining habitats as short rotation coppice with benefits to biodiversity.



“Fell to waste” – a term I have come across on several of our management plans. Many of our reserves are awkward to access, often we do not have the means to extract the timber that is cut and sometimes it is desirable to increase the deadwood reserves to benefit invertebrates which inhabit the decaying timber.

“Fell to waste” – a gift for the “firewood fairies”, members of the public who believe it is their right to scavenge (or steal) their domestic firewood from the woods no matter who they are owned by and possibly doing more damage

than they imagine.

“Fell to waste” – a term that sends shivers down the spine of a woodsman. A seasoned woodsman sees pound signs running through every log like words in a stick of rock. It is in a woodsman’s nature to gather, collect and add value to cut material. It seems no matter what is cut there is someone, somewhere looking for it. In every tree a woodsman may see charcoal, firewood and saw logs; there may be hazel rods for bean poles and woven hazel hurdles, walking sticks, clothes-line props, birch brash for besom brooms, oak for riven fencing and materials for greenwood furniture, spoons and other crafts.

Traditional woodland management and coppicing benefit biodiversity by creating different layers in the woodland canopy. Areas of open canopy allow warmth and light to hit the woodland floor, causing a flush of woodland flowers and vigorous growth of honeysuckle and bramble, all benefiting invertebrate, mammal and bird life. The coppice then regenerates, shading out the field layer and then the canopy closes – the woodland cycle. Areas of coppice and thinning are therefore done on rotation. In times gone by the benefit to biodiversity was merely a side effect of woodland management because the woods were managed continuously for many centuries as a sustainable source of wood. In a rather strange turn around in modern times many habitats are managed only for the purposes of conservation, relying on grants and donations to fund the work and many privately owned woodlands go unmanaged because of the high cost of management.

Since starting with WTSWW I have always utilised materials cut from our woods where possible to reduce the need to buy timber in, using planks from our mobile sawmill for steps & boardwalk, for a timber-framed notice board and for riven fencing and in my own greenwood crafts. In many of our woods however there is a lot of over-stood coppice and many are densely vegetated with an overcrowded canopy and poor field and shrub layers, desperate for thinning. Supported by FC Wales’ grant scheme Better Woodlands for Wales we have steadily started delivering management work on over 10 of our woodland reserves in West Glamorgan with much of the materials being “fell to waste” either due to the prescription in the management plan or because we have little use for it. The waste and the long term reliance on grant funding troubled me - there must be a better way. In 2012 I applied for a small grant from Welsh Government AONB Sustainable Development Fund to purchase charcoal kilns (Matt Carroll’s business has since changed direction towards ecological consultancy) which kick started an interesting project: The Gower Charcoal Makers.



The Gower Charcoal Makers project has been led by The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales in partnership with Dryad Bushcraft with the aim of making habitat management economically viable and to slow the loss of traditional woodland skills. It is hoped that by making use of materials gathered during coppicing, woodland management and meadow restoration and by “adding value” to these materials, producing products such as charcoal, firewood, bio char soil improver, bean poles, traditional fences, the habitat management work can be both environmentally and economically sustainable.

The Gower Charcoal Makers project hopes to prove that some of the management costs can be offset by finding a market for charcoal and coppice products. Gower Charcoal is made by the staff and volunteers of The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales from wood that has been cut for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity on nature reserves and sustainably managed woodlands throughout the Gower AONB. Sales of Gower Charcoal in local shops and campsites will help support the conservation work delivered by The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales and helping to maintain important habitats for wildlife. As well as supporting our work it is supporting the local economy and reducing the demand for imported charcoal where timber harvesting is often detrimental to the environment. This winter the work of the volunteer team has focused at Gelli Hir Woods but five other sites within the Gower AONB have benefitted from coppicing and habitat management work as a result of the project.

The woodsman’s way – there are as many approaches to cutting a coppice coup as there are woodsmen. Some may put the brash into habitat piles, others will burn it on bonfires, some may leave the brash dispersed where it is cut so it decays quickly and will not impede movement through the coup in subsequent years, some may chip the brash, (I know of one woodsman who chips his brash into a charcoal kiln and then burns it to make bio char soil improver), some will use the brash to protect young regeneration on stumps from browsing by deer or livestock.



We are interested in conservation though, we want to leave deadwood reserves to benefit invertebrates and provide nesting habitats for birds and mammals.

In Gelli Hir we have records from 2001 of dormice and this led to the design of the cutting of our coppice coups utilising windrows – stacks of cut brush material running from one edge of the coup to the other with about 10 or so metres between each windrow. This method maintains connectivity within the cut area but also allows us to extract our cordwood, logs and hazel rods without disturbing the brush and therefore without disturbing any species which have chosen to move in to this new habitat. I have no plans to strip the woods bare of all deadwood but would rather we utilised it from the easily accessible sites than seeing removed with little care by the firewood fairies. Those of you who follow our Facebook page may have noticed we now use this low impact method in all of our woodland operations.

