



Small Woodland Owners' Group

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2013

**Shelters, Shacks
and Shanties - huts
in the woods**

**Chainsaw training
in Wales**

**Muck trucks and
timber extraction**

Small Woodland Owners' Group

Welcome to the June edition of the SWOG newsletter and thank you to all of the enthusiastic members who have contributed to it. The in-box has been overflowing with pictures and articles, for which I am very grateful – please keep them coming!

This month we have reports from two SWOG meetings, Sarah's account of chainsaw training, as well as the usual round-up of events, courses and woodfairs.

The layout is a little different, but I hope the content will remain as informative as ever. Web addresses are hyper-linked to their websites, and all information was correct at the time of compilation.

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What's On

SWOG MEETING 17 AUGUST

Andy Brown has written with an update of life with the llamas (and pigs, lambs, ducks and chickens) in Kent. The 57 alpaca have produced 15 babies and the bees are back on site, which is good news for the fruit tree pollination.

A SWOG meeting will be held at Andy's wood near Hartlip, Kent from midday on 17 August 2013. There will be a walk through his wood, a chance to see the extensive new planting, and to feed the alpacas and pigs. If the weather is fine, visitors may be able to tog up and inspect the bee hives. There is also talk of a hog roast, but details of this will be finalised nearer the time.



It will be a fascinating afternoon, so if you would like to book a place, please email judith@swog.org.uk

EVENTS IN JUNE



Chiltern Woodland Conference 7 June

Topics to be covered include ash dieback, lessons from Dutch Elm disease, pine martens, grey squirrels and use of tree guards. It will be held at the Clare Charity Centre, Saunderton and the fee is £20; booking is essential. For more details visit the website www.chilternsaonb.org

Photography Course, Alvecote Wood 15 June

Sarah will be running an Introduction to Photography course at Alvecote Wood, north Warwickshire, on 15 June. If you have a digital camera, but sometimes find the pictures you take aren't quite what you expected, and would like to spend a day in a glorious woodland improving your photography, then this would

be a great course for you. The course takes you through both artistic and technical aspects of photography and gives you greater control over your camera, getting you off the automatic settings and using the creative possibilities of modern cameras. All you need is a digital camera with a removable memory card.

Cost £20 per person including hot drinks and biscuits, but you will need to bring a packed lunch. Please contact sarah@pragmasis.com for more information and to book a place.

European Protected Species Training

Run by the Forestry Commission at various venues around the country, and designed for woodland owners and agents, the one-day training will enable participants to identify likely habitats for the key species and how best to undertake work to ensure compliance with good practice, reducing the need for an EPS licence.

The fee is £50. There are two dates and venues: 5th June – Alice Holt, Farnham, Surrey; 11 June – Wyre Forest, near Kidderminster, Worcestershire. Click [here](#) to book tickets.

Natural History Museum—half-day British Native Trees Course

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

20 June, either 10.30 am–1.00pm or 1.30 pm–4.00 pm; cost £40.

See the website www.speciesrecoverytrust.org.uk for more information and to book a place.

Courses at Orchard Barn

Working with the wood

Coppiced materials have a character of their own. Develop new skills and your eye for what the wood suggests you design and construct. Help make some benches and a chair or two for our indoor teaching area.

FREE community workshops – there are a couple of places still available. Choose from four dates: 1, 8 or 29 June; or 6 July (times 10–4.30) Pre-booked places only please.

To register your interest in attending, please email wendy@orchardbarn.org.uk or phone 01473-658193.



Making and applying lime render

Tuesday 9 July, 10 am–1 pm

Tutor: Rory Sumerling

Cost: £39

Continuing Professional Development

Certification: Institute of Historic Building Conservation

Timber framing for beginners and improvers

Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 July

Time: 10 am–4.30 pm

Tutor: Rick Lewis of

www.traditionaloakcarpentry.co.uk

Cost: £90 (partially funded, so half usual price)

To register your interest in attending please email sarah@orchardbarn.org.uk

These courses take place at Orchard Barn, Far Ringshall, Mid Suffolk, IP14 2LY.



Forest Live 2013

Forest Live concerts began in 2001, with Jools Holland and the Levellers performing at four forestry commission sites.

Over a decade later,

the Forestry Commission has become a major promoter of summer concerts, with events staged at seven forest venues. The concerts provide much-needed revenue for the Forestry Commission, while the forests themselves provide a spectacular backdrop for some amazing live bands.

There are still tickets available for:

- James at Thetford Forest on Thursday 13 July.
- The Charlatans headline an evening of live music at Delamere Forest on Sunday 7 July with The View, Velvetten Saints, John Ainsworth & The Beat Boutique DJs.
- Elvis Costello & The Imposters at Thetford Forest, Suffolk on Saturday 13 July.
- Blondie is playing at all seven forest venues. Tickets are available for Sherwoods Pines, Notts, on Friday 14 June, and Thetford Forest, Suffolk on Saturday 15 June.
- Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra featuring guest vocalist Roland Gift will perform at Westonbirt Arboretum, Glos, on Sunday 21 July.

To book tickets, visit the Forest Live website www.forestry.gov.uk/music

Tree Health Workshops, Three Counties Show, Malvern 14 June

The Royal Forestry Society, Forestry Commission, CLA and NFU bring you two workshops on tree health, including a visit to an adjacent wood to view ash regeneration and discuss responses to ash dieback with forestry professionals. The first workshop starts in the Perry Suite, Three Counties Centre at 10 am, and the second at the Abbey Forestry stand at 2 pm. Duration about two hours. Everybody welcome.



