

Small Woodland Owners' Group

NEWSLETTER JULY 2013

Woodfest Wales

**Working in the woods:
the ultimate therapy**

**Alvecote Wood –
top of the tree!**



Small Woodland Owners' Group

It's been a busy month here at SWOG. The woodfair and country show season is well underway, so there are plenty of opportunities all round the country to see traditional and woodland crafts in action. SWOG visited Woodfest Wales (as did the BBC Countryfile team, who kept us carefully out of shot).

Sarah is understandably jubilant about the RFS award for Alvecote Wood – a well-deserved accolade that is a source of inspiration for all small woodland owners. She has also been on a course to learn about European Protected Species and how woodland owners can work to preserve their habitats.

Rich recalls how working with wood can be a useful form of therapy for anyone, at any time, and Dave Howells has sent in some impressive photos of his woodland structures.

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Contact Us

We want to hear from you! Contributions for the August newsletter need to be with Judith by 25 July 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. How do you protect your saplings and young trees from deer damage?

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 July 2013

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With thanks to this month's contributors, Richard Hare, Sarah Walters, Dave Howells

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Woodlands Picture Library: 3, 4, 21, 22
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What's On

SWOG meetings around the country

Overnight camp Sandford, North Somerset, 27 July 2013

SWOG member Andrew Fox is hosting an overnight camp in his semi-native ancient



woodland with views over the Bristol Channel.

There's a big camp space for up to 20 people to camp, pitch tents and light fires. An abundant supply of split logs is also promised. The terrain is not suitable for limited access and well-behaved dogs are welcome (as long as they behave well around other animals). Please bring what ever you'd like to cook for dinner and breakfast, as well as overnight camping kit.

This promises to be wonderful SWOG meeting for people to chat and enjoy the woodland. Andrew is an arboricultural consultant who offers a stroll around his woodland and plenty of chat around a camp fire.

Meeting at Ravenshill Wood, in the Malvern Hills 10 August 2013

Phil Hopkinson of Malvern Coppicing will host a SWOG meeting in his wood. Ravenshill Woodland Reserve is large enough to demonstrate the many opportunities available to woodland owners – from coppicing to building, camping, and positioning and monitoring nesting boxes.

Phil and his team are hugely knowledgeable and he will no doubt demonstrate some green woodworking as well as offering a tour of the beautiful woodland. Phil's meeting a few years ago was a sell-out success – details are here.



Afternoon at Hartlip, north Kent, 17 August 2013

Taking on a woodland is an adventure; taking on a woodland and running a smallholding that includes llama, pigs, sheep, and beehives is a life-changing decision. Andy Brown wants to tell us how he does it and will host a SWOG meeting at his 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 inspect the bee hives. There may be a hog roast, but details of this will be finalised nearer the time. *If you would like to book a place for any of these meetings, or have any questions, please email judith@swog.org.uk*



South Downs Wood Fair & Country Show, 13 & 14 July 2013, Hampshire

The newest of the 15 national parks in Britain, the South Downs National Park covers a massive area of spectacular landscape between Eastbourne and Winchester. The South Downs

Wood Fair & Country Show is set in the glorious parkland at the foot of Butser Hill, near Petersfield, Hampshire. This wonderful venue is perfect for the wood fair and is an inspiring setting for a fantastic weekend.

One of the objectives of the National Park is to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the area. Forest management, timber production and the use of wood in all its forms are integral parts of this heritage.

The South Downs Wood Fair & Country Show showcases all aspects of wood, its production and uses. There will be everything from large forestry machinery to small-scale craftsmanship in wood. The website is: www.woodlandcrafts.co.uk/south

How healthy are our trees?

The RFS is holding free events in July and August for members and non-members to learn how to take part in the national OPAL Tree Health Survey, which has been set up to involve members of the public as well as woodland owners in helping to track diseases such as ash dieback. No experience or special equipment is needed!

All those who take part will be given survey kits to use in the future in their own surveys. Data from all OPAL surveys is being collated to develop a picture of the health of the UK's trees. The events are free, but numbers are limited and places must be booked. Participants will:

- Discover more about trees and how to assess their general health.
- Learn to identify some of the pests and diseases that can affect oak, ash and horse chestnut.
- Find out about six of the most unwanted pests and diseases that could threaten the future of our landscape, including ash dieback.

The meetings will be held at different venues around the country.

10 July Miserden Estate, Gloucestershire

RFS Gloucestershire Division is holding an OPAL Tree Health event as part of its meeting. Numbers are limited, with further details available from Divisional Secretary Ann Jones.

13 July RFS Battram Wood, Leicestershire/ Nottinghamshire borders

The RFS is teaming up with the National Forest to hold an OPAL Tree Health Event.