In Gelli Hir due to the possible presence of dormice all work has to be licenced. This requires me to carry out a fair amount of paperwork in preparation before even picking up a saw and cutting and the method statement requires us to check all stools and the surrounding area prior to cutting. We are also only allowed to remove the cut material within certain time constraints in case an over-wintering dormouse has chosen to take up residence in or beneath a log pile. (Remember my comment regarding the firewood fairies doing more harm than they may imagine?) The controls we have to employ add to the work involved and time required cutting a coup here. The last record for dormice in Gelli Hir is 2001, we cannot be sure they are there, especially as the dormouse favours an open and well managed wood but to know our work is benefitting such a scarce species would be amazing. Of course if they are not there the benefits of active management will still be reaped by butterflies, birds and other woodland mammals. We are hoping to remove the doubt surrounding the presence of dormice here though. Our management work prompted licenced ecologist Steve Hancock to approach me and Steve has volunteered to lead a long-term dormouse survey project with over 50 nest boxes and 100 tubes being put out into the most likely areas of the wood this coming spring.

So I see the future of our woods as a future worth investing my time and efforts in. I hope to be working WTSWW's woods long past retirement age, I am now cutting hazel in some coups on their second rotation and would love to be cutting them on the third, fourth and fifth rotations. I have a different dog at my feet now but my approach to working the woods remains the same. The need to bringing our woodlands out of neglect was thrust into the mainstream with Rob Penn's "Tales from the Wild-wood" airing on primetime BBC4 TV autumn 2012 and there are already woodsmen (and women) working throughout Britain forging a living by adding value to low value material cut from our neglected woodlands. The success of the Gower Charcoal Makers project will be measured over the long term too, the market is out there for added value products and the more this can be exploited the more people can be employed in the woods and then more neglected woodlands can be managed. We can improve the quality of our woodlands for wildlife, for timber resources, for our enjoyment and for the future.



For regular photos & updates find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/thegowercharcoalmakers
To find out more about The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales see www.welshwildlife.org
Paul can be contacted at p.thornton@welshwildlife.org

Horse Logging at the Borders Festival—May 18th 2013

Iain Laidlaw of Forestry Commission Scotland writes about the chance to see horse logging in action at the Borders Festival in May—and about horse logging in general

Horse Logging at Abbotsford for Borders Festival 2013

Saturday 18th May 2013, Abbotsford, between Melrose & Galashiels

Woodland owners, managers and the wider public have a great opportunity to see working horses in action as part of a timber harvesting demonstration at the award winning Borders Festival of the Horse this May. The horses will be working on a small timber harvesting operation in one of Sir Walter Scott's old woods on the Abbotsford Estate between Melrose and Galashiels.

See working horses in action pulling timber from woodland and meet North Northumberland based expert Danny MacNeil and new Borders horse loggers Rab and Caitlin Erskine with their commercial horse logging team: Scout (a 15 hands high, 19-year-old black & white cob) and Angel (a 14.2 hands high, 10 year-old black & white cob). Discover how horses continue to play an active role in sustainable forest management.

For several years now, Forestry Commission Scotland and Treefest partners have been working with the festival's organisers British Horse Society Scotland (BHS) to help celebrate everything that makes Scottish Borders "Scotland's Horse Country". The 2008 Festival included horse logging demonstrations for the first time and they are back by popular demand. This year (2013) the demos take place at Abbotsford on Saturday 18th May from 3pm to 5pm. The demo site is accessed via the new Abbotsford car park (NT511/343), follow signs from the Tweedbank roundabout on the A6091 between Galashiels/A7 and Melrose/A68.

The Abbotsford Woods provides an accessible logging site where Danny, Caitlin and Rab will be working a small felling and extraction contract for a few days leading up to the demo on 18th. Its a lovely spot with good footpaths and the new Abbotsford Visitor Centre and café will be open for refreshments nearby.

Booking is preferred (but not essential) and anyone requiring further information should contact Iain Laidlaw on 07831 327319. Admission is free but donations to the British Horse Loggers Charitable Trust (www.britishhorseloggerscharitabletrust.org) are welcome.

Iain Laidlaw of Forestry Commission Scotland said:

"We are delighted to be working with the horse loggers, BHS and Abbotsford Trust to lay on demonstrations that will be of interest to many people. The demos are open to all and I would particularly encourage foresters, woodland owners and community woodlanders to come along and see why modern horse logging is often a viable option for timber harvesting, particularly on sensitive sites. Rising fuel costs for mechanised harvesting are helping to make bio-fuelled horses even more competitive."

"Speaking as some one with a horse riding daughter, its great to see horses really earning their keep! Its also great to see Rab and Caitlin – having been inspired to take up horse logging by one of Danny's previous demonstrations – getting to the stage where they can take an active part."

Robert Gray, Woodland Manager for Abbotsford said:

"We are keen to try horses rather than machines for timber harvesting on what is a fairly sensitive site. Whilst it may be slightly more expensive than the most efficient modern machines we think it would be worth paying a premium to minimise disturbance, for example around streams, footpaths and roadside verges. We are aiming to make the woods more attractive by selectively thinning out some of the trees and we hope to make a small profit from the sale of timber to a local sawmill".

Ann Fraser of BHS is delighted that horse logging is going to be part of the 2013 Festival of the Horse:

"Few people have seen horse logging in action and it will give them a great chance to see an example of the skill of horses in a real work situation rather than in recreation or sport."



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba



The Festival runs from 17th to 26th May and offers 11 days packed with activities and events for both riders and non-riders. For full details of the rest of the Festival from guided rides to International Horse Trials, Kelso Races to horse friendly accommodation check out www.bordersfestivalhorse.org. The comprehensive Festival brochure will include sections on the Trees, Woods and Forests of the Scottish Borders and Horse Logging. For information on Abbotsford go to www.scottsassbotsford.co.uk.