There is no charge. Further details can be found at: www.rfs.org.uk

The Royal Three Counties Show runs from 14 to 16 June and is a showcase for agricultural and country activities, including sheepdog trials, pole climbing

and livestock competitions. There will also be exhibitions of equipment, as well as demonstrations by heavy horses and horse loggers. Visit the website for more details: www.threecounties.co.uk.

Cumbria Forestry Festival 21 July

Featuring the prestigious annual UK Logging Competition, the Cumbria Forestry Festival includes a large number of exhibitors from the forestry sector showcasing forest machines and woodland crafts. To demonstrate the chain of harvesting a sustainable resource, logged poles will be moved around the site using different methods, such as horses, an Oxtrac, a Forecat

Skidder, and Alstor forwarder to be processed by a range of machinery, including a Woodmizer and a Truncator sawhorse, a Cordmaster firewood processor and woodchipper, and blowing machine. It's going to be a great event and entry is free!

Blackdown Hills Woodland Fair 6 July

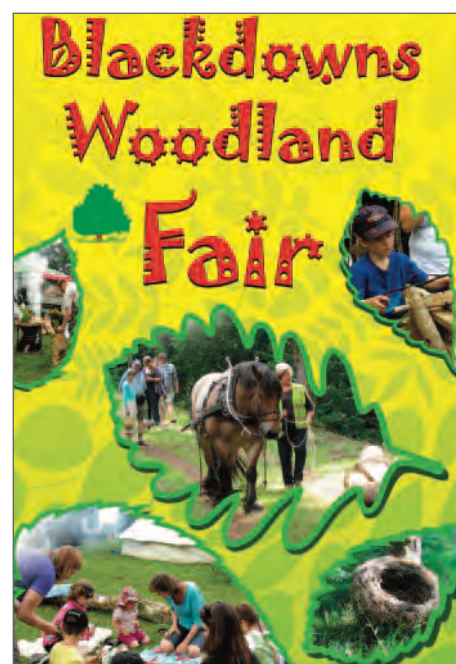
Free children's activities, local food and forestry demonstrations are all on the programme of this year's Blackdown Hills Woodland Fair on Saturday 6 July at Park Farm near Wellington in Somerset.

There will be a large Forest School area where children can have a go at a range of free activities including fire-lighting, den building and bushcraft skills.

Other activities and displays on offer include a wide range of demonstrations such as wood carving and furniture making, tree surgery and pole climbing, fire lighting, chainsaw carving, horse logging, (with four horses this year), saws and machinery, bow and hurdle making, willow work and cleft work.

The grown-ups will also get the opportunity to try a range of activities, including archery, green-woodworking and tree and pole climbing.

The Blackdown Hills Woodland Fair is open to the public from 10 am. Under 16s get in free, while entry for adults costs £7.50 per person. There is free car parking and the fair will be signposted on all major roads.



State of Nature Report

For the first time, Britain's wildlife organisations have joined together to undertake a health check of nature in the UK and its overseas territories. It makes grim reading. Sarah has prepared a summary.

Using a quantitative assessment based upon many different datasets that follow more than 3,000 species over a period of up to 50 years, the report has created a new indicator, the 'watchlist indicator'. This is based upon the Biodiversity Action Plan species list for which data are available over a 50-year period (150 out of about 1,500 total BAP species).

The headline is that nature is declining, despite our best efforts. Over 60% of species in the UK are in decline, and over 30% in severe decline, with 10% currently endangered. The more endangered species are declining more rapidly, with the watchlist indicator showing over 70% decline over 50 years.

Species that are specialists are doing worse than generalists, and invertebrates and plants are doing worse than vertebrates. Most of the declines are related to loss of habitat area, quality and connectivity. Some are related to changes in both lowland and upland farming practice, grazing patterns and use of chemicals.

In woodlands, decline has been slightly worse than average, with 34% species declining strongly. The reasons include habitat fragmentation and loss, and decline in management of woodland. Invasive species, such as grey squirrels, have had a significant effect, as has overgrazing by deer, which has resulted in loss of regeneration. Deadwood habitat loss, and climate change also have impacts.

Woodland owners can make a serious

impact if they bring their woods back into management. Management should seek to improve both species and age diversity, and create open spaces in which woodland can regenerate and woodland wildflowers can thrive.

Woodland owners should also be aware of links between their woods and others, and of valuable habitat other than woodland in the area. It would be inappropriate, for example, to plant woodland or allow it to grow in valuable lowland heath or grassland habitats.

The report offers few solutions, and although it does highlight the relatively few success stories (such as the cirl bunting, Adonis blue butterfly), it shows just how desperate the situation is for many species.

Download and read the report from the RSPB at: www.rspb.org.uk



Payment for Ecosystem Services Action Plan

The Government has published its action plan for the implementation of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES). Ecosystem services are those benefits that healthy ecosystems provide to the economy, but which are rarely recognised or paid for. This action plan seeks to remedy this, and to provide recompense to landowners who manage their land to provide benefits for the public good. These payments should be additional to existing Government grants, and should not result in transfer or leakage of benefits (e.g. benefit in one area at the expense of another). The report looks at both building capacity and opportunities to put PES into practice. In terms of forestry and woodlands, this is looking to link in with Grown in Britain to stimulate a thriving, sustainable supply chain for home-grown wood and wood products within the UK.

The report is available at www.gov.uk

Chalara – the fight goes on

The Forestry Commission of Wales, has announced that the first cases of Chalara dieback have been found in the wider environment in Wales, as opposed to in newly planted trees that could be traced to nursery stock.

The infected site is in Ferryside, south of Carmarthen, and it is adjacent to an area of young ash trees planted in the winter of 2006–2007. John Browne of Natural Resources Wales said, ‘Following the discovery of Chalara dieback in the wider environment in England last autumn, we have known that it would be only a matter of time before it was discovered in the wider environment here as well.’

‘We have carried out a 1.5km survey of the area to ascertain the extent of the infection, and we are liaising with the landowners on the steps they can consider to reduce the rate of spread of the disease, in line with the Welsh Government’s Wales Chalara Management Plan.’

More details are available on the Forestry Commission website here.

New grants available in Scotland

In Scotland, where there are 111 confirmed sites of the diseases, woodland owners can now apply for a grant towards the costs of removal and destruction of infected, recently planted ash trees in the sheltered and buffer areas identified in the Chalara Action Plan for Scotland. This

identifies a ‘sheltered’ area in north-west Scotland, where, as a special precaution, all recently planted ash trees on infected sites will need to be removed and destroyed under the terms of Statutory Plant Health Notices. An associated ‘buffer’ area will also see the removal and destruction of recently planted ash trees showing signs of infection. For more details visit the Forestry Commission webpages on chalara grants, www.forestry.gov.uk/chalaragrants

Video evidence

Owners concerned about Chalara should visit the Forestry Commission's web pages, www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara, where there is extensive guidance and advice, as well as a video on symptom identification.

Hope takes root in Norfolk

More than 160,000 ash trees have been planted across Norfolk in an effort to develop disease-resistant varieties. Using land donated by farmers, charities and landowners, Forest Research is leading the project in the certain knowledge that the vast majority of these trees will succumb to Chalara within a couple of years. However, they expect 1–2% of the young ash trees to survive and will study them to see why they are resistant.

More than half of all the UK cases of Chalara have occurred in East Anglia and Forestry Research believes that this project is the quickest way to study resilience to the disease.

Oak Processionary Moth spraying

The larvae or caterpillars of the Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*, OPM) are a pest because they pose a threat to oak trees and to human and animal health.

OPM caterpillars are most easily recognised by their distinctive habit of moving about in late spring and early summer in nose-to-tail processions, and the fact that they almost exclusively live in and feed on oak trees. Large populations can strip whole oak trees bare of leaves, leaving them vulnerable to attack by other pests and diseases, and less able to withstand adverse environmental factors such as drought and flood.

They build distinctive white, silken webbing nests in oak trees and leave white, silken trails on the trunks and branches in early summer. These become discoloured after a short



time, and more difficult to see as a result.

The adult moth is an undistinctive, brown moth very similar in appearance to other, harmless species. They are active from mid to late summer and lay their eggs on the smaller twigs and branches in oak trees.

Contact with the hairs of the caterpillars can cause itching skin rashes and, less

commonly, sore throats, breathing difficulties and eye problems. This can happen if people or animals touch the caterpillars or their nests, or if the hairs are blown about by the wind.

The caterpillars have become well established in several London boroughs and on one site in Berkshire. The Forestry Commission has embarked on aerial spraying near Pangbourne in Berkshire to treat the problem.

For more details or to report sightings, see the FC website <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/opm>

Tree-riffic new survey launched

The latest survey from Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) has just been launched and will focus on the health the British tree population. The environmental education charity Field Studies Council (FSC) has worked with OPAL to produce free survey packs.

The tree health survey will encourage people across the UK to learn more about their local trees, and will provide valuable data about them. Trees are an integral part of our landscape in both rural and urban spaces, and anyone can take part by completing the survey in their local area.

Participants will be asked to look out for tree types, numbers and locations, as well as for

threats from diseases and pests, which have grown in number over recent years, including the much-publicised ash dieback. Some of the possible pests and diseases you may see include:

- Ash bud moth – black wilted leaf shoots with small holes at the base
- Oak mildew – a whitish powdery coating on leaves which was very widespread in the wet summer of 2012
- Horse chestnut leaf-miner – see-through brown blotches on the top of leaves made by a grub which first arrived in England in 2002

To download the tree survey pack or request a printed version, visit the Opal website www.opalexplorenature.org/treesurvey



Kent Wildlife Workshop

Back in April, SWOG members enjoyed a morning at Tylands Barn, the headquarters of the Kent Wildlife Trust, followed by an afternoon at Quarry Wood Nature Reserve, learning about ancient woodlands and how to encourage wildlife in woods. Heather Martin recounts the highlights of the day.

Camilla Blackburn, Living Landscape Project Officer at Kent Wildlife, outlined the plans for the day and introduced her colleague Neil Coombs, the Senior Land Management Advisor.

Keen to encourage an appreciation and understanding of woodlands among others, Neil began by explaining how to identify changes to the landscape and how this can have an effect on woodland management. He then discussed how to manage a woodland to encourage wildlife, touching on coppicing, the creation of rides and the provision of dead wood.

Camilla ended the morning session by explaining how to record flora and fauna in woodland by writing a brief monitoring plan.



This data can be fed into a larger woodland management plan.

In the afternoon, Neil took us to Quarry Wood Nature Reserve for a guided walk, although this was so much more than just a quiet walk in the woods. Neil's enthusiasm is infectious and he encouraged us to think carefully about our surroundings, along the lines of 'look, think, decide'. We were given the task of trying to decide whether one section at the far end of the plot should have a ride created through it or not, and this reinforced what we had learnt during the morning.

Everyone agreed that this was such a valuable part of the day – Rodney and I both said that if we had been able to go on a course like this right at the start of owning our wood we would have understood what we were trying to deal with a whole lot faster!

With only ten participants, there was plenty of time to ask questions and discuss solutions. We would like to thank Camilla and Neil for sharing their expertise in such an engaging and enthusiastic manner.

This workshop was sponsored by SWOG and we are delighted that those who attended enjoyed it so much.