Horse Logging in South Scotland

Whilst there are several active professional horse logging teams in North England (including Danny MacNeil) who often work in Scottish Borders, I am only aware of one South/Central Scotland based horse logging team: Caitlin and Rab Erskine, based at the Glen Estate near Innerleithen in Scottish Borders. A couple of previously active horse logging teams have in recent years either moved their team overseas (Norway) or ceased operating in South/Central Scotland.

Horses appear particularly well suited to the increasing number of community / urban fringe woodland sites where they cause minimal damage to footpaths etc and are generally much better suited than conventional machines when it comes to interaction with (and interest from) the public. There appears to be no shortage of work for existing horses and so there would appear to be opportunities for new horse loggers based in South/Central Scotland. British Horse Loggers are certainly keen to encourage new horse loggers in Scotland and this is one of the aims of a series of horse logging demonstrations that FCS and Treefest Partners have been helping with.

Local Horse Logging Contacts:

Danny MacNeil, 24 South Green, Byrness, Otterburn, Northumberland NE19 1TT (01830 520457 & 07774 616567)

Rab Erskine, Homestead Horse Logging, Glen Estate, Innerleithen, (07767 480132 & raberskine@gmail.com)
www.homestead-horselogging-company.co.uk

British Horse Loggers

From the Chair of the BHL, Doug Joiner, Hill Farm, Stanley Hill, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1HE.

Phone/fax: 01531 640236 mobile: 07773 900751

email: doug@heavyhorses.net

www.britishhorseloggers.org

Patron: His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales

Horse logging is the extraction of timber using horses as a 'base machine' with a wide range of traditional and modern implements. Horse loggers work through the whole range of timber produced in British woodlands; from small coppice poles, thinnings in soft and hard woods up to final crop - large saw logs in soft and hard woods.

The British Horse Loggers is an independent group and is the national industry body representing horse logging contractors and their supporters. It offers demonstrations, training, professional development and works to advertise and promote horse logging.

Horse loggers are currently employed throughout Britain. They work in our state forests, for the woodland and wildlife trusts, for our statutory agencies, national and local bodies, voluntary groups and for owners of small woodlands. There are successful horse logging contractors working from the north of Scotland, throughout England and Wales to the south coast. Most work as self employed contractors. Some are employed on estates and one was awarded a long term contract with Forest Enterprise in Wales. Horse loggers work in commercial, amenity, conservation and private woodlands.

Horse logging has considerable benefits over other extraction systems. It is the ultimate low impact extraction system and outperforms all other small scale systems including quad bikes and mini forwarders. Horse logging allows for a highly selective silvicultural management of our woodlands resulting in a quality of woodland management and woodland care that can not be equalled by any other system. Horses can extract timber effectively and safely through standing timber without causing any damage or disturbance to the standing timber or to the flora and fauna.

Horse logging can appear to be expensive, superficially. It is



highly skilled and complex work and demands a premium. When the quality of the work is taken into account along with the low impact, the lower reliance upon expensive infrastructure (such as stoned roads) and the lack of costly reparation, the cost equation evens out. Horse loggers are often asked to work with poor quality timber on dangerous terrain over a long distance. This can give a poor impression of outputs. Allowed a reasonable extraction distance, good timber and reasonable terrain, horse logging can be cost effective and cost competitive and the daily output is impressive.

Horse logging is not an outdated and outmoded relic of a previous age. It is a vibrant and continuous tradition using the very best of the past; the traditional and important skills of life long horse men and women, with the very best of the current; the contemporary, practical skills of working horses, their handlers and modern equipment. It has an important niche in contemporary forestry and does not threaten or challenge more conventional systems, seeking rather to complement and enhance those systems.

Horse loggers perform other important services in forestry. Controlling bracken, brambles and other invasive weeds, scarifying to encourage natural regeneration, moving fencing materials, tools and equipment as well as working in establishment. Horses can offer a flexible answer to a range of access problems.

If you wish to employ a competent and professional horse logging contractor who you can employ with confidence, contact the British Horse Loggers using the above contact details. The British Horse Loggers have a Professional Register of recommended contractors. For more information, contact the British Horse Loggers using the addresses above or www.britishhorseloggers.org.

SWOG Meeting with Forestry Commission at Dilston Woods



Judy Harrison writes about a meeting on 13th February attended by SWOG members, and covering three sites in the North East

Snow was forecast, but not until around lunchtime. It began falling at 8.30 as I drove along the A69, and panic set in. Would the meeting with Ian Everard of the Forestry Commission still take place at 9am as scheduled?

Ian had agreed to meet a couple of neighbours and me at Dilston Woods in south Northumberland. We are all new to wood ownership – our ownership time ranges from ten months to ‘the cheque is with the solicitor’.

Before setting off to have a look at the three sites, Ian explained the need to register with the Rural Payments Agency if we wanted to apply for any grants. We then

proceeded to John’s wood, an area of predominantly larch around 45 years old. Here we discussed felling licences, clear felling, thinning out and continuous cover.

There is a mixture of 45-year-old larch, plus some new planting of Sitka spruce and Douglas fir with regeneration of holly, larch and Scots pine in my wood. Ian gave advice on thinning out the new planting.