Shelters, Shacks and Shanties

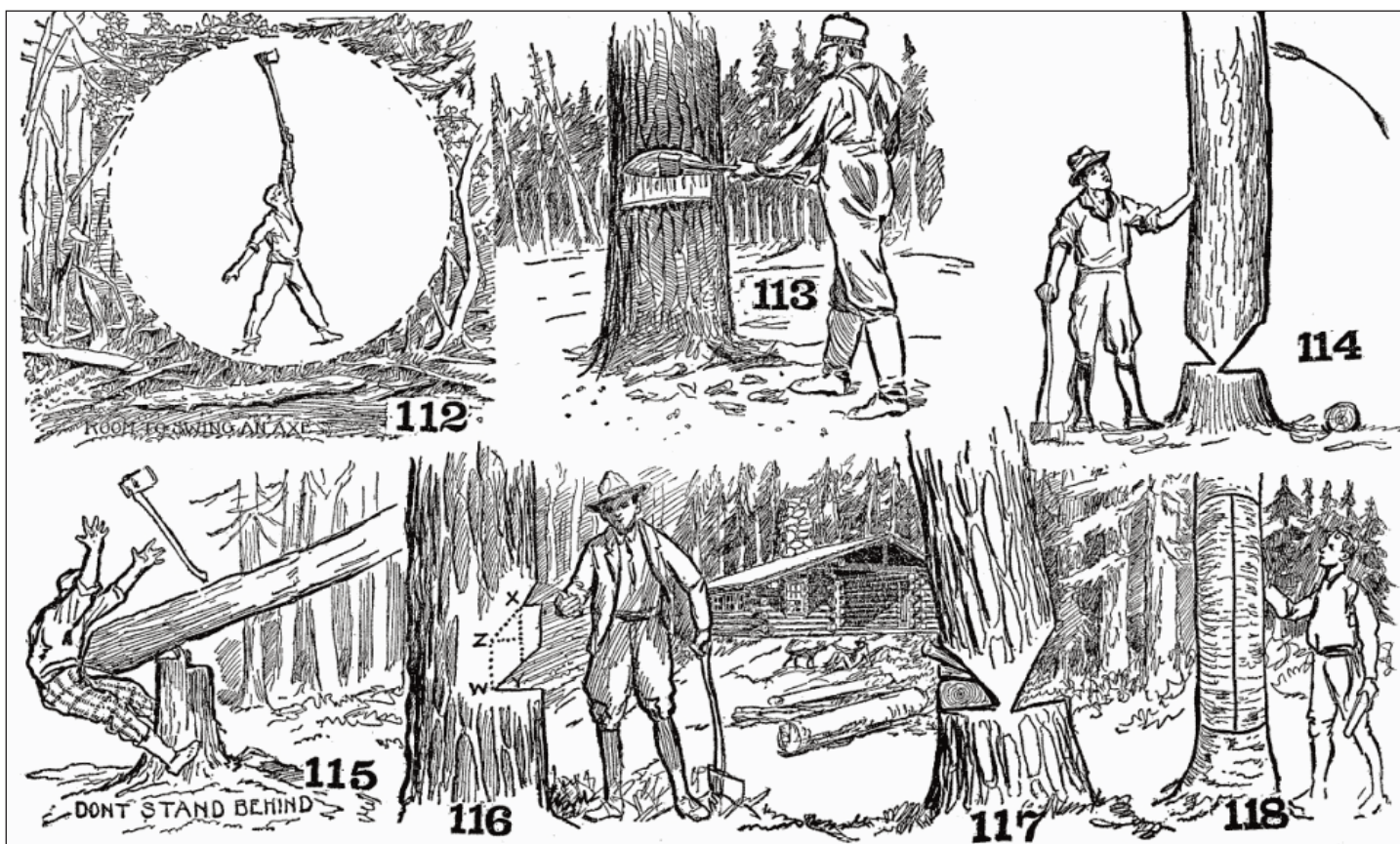
One of the first things we wanted to do on acquiring a wood was to put up some kind of hut or shed to keep vital equipment like the Kelly kettle. We were not alone and many SWOG members can recount tales of their negotiations with local planning authorities in their efforts to erect a useful shack. (There is a great deal of useful advice on the Woodlands.co.uk website.) Planning regulations aside, ingenuity and hard work seemed to be the key ingredients.

With my husband threatening to build a log cabin, his lack of experience matched only by his irrepressible enthusiasm, I decided to find some kind of manual to give us some tips.

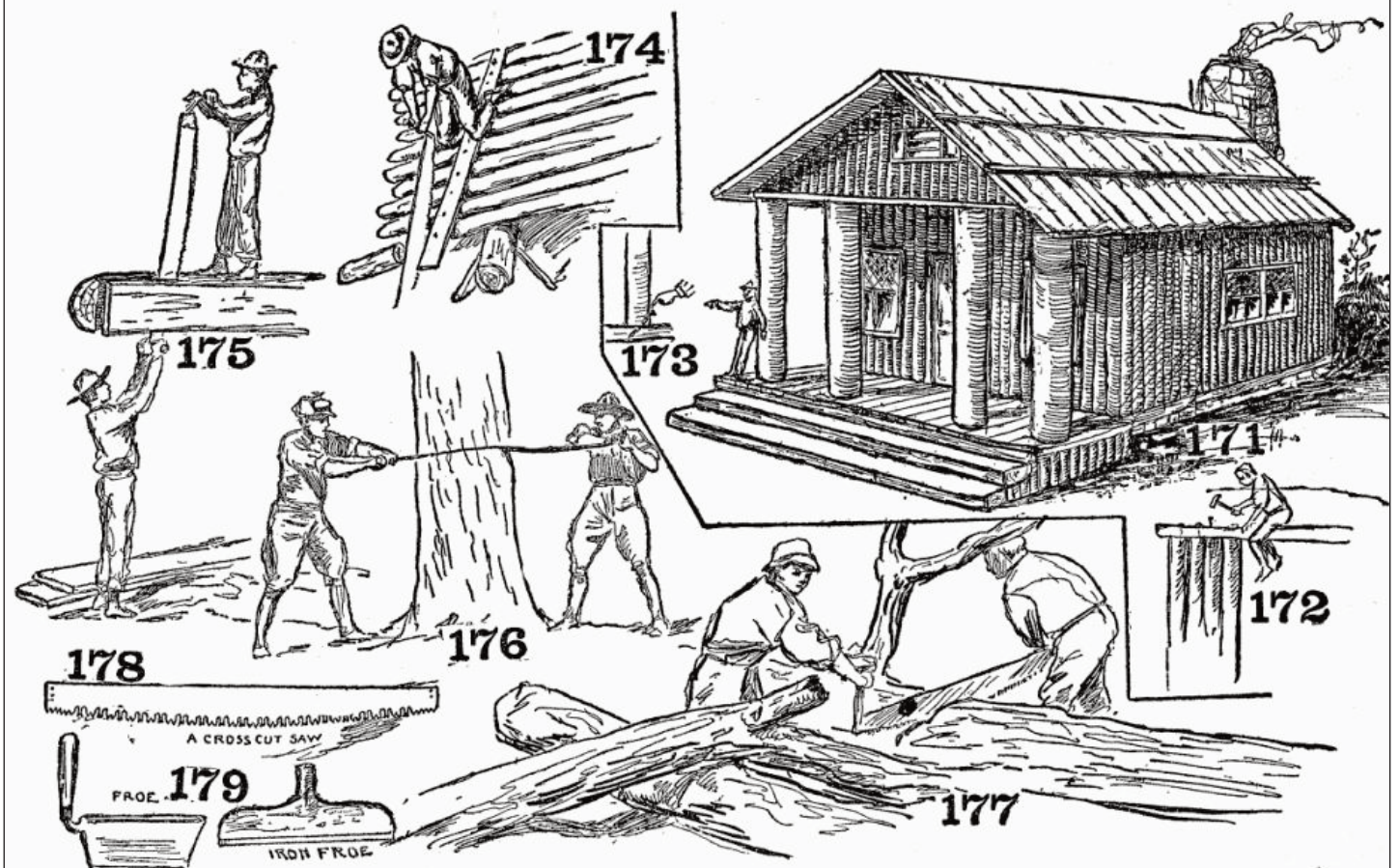
Shelters, Shacks and Shanties is an immensely helpful tome written by the American writer and youth leader, D. C. Beard in 1914 and intended for 'boys of all ages'. Beard was akin to the American equivalent of

Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scout movement. Born in 1850, Beard founded the 'Sons of Daniel Boone' in 1905, a youth movement that he merged with the Boy Scouts of America in 1910. Beard was clearly passionate about passing on outdoor skills to the (male) youth of America, and wrote and illustrated a magazine column for many years. (Incidentally, girls were advised to turn to the volume written by his sisters, *Indoor and Outdoor Recreations for Girls*.)

'The smallest boys can build some of the simple shelters and the older boys can build the more difficult ones.' His book is full of advice and admonition for young boy scouts, who were clearly not subject to any of the health and safety legislation that protects us today. 'It is time to begin to handle the woodsman's axe, to handle it skilfully and to use it as a tool with which to fashion anything from a table to a two-



An illustration clearly describing the best way to use an axe – and a graphic warning of where not to stand when felling a tree.



The process of building an American log cabin, complete with verandah and chimney.

story house. None of you is too young to learn to use the axe.'

It is easy to raise a wry smile at the earnest, down-home advice proffered by this book, but much of it is still very valuable. It is also worth remembering that the pioneer era of settlement in the USA was barely a generation past, when the successful construction of a sturdy wooden shack could mean the difference between survival and death.

The chapter entitled 'How to use an axe' contains eminently sensible practical advice that is still relevant today. The author covers an unbelievable number of different styles of shelter, beginning with the most basic fallen tree shelter and extending to the rather more ambitious (and the gold standard of the book), American log cabin. He draws on many Native

ranging from the picturesque 'sod house', to the 'bog ken' and the 'Barabara'.

While the author laments the arrival of the saw mill in the late 19th century that changed the style of cabin building forever, I was left feeling grateful that we live in the age of the chainsaw.

While *Shelters, Shacks and Shanties* is a well illustrated read, in the end we were so overwhelmed by the choice and the sheer hard work of felling, planing and notching, that we hired a contractor to build us a simple shed. I've not given up on the idea of making a totem pole, however.

Many other SWOG members are far more skilled, and the sheer range of modern woodland shelters would no doubt please the redoubtable D. C. Beard.

Judith Millidge

Shelters, Shacks and Shanties is freely available for download via Project Gutenberg.

Chainsaw training in the Welsh hills

Sarah Walters and her husband Stephen spent a week in Wales improving their chainsaw skills and earning Lantra qualifications.

When we first got chainsaws a few years ago, we had some informal training from one of our tree surgeons, who is also an instructor at the local agricultural college. We now have the opportunity to help out on other sites, so needed to get some formal training and a proper certificate.

Phil Dunford is based in Corwen, North Wales. He has twice won the British Chainsaw Championship and seven times the Welsh Tree-felling Championship – so he is good!