Moving on to Janet’s plot, which includes a stream with larch, Scots pine, oak and birch, we talked more about conservation and available grants. By this time we were getting rather cold, so adjourned to the Holly Bush Café for coffee and hot chocolate and continued to talk about EWIGs (English Woodland Improvement Grants) in particular for woodland birds in decline. In our area this includes redstart, pied flycatcher, willow warbler, spotted flycatcher, woodcock, willow tit and lesser-spotted woodpecker.

I am very grateful to Ian for all the information and his enthusiasm during our walk around the woods. This includes advice on thinning, creating light, maintenance of the track, implications of logging, birch coppicing, wind blows and planting. I’m sure we will all be meeting up again with him again in the near future.

Our woods are on the edge of a red squirrel area, so part of our plans will be to help protect and create the right habitat for these delightful creatures.

For me, I have only had the wood since December so I can’t wait to see what appears over our first year!

News for small woodland owners

Sylva announce partnership with B and Q and BioRegional

A ground-breaking scheme to breathe new life into neglected UK woodlands has been developed by a partnership between two charities and DIY giant B&Q.

Sustainability charity BioRegional, forestry charity the Sylva Foundation, and B&Q will support woodland owners in bringing woodlands into active management.

Their new scheme, part of B&Q's One Planet Home programme, will enhance wildlife and landscapes, help local communities to enjoy and value their woodlands, encourage the sourcing and supply of local timber from sustainable sources, and create products and jobs.

The new partnership was endorsed by government on 31 January, when Environment Secretary Owen Paterson published the formal response to the final report of the Independent Panel on Forestry. The panel had called for programmes like this one to revive neglected woodlands.

Sue Riddlestone, BioRegional chief executive, said: "This is the start of something big. We're teaming up to make the most of this amazing but neglected natural resource that lies all around us. We can do so much better with our woods, and in doing so we'll benefit people, the economy and wildlife."

Dr Gabriel Hemery, Sylva Foundation chief executive, said: "We are excited to be working alongside our partners in delivering a step change in the way that woodland owners can be supported in bringing woodlands back to life - for nature and for people."

The new programme will begin in the South East and East of England in its first year under four main themes: 1) Woodland revival and creation, 2) community engagement and education, 3) innovation and communication and 4) marketing of local timber.

It will aim to bring neglected woodlands into good management. This will tackle species and habitat loss, strengthen links between communities and woodland, build forestry skills, and develop markets for products from woodlands.

Ten thousand hectares of woodland will be mapped and assessed, and even more covered under a new Star Award Scheme to be developed as part of the programme to move towards active woodland management. This area is about the size of 21,428 football pitches.

More than 1,000 people will receive training and education about woodlands, and the scheme will reach out to hundreds of woodland owners. It will build on the work of existing woodland-related organisations and support them in the process.

Matt Sexton, B&Q's Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, said: "This scheme isn't just about planting trees. We believe that we can help make a real difference to the UK's woodland. We are committed to improving local woodlands for all the community to enjoy and creating sustainable local woodland jobs, skills and products.

"We have a strong heritage as a responsible retailer and as part of our ambition to make a net positive contribution, this investment.

For more information please see <http://www.sylva.org.uk/blog/new-partnership-to-bring-woodlands-back-to-life/>



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

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>

Natural England report damage to wildlife site from off-road vehicles—help requested.

The South Downs National park and Natural England are appealing for help to prevent further damage to wildlife from illegal off-road vehicles. Beeding Hill to Newtimber Hill (see http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1000374.pdf

For more information) has been particularly affected. If you are in the area, and see any illegal activity, please report it to Pathwatch (<http://www.pathwatch.info/>) or Sussex Police. See http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2013/310113a.aspx

Practices used in FSC Certified Woods improve biodiversity

A study undertaken by the RSPB shows that practices used in FSC-Certified woods, such as clear-felling, coppicing, widening roads and creating glades have a positive effect on the biodiversity of the woodland. Managing forests according to these certified practices can enhance biodiversity and allow for the commercial use of products from the woods.

<http://www.fsc-uk.org/?p=5015>



Search to find Scotland's national tree

The Woodland Trust Scotland wants people to vote in a poll to select a national tree for Scotland. If you live in Scotland, or visit, and would like to help select a national tree, please visit the poll site on.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/news-media/scotland/Pages/scotlands-national-tree.aspx#.UStvDvLcx8E>

Hunt is on for Scotland's finest woods

The 2013 Scotland's Finest Woods Awards is on the look out for nominees for the four categories of awards that aim to recognise and reward those who use, promote or manage Scotland's woods and forests to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits.

There are four category awards as follows:-

The **Schools Award** is open to secondary, primary, pre-school and special schools that have been involved in practical or desk-based projects connected with woodlands. This award includes a cash prize of £500 for the winner and \$250 for the runner-up.

The **Community Woodlands Award** is for community-based projects and features two separate competitions - one for projects with a 'health and wellbeing' focus and a second for those focusing on 'economic development and regeneration'. The Tim Stead Trophy and £2,000 of prize money to be won.

The **New Native Woods Award** is for new native woodland projects – and is rewarded with the Woodland Trust Scotland Trophy and £1,000 of prize money.

The **Quality Timber Awards** focuses on growing quality timber and has three competitions - newly-planted commercial woods; single-stands/small woods; or whole estates/large multi-purpose woods. Three trophies and £3,000 of prize money have to be won“.

Full details, including entry criteria and entry forms, are available at www.sfw.co.uk, where you can also register your interest in entering the Awards. Entries must be received by 31st March 2013. See also <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPRByCountryLang/CF5657A68603EFC580257B1A00364F9F>

FC Scotland helping youth unemployment.