We opted for different courses. Chainsaw courses have recently been overhauled, and the old CS30/31 course is now a Lantra QCF course (course code 2564) covering maintenance, cross-cutting and felling trees up to 380mm, and comes with a licence to practice professionally. However, this is quite a demanding course, with an assessment on the sixth day, for which you pay separately. There is a new course for ‘occasional users’ which would suit most small woodland owners as few of us work full time in forestry. This is called the Lantra ITA course (CLMC41X) which covers maintenance and cross-cutting, and felling up to 20cm diameter – absolutely ideal for coppicing, firewood cutting and small woodland management tasks. This course is four days long – basically it is the first four days of the QCF course, with a certificate of training issued at the end of it.

Maintenance

We spent the first day in the workshop. We covered both the cutting elements and drive elements of the chainsaw, and I enjoyed tasks



Stephen demonstrates his brashing technique.



Filing a chain with a Husqvarna roller guide.

such as sharpening, checking, filing, removing the clutch and replacing the starter cord.

The course moved up a gear considerably after the first day, when we headed out into the forest. This was a real shock. I had

not expected to be felling sitka spruce on a Forestry Commission plantation. Now, some of these trees may have a small diameter, but they are massive – up to 60 foot tall – and so very heavy. If you think you will be felling little bits of coppice, this is a bit of an eye-opener.

The first part of day one in the woods was spent cross-cutting and learning basic felling cuts on logs Phil had set up for this purpose – a great way to practice without all the hassle of getting your aim wrong and hanging-up a large tree! I had not expected to be learning plunge or bore cuts with both pulling and pushing chain on the first day in the woods – scary stuff.

Felling cuts

The range of felling cuts is astonishing. Phil took us through all of them on log blocks before we headed off to try them out for real. We didn't just work in the sitka plantation, but also went up to a larch plantation on a different site to experience felling on a steep slope with trees leaning forwards and backwards.

By the end of the four-day course I was exhausted, so Phil set up a load of blocks for me to practice felling without having to do all the snedding, cross-cutting and log-stacking. He also set up a stand so I could have a go at chainsaw carving – and taught me how to do a stool, chair and mushroom. My first attempts were not too bad, and this is definitely something I will do more of. Phil demonstrated to us how he carves owls – now that is truly

amazing, and something I'd like to have a go at back home.

The assessment was straightforward provided you had listened, learned, practised and did things according to the book. We departed, exhausted and happy with our respective chainsaw qualifications, a new respect for forestry workers and our chainsaws, with greatly expanded knowledge and experience.

Phil really is a gifted tutor – he explains things well, can deal with anything, from students being too scared to too confident, and has a gift for making the day enjoyable, whatever the circumstances.

The physical demands of this course are very high. You need to be either big and strong, or very fit, or preferably both, to cope with the QCF course. For coppicing, the ITA course is perfect, but some public bodies, including the Forestry Commission and some councils, will not accept it, and require the QCF certificate instead.

Whatever you choose, Phil Dunford is a really good tutor – a week in Wales in his company is pleasant and informative, and his experience and skills are legendary. You could not pick a better place to go, nor a better person from whom to learn.

Phil's website is www.chainsawtraining.com



An owl takes shape under expert guidance from Phil's chainsaw.

Muck trucks and timber: SWOG meeting in Pluckley

It's probably the holy grail for all woodland owners – what is the best method of extracting logs and timber without breaking either the bank or your back? Keith Douglas thinks he has the answer: the Micro Arb Muc Truc, a versatile motorized barrow.

Alex Bienfait arranged for a demonstration of the Micro Arb Truc and was kind enough to open his wood to SWOG members. Richard Hare, the SWOG webmaster, was there.

SWOG members joined Alex Bienfait in his beautiful and diverse woodland in Pluckley, Kent for a meeting with the theme of small-scale extraction of timber.

We began looking at the types and sizes of wood to extract, ranging from brushwood and

small diameter coppiced cordwood, to larger diameter trunks and cross-cut rounds. We then examined the difficulties most small woodland owners face when extracting. It became apparent that most of us have woods with quite difficult terrain and underdeveloped tracks, good for diversity and interest, but quite difficult for getting wood out.

The Micro Arb Truc was originally developed for tree surgeons, who usually need to get along side alleys and up and down steps, but Keith soon realised that with some minor modifications, the truck would be suitable in a woodland environment.

It is a total system with the drive unit, skip, arb trough and trailer. There are lots of quite ingenious design features, like the multi-positional 'bolster arms', which can be turned



Alex loads a log on to the trailer.

around for use with large volume brushwood, or kept more upright for hauling cordwood. They also create a ramp system for winching on heavier loads.

The engine is a 160cc 5.5hp Honda which seemed more than adequate for the needs of the demonstration, and we did push Keith to load it beyond his comfort zone. The machine was impressively versatile, like an eager terrier, and chugged along well. With three forward gears, and one reverse, it offers drive to all four wheels.

Keith is very enthusiastic about development of this product, and was keen to get feedback and suggestions from the group. His recommendation for small woodland owners on this type of terrain would be a twin wheel kit, weight kit (which helps to keep the drive wheels on the ground and prevent it from tipping) and a standard skip.

Exact prices will vary with the set-up specification, but basic kit would be just over £2k – maybe not such a huge expense if you are intending to extract timber over difficult terrain on a regular basis. Other useful additions would be the trailer, trough and timber tongs, for pulling most sizes of wood you are likely to



Keith puts the arb truc through its paces.



want to haul.

Alex has been at the wood for 15 years and gave us a tour around in the afternoon. The wood is a diverse mix of English and Turkey oaks, hornbeam, ash and hazel with a lot of other species intermingled. Alex explained that the Turkey oaks were planted by the Victorians in the hope of making a quick profit from the sale of these majestic fast-growing oak trees for veneer wood. They soon discovered in this climate, timber here creeps and rots very easily.