“Forestry Commission Scotland is to give around 440 young unemployed people a helping hand to find a job through a range of woodland-based skills training.

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

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

www.floralocale.org

The training is part of the Scottish Government's national drive to tackle youth unemployment and is being delivered in the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) area. The training is run in partnership with a number of training providers from social enterprise and third sector organisations.

Participants are taught forestry and employability skills while they carry out forest maintenance tasks that are helpful to the Commission's teams and local communities. Tasks include chainsaw training, scrub cutting, high pruning and landscaping."

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPRByCountryLang/273012E068E1770A80257B17005A1F02>

Last chance to enter Excellence in Forestry Awards from RFS

These awards cover the West Midlands and North West, and feature a Small Woodlands award, sponsored by woodlands.co.uk. You only have a few days to enter for these awards, for which entry closes 4th March. Details on <http://www.rfs.org.uk/node/908>

Tree Council Events Listing

If you are holding an event in your woods you can list it under the Community Action section of the Tree Council web site. This could include tree planting, walks in the woods, volunteering or other events. See <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/events-map> for more information and to list events see <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/list-event>



Rogue Traders in Kent

Rogue traders are playing on ash dieback fears to trick tree owners into parting with money to have healthy trees felled. http://www.kentonline.co.uk/kentonline/home/2013/february/22/rogue_traders_in_scam.aspx

Forest Research Newsletter Winter 2013

This newsletter is now online [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FR_News_Winter_2013.pdf/\\$FILE/FR_News_Winter_2013.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FR_News_Winter_2013.pdf/$FILE/FR_News_Winter_2013.pdf) This edition includes information about Chalara ash dieback and high resolution aerial photography.

The European Landscape Convention



What is it and its relevance to land use and landscape planning—a scholarly article, but very informative for those who wonder what the ELC is, and what it is for, and what it could achieve.

<http://www.recept-enec.net/allegati/LCN-News-27-Michael-Dower.pdf>

Chilterns AONB Woodland Project

Latest Newsletter is now online, and this includes a listing of all local events in this project area. See http://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/AboutTheChilterns/Woodlands/CWP_events_and_news_spring_2013.pdf

The Wildlife Impact of HS2

An article from The Independent on Sunday, showing the impact of the line on designated and non-designated wildlife habitats <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/>

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

Forest Garden Shovelstrode

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

www.forestgarden.info

[nature/ios-investigation-hs2--the-hidden-cost-to-britains-wildlife-8478609.html](http://nature.ios-investigation-hs2--the-hidden-cost-to-britains-wildlife-8478609.html)

Protected Landscapes – a Conservation Model for 21st Century

A new perspective on conservation – from top down to bottom up—how top-down conservation has failed to deliver, and how more could be achieved by taking a different approach. See <http://www.georgewright.org/171beresford.pdf>

Online e-zine: Wood Focus

A new online e-zine called “Wood Focus” is now available. The magazine mainly looks at wood as a building material and for construction of furniture, but has some items of interest to woodland owners. See <http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/launch.aspx?pbid=fbae1871-c743-4007-8bfd-cebbf814470d>

21st March – hereafter to be known as International Day of Forests

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution in December 2012, on the recommendation of its Second Committee, proclaiming 21 March the annual International Day of Forests, in acknowledgement that there was no single internationally-agreed day that highlighted issues relating to forestry. See http://forests-liisd.org/events/international-day-of-forests/?utm_source=People+and+Forests+E-News&utm_campaign=4fc33e6a2f-People+and+Forests+E+News+JAN+2013&utm_medium=email

LEAF Awards – Closing date 15th March

The Forestry Commission are promoting awards in London for groups and individuals committed to trees.

“Promoted by the Forestry Commission and the Mayor of London and the RE:LEAF partnership, these awards aim to recognise committed individuals, enterprising groups and organisations, and excellent projects that have promoted and enhanced the conservation and management of trees and woodlands in London.

We are seeking nominations for the following award categories for 2013:

- Street Trees award – for projects that improve the street scene and are valued by local residents and/or businesses
- Community Trees and Woodlands award – for projects that have been inspired, driven, and delivered by local community groups
- The Tree Council Trees and Learning award – for projects that engage and involve children
- RE:LEAF ‘Acorn’ award– for a member of the public who has made a particular contribution to promoting or conserving trees
- The London Tree Officers Association Award for Individual Commitment- for a person who is professionally employed and has made an outstanding contribution over a long period to London's trees and woodlands. Nominations for this Award are from the full LTOA membership with the winner being chosen by The LTOA Executive Committee.

We also want Londoners to unleash the creative spirit and submit photos, poems, prose or posters that evoke the value and beauty of trees in London. There will be a RE:LEAF Creative award for the best submission.

Nomination forms are available from the links below. **The deadline is now Friday 15th March 2013.** See <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/releafawards> If you have any queries please contact Craig Harrison (craig.harrison@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) or Jim Smith (jim.c.smith@forestry.gsi.gov.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.field-studies-council.org/>

AJS Crafts

Offer a wide range of courses covering many different woodland-related crafts. Upcoming are courses on spoon making, charcoal burning, willow basketry and sweet chestnut gates and hurdles.

<http://www.ajscrafts.co.uk/courses/CourseList.aspx>

DWWP offer a range of woodland activity and traditional woodcraft courses in Yorkshire

<http://www.dwwp.co.uk/Woodland%20Skills.aspx>

Coastal Survival and Bushcraft Courses

Available from the Coastal Survival School in North West Wales. Courses include 1-day, 2-day and 5-day survival skills courses for individuals and families. See web site for more details.

<http://www.coastalsurvival.com/>

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

<http://www.patrickwhitefield.co.uk/diary.htm>

Forthcoming Events

Institute of Chartered Foresters - Events for March 2013

The ICF programme has lots of interesting events coming up in the next few months. These include tree health event in Berkshire on 8th March – see <http://www.charteredforesters.org/icf-events/event-calendar/eventdetail/138/-/tree-health-conference-where-do-we-go-from-here-berkshire/> and also includes workshops on woodlands and the historic environment in Dumfries, Hamilton and Huntly. For more information, and to book, please see <http://www.charteredforesters.org/icf-events/event-calendar/monthcalendar/2013/3/-/>

Trees and Woods Archaeology Study Days in London

A series of events are being held in London from 28th February by the the Arboricultural Association. If you are interested in the archaeology of woodlands, and of tree, these should be very interesting. Please see http://www.trees.org.uk/aa/documents/training/aa_trees-woods-archaeology.pdf for more information.

Putting Commerciality at the heart of your woodlands

Confor and Heartwoods are holding a joint event at Ludlow Racecourse, Bromfield, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 2BT on Tuesday 16th April 2013 from 9.30am—4.00 pm. It costs £10.00 including lunch and refreshments. If you are interested in using your woodlands on a more commercial basis, this could be a good event to attend. For more information or to book your place please contact the Heartwoods office on 01952 435860 or alternatively email info@heartwoods.co.uk

Tree Diseases Event

Another event from Heartwoods, this event is being held on Wednesday 24th April 2013, at Herefordshire Group Training Association, Holmer Road, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 9SX. The day starts at 10 am, and finishes at 4pm. The event costs £10.00 which includes lunch and refreshments, and is targeted at woodland owners and contractors in the West Midlands. For more information or to book your place please contact Heartwoods office on 01952 435860 or alternatively email info@heartwoods.co.uk



Tree and Timber Measurement: The Basics

Again from Heartwoods, this event is being held on Wednesday 10th April 2013, at The Stables Conference Centre, Lower House Farm, Canon Frome, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2TG. The event starts at 9.30 am, and finishes at 4.30pm. Part of this event will take place outdoors so please ensure suitable clothing and footwear is worn. The course costs £10.00 which includes lunch and refreshments, and is targeted at woodland owners and contractors in the West Midlands region. For more information or to book your place please contact the Heartwoods office on 01952 435860 or alternatively email harrietwood@smallwoods.org.uk

Mammal Society Student Conference

This event is being held on 15th June 2013 at the Centre for Science, Staffordshire University. Price is **£15 members, £25 non-members** (includes a year's membership). Tickets from http://www.mammal.org.uk/student_conference

National Coppice Federation Inaugural AGM and Gathering 2013

Hosted by the [Malvern Hills Coppice Network](#) with contributions from Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Coppice Groups. This inaugural meeting will take place at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall, Sherridge Road, Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire WR13 5DE

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>

Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall is probably the largest parish hall complex in Worcestershire, with views of the Malvern Hills. There are two halls each with their own toilets, a committee room, a bar, a kitchen, ample parking and a two acre playing field for crafts and camping.

Dates: Friday 26th and Saturday 27th April 2013. For more information and to book your place, please see <http://www.ncfed.org.uk/>

RFS Whole Society Meeting 2013

The Royal Forestry Society whole society meeting runs from Monday 13- Friday 17th May, and is based at the Manor Hotel, Yeovil. It is hosted by the Somerset and Dorset Division. The programme reads:

Day 1: Forest of Neroche and Butterfly Conservation

Day 2: Forde Abbey Woodlands and Gardens, AGM and Annual Dinner

Day 3: Wareham Forest and Moors Valley Park

Day 4: EU WAVE Project, Taunton Vale (trees for flood control) **to be confirmed**

Day 5: Stourhead (Western) and Stourhead Gardens tour led by the Head Gardener

Closing date for bookings is Friday 12th April. Please contact Dawn or Karen at RFS HQ on 01295 678588 or e-mail rfshq@rfs.org.uk.

Forthcoming Courses

RFS Course Guide for 2013

The Royal Forestry Society now has their 2013 Course Guide available online. The majority of these courses lead to formal academic qualifications at levels up to and including degree level.

http://www.rfs.org.uk/files/Course_Guide_2013_170113.pdf

Basic Tree Surveying and Inspection-Arboricultural Association

http://www.trees.org.uk/training-events/Training/Basic-Tree-Survey-Inspection_50



This course is being held on 12th March, in Bedfordshire. It is suitable for woodland managers who are not professional arborists but who have to assess tree safety. The course will also be run in June at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, in August at Wokingham, in October at Bristol and in December again at Stoneleigh. If you have public access on or close to your site, and need to carry out tree inspections for your tree safety policy, this could be a very useful introduction. For more

information about training courses from the Arboricultural Association, please see

<http://www.trees.org.uk/training-events/Training>

Short Course Calendar for April 2013 from Countryside Jobs Service

The CJS has an online calendar that is regularly updated, and lists courses for a wide range of countryside and conservation-related activities. This is a good one to visit regularly. You can also list your own courses and events on their web site.