Julian, who helps manage the wood, explained, that it does, however, make excellent firewood. He has a wood-fuelled boiler and the wood provides all his heating needs.

Many thanks once again to Alex and his helpers who made SWOG members feel so welcome, and to Keith for the enthusiastic demonstration of his solution to difficult timber extraction sites.

Take a look at the Micro Arb Truc in action with these YouTube videos:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=39W6IrAawVM
www.youtube.com/watch?v=fH2S_fBzIQo
www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AQE5gIiRIM

Contact Keith through the Micro Arb website with any further questions or comments.
<http://microarbtruck.co.uk/>

Abbotts Living Wood

A range of green woodworking courses.
www.living-wood.co.uk

Acorn Ecology in Exeter

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

Acres Wild Woodland

2013 timetable of woodland and woodcrafts courses available. www.acreswildwoodlands.co.uk

AJS Crafts

A wide range of courses covering many different crafts, such as spoon-making, charcoal-burning, willow basketry and sweet chestnut gates and hurdles.
www.ajscrafts.co.uk

Bat Conservation Trust

The full brochure of courses is available at
www.bats.org.uk



Bishops Wood Centre, Stourport-on-Severn

A wide range of courses of interest to woodland owners, including bushcrafts, photography, pole lathe and other woodland crafts, as well as forest school leader training and CPD.
www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Brighton Permaculture Trust

Courses include pruning old fruit trees, introduction to permaculture and building with straw bales.
www.brightonpermaculture.org.uk

British Dragonfly Society

The society runs a programme of field visits and educational events.
www.british-dragonflies.org.uk

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

A large range of courses for woodland owners.
www.tcv.org.uk

Bulworthy Project

A multitude of courses, including guided walks, as well as one-day introductions to charcoal burning.
www.bulworthyproject.org.uk/

Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)

To see upcoming courses for 2013 visit.
www.cat.org.uk

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.
www.coastalsurvival.com

Cotswolds Rural Skills Courses

Grassland management and drystone walling.
www.cotswoldsruralskills.org.uk

Dorset Centre for Rural Skills

Courses include hurdlemaking and green woodworking.
www.dorsetruralskills.co.uk/courses.htm

DWWP

A range of woodland activity and traditional woodcraft courses in Yorkshire. www.dwwp.co.uk

Mark Fisher Art

Woodland-based art days for all abilities.
www.markfisherart.co.uk

FloraLocale

A wide range of courses of interest to woodland owners.
www.floralocale.org

Forest Garden Shovelstrode

Practical woodland courses and yurt camping.
 Upcoming courses include green wood-working, hurdle-making, beekeeping for adults and children.
www.floralocale.org

The Field Studies Council

Courses of interest to woodland owners include tree identification, woodland management and woodland ecology; and wildlife surveying and recording techniques. www.field-studies-council.org

First Responder Course

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. Based in Kent/Sussex. www.elst.co.uk

Greenwood Centre

Run by Smallwoods, the Greenwood Centre offers a wide range of woodland management and woodcraft courses the whole year round. Based in Shropshire.
www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk

Greenwood Days

Offers courses to public and corporate groups on green woodworking and a wide range of creative arts in Leicestershire. www.greenwood-days.co.uk

Institute of Chartered Foresters

Forthcoming events are on
www.charteredforesters.org

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

A wide range of courses, some of which are of interest to woodland owners. www.ieem.net

Kingcombe Environmental Studies Centre

Courses on wildlife, livestock and lifestyle management.
www.kingcombe.org

Ben Law

Runs a wide range of woodland management and woodcraft courses in Sussex. www.ben-law.co.uk

Low Impact Living Initiative (LILI) Courses

For the full range of courses from the Low Impact Living Initiative, please see www.lowimpact.org

**Malvern Coppicing**

Phil Hopkinson offers practical coppicing courses
www.malverncoppicing.co.uk

The Mammal Society

A wide variety of courses, at various venues and dates.
 2013 dates now announced.
www.mammal.org.uk

Moelyci Environmental Training Centre

Welsh environmental centre that offers a wide variety of courses, including Phase 1 habitat surveys, national vegetation classification and wildlife surveys.
www.moelyci.org

Monkton Wyld Court in Dorset

Courses in sustainable living.
www.monktonwyldcourt.co.uk

Plantlife

Wildflowers and wild plants, as well as a programme of educational activities www.plantlife.org.uk

Royal Forestry Society Divisional Events

The programmes for 2013 can be seen at www.rfs.org.uk

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

To see courses for the coming year, visit
www.rspb.org.uk

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

An experienced provider of training in practical conservation and environmental education, plus other courses for 2013
www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/page/training-courses

The Sustainability Centre

Lots of courses around the theme of sustainable living, including green woodworking, permaculture and bushcraft. www.sustainability-centre.org

John Waller, Underwoodsman

An extensive programme of courses available: green woodworking, coppice management, charcoal making, living willow and introductory blacksmithing.
www.underwoodsman.co.uk/

Patrick Whitefield Associates

Permaculture courses, including how to read the landscape. www.patrickwhitefield.co.uk

Wildlife Trusts

All 47 UK Wildlife Trusts run events of potential interest to woodland owners. For further details please see www.wildlifetrusts.org/whats-on

Willowcraft and Woodlands

A social enterprise doing woodcrafts and woodland management based in Worcestershire. They run a number of courses of potential interest, including living willow structures, coppice management and treebog construction. www.willowcraftandwoodlands.co.uk/

Woodcraft School

Timetable for woodcraft and bushcraft courses
www.woodcraftschool.co.uk/

Woodlandskills.com

Based in Sussex, they offer a variety of courses in the field of woodland living, survival and traditional wood crafts. www.woodlandskills.com

Yorwoods

Courses for woodland owners and managers in the Yorkshire area www.yorwoods.org.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. Denbighshire
<http://www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk>



This is not an exhaustive list, so if you know of any others, please let us know!