<http://www.countryside-jobs.com/Professional/current.htm#training>

Scything, 3-4th August 2013, Brighton Permaculture Trust

Scything is a low-impact way of maintaining open spaces in your woodlands, and your wildflower meadows. If you would like to learn how to do it, this course in Brighton may be ideal for you.

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 or 01745710626

Mark Fisher Art

Woodland-based art days for all abilities

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.brightonpermaculture.org.uk/courses-conferences-and-events/courses/scything.html>

Woodland Conservation and Management Course

From the Field Studies Council, Pembrokeshire, this is a great course to introduce you to the principles of conservation, and to help you assess woodlands, and make decisions about their management.

http://www.field-studies-council.org/media/531434/woodland_conservation_course_programme.pdf

Royal Geographic Society Camera Trapping Course

16th March 2013, RGS, London. Camera trapping is a wonderful way to learn what wildlife you have in your woodlands. This one-day workshop is a good introduction, from the Royal Geographic Society.

<http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Fieldwork+and+Expeditions/GO+seminars+and+workshops/Camera+Trapping+Workshop.htm>

Events from Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth are running workshops and events that would be of interest to woodland owners. These include a number of Bee talks and Bee events (not just for beekeepers, but for woodland owners seeking to help wild bees). There are also courses on green energy, and natural connections. For more information please see http://www.foe.co.uk/news_events/events_index.html

Woodland Plant ID

A course from the Species Recovery Trust, Garston Woods, Dorset. 7th June 2013

A really good way to become familiar with the ground flora of your woodland, this course introduces you to up to 40 common woodland plant species. See <http://www.speciesrecoverytrust.org.uk/Training%20Course%20Info/Woodland%20Plants%20-%20Garston%20Woods.pdf>



Woodfairs in 2013

It's that time of year again! The season of woodfairs is fast approaching. These are the fairs of which we have been notified so far. We hope to be able to update this listing throughout the year so you are kept informed of events near you. If you know of any events NOT on this list, then please let us know! sarah@swog.org.uk

Celebration of Trees and the Countryside

Capel Manor Gardens, 19-20th April 2013

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

Weird and Wonderful Wood

Unique art and craft fair with wood at its core

18th and 19th May 2013, Haughley Park, Wetherden, Nr Stowmarket

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

Devon County Show

16-18th May 2013

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

Borders Festival of the Horse 2013

17-27th 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

25-27th May

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

Blackdown Hills Woodfair

6th July 2013

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

South Downs Woodfair

Horndean, Hampshire, 13-14th July 2013

http://www.woodlandcrafts.co.uk/south_downs_wood_fair.html

New Forest and Hampshire Show

30th July to 1st August 2013

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

National Forest Woodfair

26th August 2013

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

Stock Gaylard Oak Fair

Saturday 24th 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/infd-8fpnpt>

Woodworks

Marston Vale, Beds, 7th and 8th September 2013

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

Lincolnshire Firewood Fair

Revesby, 8th September 2013

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

Wychwood Forest Fair

Foxburrow Wood, Witney, 1st September 2013

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

CONFOR Wood Show

Longleat, 12/13th September 2013

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

Wild About Wood

The Yorkshire Arboretum, Kew and Castle Howard
Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th September 2013

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

Chilterns AONB Countryside and Food Festival

Ashridge Estate, 15th September 2013

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

Bentley Weald Woodfair

20-22nd September

Web site details to follow

European Woodworking Show

Cressing Temple Barns, Essex, 21st and 22nd September 2013

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

Cranborne Chase Woodfair

Fordingbridge, 5th and 6th October 2013

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

Surrey Hills Woodfair 2013

5th-6th October 2013

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

SCOTLAND**Royal Highland Show 2013**

20-23rd June 2013

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

Tweed Valley Forest Festival

19-27th October 2013 with Peebles Wood Market on 20-21st October

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

WALES**Woodfest Wales**

Kimmel Estate, St George, 31st May-2nd June 2013

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

On the SWOG Web site

Please visit the web site and catch up on the news items posted there. Events are added all the time, so this is a good site to visit regularly to keep updated, particularly for events with availability at short notice.

Search for ancient trees on Cranborne Chase

<http://www.swog.org.uk/news/cranborne-chase-aonb-ancient-trees/>

Help needed with BTO Woodcock Survey

<http://www.swog.org.uk/news/bto-woodcock-survey-2013/>

The Llais y Goedwig gathering

19th and 20th April—<http://www.swog.org.uk/events/the-llyg-gathering-2013>

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

These are the latest blogs from Woodlands.co.uk and videos on woodlandsTV. Please have a look and comment upon them, as they make very interesting reading.

“This Land is our land” – The Land Magazine ~ by Angus

Angus introduces us to a fascinating magazine that discusses issues around land ownership and management.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/community-woodland-use/this-land-is-our-land-the-land-magazine/>

Moss Mites in woodlands. ~ by David Copestake

Tiny, overlooked, but critically important to the woodland ecosystem, this article looks at moss mites, and their role in the woodland ecology.

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/moss-mites-in-woodlands/>

Roe Deer and woodlands ~ by Lewis

It's those pesky deer again. Roe deer are native to the UK, unlike many introduced species of deer. But do they have an impact on our woodlands, and in what way?

<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/woodland-economics/roe-deer-and-woodlands/>

Bees and bumblebees – neonicotinoids ~ by Lewis

This is a big topic at the moment, with discussions going on at European level to decide whether these products, which some countries have already banned, should be banned throughout the EU. What effect do neonicotinoids have on bees and other pollinators? What can we do about it?

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

Care of Tracks

Woodlands.co.uk own and manage miles of woodland tracks. Here is some advice on how to care for your tracks, based upon their extensive experience.

A shared track is not at all the same thing as a public road or street, and has to be treated with intelligent care by all its users. At the earliest opportunity, get to know the other users of the track, and together plan a strategy for caring for the tracks. Ensure that you each have copies of this advice sheet.

Your own driving will affect the surface of the track. Avoid, if at all possible, driving when it is wet or snowy. When there are potholes, don't drive through them if you can help it. Users of this sort of track often bring from home some clean rubble or stone, etc in a bag to drop into the potholes. It's amazing how just a few bags over time can help.

Try to avoid driving in the “tram lines”, but instead help to compress the whole width of the track.

And never drive fast- apart from being dangerous, it causes the loose gravel to disperse off the track .

Good drainage is crucial for good tracks. Wherever possible keep any ditches alongside the tracks clear, as much of a track's integrity comes from good drainage.

Keep culverts clear. This can be done , for example, by pushing a long stick through to make sure it's not blocked. Dig leaves, silt etc. out of a culvert ‘sump’.

Try to divert any new stream lines/rivulets that are running onto the track.

Extraction of timber is very hard on tracks. It should be



done in dry weather, and always on a vehicle/trailer with either wide, load dispersing tyres, or tracks.

If you do damage a track you are legally required to repair it. If the track belongs to Woodlands.co.uk you can get advice from them.

If your own timber is being extracted by a contractor, you will probably want to have the reinstatement of the tracks built into the agreement.

If you own a wood alongside a track, aim to cut the vegetation back, especially anything overhanging. Getting light and air onto the track will help keep it dry.

If there is a fallen tree over the track, don't attempt to drive over it. Either deal with it by clearing it, including anything in the ditches, if you can, or contact the owner of the wood that had the tree in it.

If you encounter horses on the tracks, politely ask them to leave (unless it is a bridleway or TROT route) as horse riding on tracks will cause severe damage over time.

Newsletter - March 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

Contact us:-

Web site:

rich@swog.org.uk

Newsletter editor

sarah@swog.org.uk

All other enquiries

judith@swog.org.uk

www.swog.org.uk

On the SWOG Forum

Simon Fisher asked about a problem with a blocked chainsaw bar oiler hole on his Stihl chainsaw—lots of helpful advice. If you have a similar problem, the answer may well be on the forum.

Ratcatcher bravely admitted he had bought Chinese kit on EBay—this triggered a lot of criticism. Have you bought or used Chinese copy of chainsaws, trimmers or protective kit?

Gasmatt is looking for syndicate members to buy 10 acres in Surrey. Interested? See the forum for details.

Tracy posted about a new type of fuel made from leaf litter—lots of comments about the sustainability, and previous attempts at such innovation that failed.

Chunkymunky posted on the skills thread, with some great photos of bowls he has turned on his lathe. Do you have any skills you can contribute to the forum?

DaveL has joined us from Stirlingshire, in Scotland, and was excited to share his new woods with us. **Jamieacking** also joined us from Sussex. Welcome to Dave and Jamie.

Our planning topics grumble on and on. **Chunkymunky** found a useful link on the web that outlines what is, and is not, covered by planning legislation. http://www.woods4sale.co.uk/planning_legislation.htm

RodTaylor posted a picture of mink seen in his woods, which triggered a debate about their merits and faults, as well as those of our perennial favourite, the grey squirrel.

Oldclaypaws wondered about improving diversity by seeding his woodland with a suitable wildflower mix—lots of pointers on this thread.

Judith is trying to organize a meeting for SWOG members in June in NE Lincolnshire or Yorkshire. The topic is on ASNW

or PAWS. If you have a suitable woodland and would be happy to host, please contact Judith (e-mail address on left of this page).

The falconry topic is still going—with some fascinating insight provided by those who handle these birds into how they catch their prey, plus a video link. <http://youtu.be/t525hIT5zOU> from **ratcatcher**

Pithillquarry is looking for some local paid-for labour in his woodland. Can you help?

Oldclaypaws reported a resolution to his ongoing trespass problem—a misunderstanding has now been resolved, and shows these issues can be sorted out, at least some of the time!

Ratcatcher asked if it is OK to plant fruit trees in your wood. The general answer seems to be yes, but keep to a light area on a southern boundary for a good fruit crop.

Thebeechtree posted about their new web site which can offer woodland owners an insurance quote online.

Ratcatcher also posted about a new forthcoming documentary following Ben Law for a year—reported in Permaculture Magazine.

MattF has started clearing an area in his new woodland, which led to a discussion about how to make a pole lathe!

Andy and Heather asked if permitted development rights can be used to put in forestry tracks. Lots of helpful discussion here about what implications there are, and what grants are available.

Ratcatcher is approaching completion on his woodland purchase! Exciting times.

Oldclaypaws has also been extolling the virtues of a wood burning stove.

Please visit the forum and have a look at the discussions!

Next Newsletter: April 2013

Contributions for the April Newsletter need to be with me by 25th March 2013. Everything is welcome: reviews, news from your woods, activities, courses, meetings, photos. Send to sarah@swog.org.uk