Woodlands.co.uk and SWOG will be exhibiting at Woodfest Wales, Wild About Wood, Treefest and Bentley.

Woodfest Wales

31 May–2 June 2013 Kimmel Estate, St George, <http://www.woodfestwales.co.uk>

Royal Highland Show 2013

20–23 June 2013
<http://royalhighlandshow.org>

Blackdown Hills Woodfair

6 July 2013 www.woodbiz.co.uk

South Downs Woodfair

13–14 July 2013 Horndean, Hampshire
www.woodlandcrafts.co.uk

Cumbria Forestry Festival

21 July 2013 Hutton-in-the-Forest, Penrith
www.cumbriawoodlands.co.uk/

New Forest and Hampshire Show

30 July to 1 August 2013
www.newforestshow.co.uk

Stock Gaylard Oak Fair

24 August 2013
www.wychwoodproject.org

Treefest at Westonbirt Arboretum

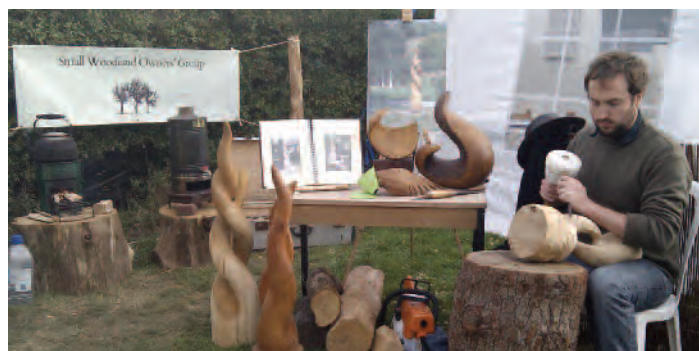
24–26 August 2013
www.forestry.gov.uk

National Forest Woodfair

26 August 2013 Beacon Hill Country Park, Leicestershire, www.nationalforest.org

Wychwood Forest Fair

1 September 2013 Witney
www.wychwoodproject.org



CONFOR Wood Show

12–13 September 2013 Longleat
www.southwestwoodlandshow.org.uk

Wild About Wood

14–15 September 2013 The Yorkshire Arboretum, Kew and Castle Howard,
www.wildaboutwood.org/

Chilterns AONB Countryside and Food Festival

15 September 2013 Ashridge Estate,
www.chilternsaonb.org/

Bentley Weald Woodfair

20–22 September
www.bentley.org.uk/events

European Woodworking Show

21–22 September 2013 Cressing Temple Barns, Essex, www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu

Wodworks! Marston Vale, Bedfordshire

7–8 September 2013
<http://marstonvale.org/woodwork>

Lincolnshire Firewood Fair

8 September 2013, Revesby,
www.lincolnshirefirewoodfair.co.uk

Cranborne Chase Woodfair

5–6 October 2013 Fordingbridge
www.woodfair.org.uk

Surrey Hills Woodfair 2013

5–6 October 2013 Birtley House, Bramley
www.surreyhills.org

New blogs from Woodlands

(Click on the blog title to link to the website.)

Ground Ivy or Alehoof

Lewis examines this pretty and pervasive labiate that colonises woodland rapidly.

Warfare amongst the ladybirds

Lewis explains how the harlequin ladybird is threatening native species.

From tree to bench

Dick recounts how a useful windfall of Western Red Cedar transformed the Woodlands benchmaking operation in the southwest.

Charcoal, billhooks and blacksmiths

Stuart interviews one of the younger woodland owners, 21-year-old blacksmith Tom, who will use his woodland for fuel for his forge.

Hedges revisited

Chris discusses the usefulness and maintenance of ancient hedges.

SWOG Forum

Members share their knowledge via the SWOG

forum, chatting about tools and kit, protective gear, planning rules for building woodland huts, conservation of animals and plant life (and often, deterrence of pesky critters, too), coppicing, timber removal, shelter building, security – the list is endless.

There has been a fair bit of discussion recently from SWOG members who would like to work another owner's woodland in the West Country, Midlands or north-west. If you can help, please get in touch via the Forum.

Anyone can register to join the SWOG forum. Email our webmaster rich@swog.org.uk. To take a look, visit www.swog.org.uk/forum/

Woodlands TV

Uniquely among websites dedicated to forestry, Woodlands.co.uk hosts Woodlands TV, a series of short videos about every aspect of woodland management and practical woodland skills.

If you would like to take a closer look at Alex Bienfait's wood, he features in a video about woodland neighbours, here: www.woodlands.co.uk/tv/

Contact Us

We want to hear from you! Contributions for the July newsletter need to be with Judith by 25 June 2013. Everything is welcome – reviews, news from your woods, activities, courses, meetings and photos. We are particularly keen to hear about what you are doing in your woods and to include reviews of any equipment you have used. Trail cameras anyone?

The Small Woodland Owner's Group has been formed to aid the enjoyment, diversity and conservation of British woodland. 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.

Newsletter June 2013

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With thanks to this month's contributors, Richard Hare, Sarah Walters, Andy Brown, Heather Martin and Alex Bienfait

Picture credits

Alex Bienfait 15 (below); Andy Brown 3; Phil Dunford 13 (below); Richard Hare 14, 15 (top); Judith Millidge 1, 18; Sarah Walters pages 2, 6, 12, 13 (top), 16, 17; Camilla Blackburn/Kent Wildlife 9; Woodlands Picture Library pages 4, 7, 8, 19.

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