29 August RFS Hockeridge Wood, Bucks/Herts

For more details, visit www.rfs.org.uk





Open 9 am - 5 pm

CUMBRIA FORESTRY FESTIVAL

SUN 21ST JULY HUTTON IN THE FOREST

FREE entry and parking

Featuring **The UK Loggers** Annual Logging Competition

Story telling and woodland crafts for the kids

Demos on: woodland management techniques, timber products, woodfuel and much more

Food and drink including real ale tent

UK Loggers

Kids crafts

Free Demos

Refreshments

Come and enjoy the best of forestry in Cumbria

The UK Loggers • Horselogging in action • Timber extraction demos • Tree climbing
Firewood production demos • Charcoal making • Planking demos • Greenwood crafts • Archery
Free trees • Storytelling tent with tales of the Green Knight • Woodland Advice • Local food & drink

For more information go to www.cumbriawoodlands.co.uk
contact Sarah on 01539 822140 or sarah@cumbriawoodlands.co.uk

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Cumbria Woodlands
Working together to make our woods prosper

Cumbria Forestry Festival, 21 July 2013

Long overdue, this summer will see Cumbria Woodlands host the biggest and best ever Cumbria Forestry Festival, at the beautiful Hutton-in-the-Forest Estate, Penrith. It will celebrate our hardworking, talented and passionate forestry sector, and includes the UK Loggers' annual competition. This nationally-recognised logging competition features the felling of 35 high-standing timber poles, which will then be moved around the site using various methods of extraction such as horseloggers, an Oxtac skidder, a tractor and trailer winch, and an Alstor 8x8 forwarder.

Entry is free and open to all. The Festival aims include raising awareness within the forestry sector of a variety of equipment and techniques, as well as educating the general public about the sustainability of locally produced timber products and the benefits well managed woodland can bring. There will be a wide range of entertainment for all the family including an archery range, greenwood craft demos and forest storytellers.

Blackdown Hills Woodland Fair, Somerset 6 July 2013

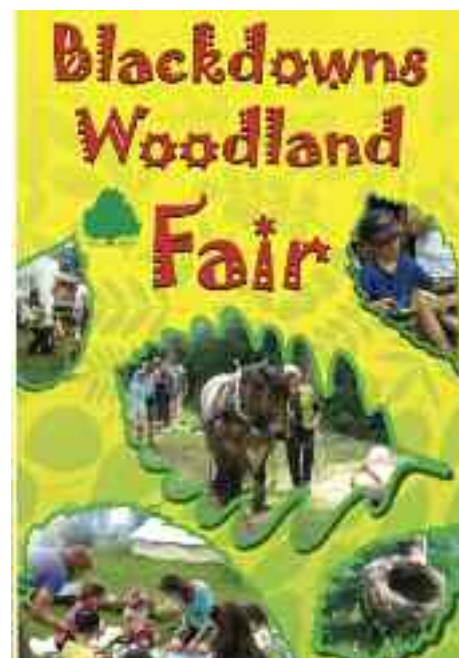
Free children's activities, local food and forestry demonstrations are all on the programme of this year's Blackdown Hills Woodland Fair on Saturday 6 July at Park Farm near Wellington in Somerset.

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 adults will also get the opportunity to try a range of activities, such as archery, greenwoodworking, 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.

For more information visit the website here.



National woodland statistics

The latest National Statistics on Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking produced by the Forestry Commission were released in June. The main findings are:

The main findings are:

- the area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2013 was 3.13 million hectares. This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK, 10% in England, 15% in Wales, 18% in Scotland and 8% in Northern Ireland;
- of the total UK woodland area, 0.87 million hectares were owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in Great Britain) or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland);
- the total certified woodland area in the UK at 31 March 2013 was 1.36 million hectares, including all Forestry Commission and Forest Service woodland. Overall, 44% of the UK woodland area is certified;
- 11,000 hectares of new woodland were created in the UK in 2012–13, mostly with broadleaved species;

- 13,000 hectares of woodland were restocked (replanted after harvesting) in the UK in 2012-13, mostly with conifers.

Certified woodland is woodland whose management has been verified as sustainable and environmentally sound by an independent auditor as an assurance to buyers of forest products that the products come from well managed forests. Two main certification standards are used in the UK: the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) standard. Producers whose forests are certified against the UKWAS are entitled to use the logo of the international, independent Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) on their products. The Forestry Commission was the first state forest service in the world to achieve certification of its entire forest area.

The entire report can be downloaded here: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/>

Grey squirrels – defiant or deficient?

Many woodland owners are frustrated by the close attention that grey squirrels pay to their trees, in particular the way in which they damage bark, leaving trees susceptible to diseases. Reducing the numbers of squirrels in a wood is a thankless and uphill task, but one forestry researcher has gone back to basics by examining exactly why squirrels do it. Now, most owners probably believe squirrels chew their trees out of pure spite, and many spend long hours dreaming up an appropriate and painful revenge. But, if we knew the cause of their gnawing, perhaps we could reduce the problem in a humane manner.

The summer edition of *Ecotype*, published by Forest Research, reports that squirrels may



attack bark to assuage a calcium deficiency. Squirrels eat the exposed phloem tissue and lick the exuding sap. Doctoral student Christopher Nichols believes that grey squirrels suffer a calcium deficiency at certain times of the year, partly according to their age and sex, and partly because of their diet. Recently weaned juveniles and adult females may suffer calcium deficiency as a result of growth and reproduction respectively. Ultimately, Nichols is hoping to develop some sort of dietary supplement, but in the short term, he wants to test his hypothesis by assessing whether squirrels are actually short of calcium in the main bark-stripping season (April–July). We await the results with interest. *Ecotype* can be read here.

Woodland bogs

Following the feature on Shelters, Shacks and Shanties, Welsh SWOG member Dave Howells has sent in some photos of his magnificent treehouse and woodland loo.

The Howells have a wood of 39 acres north of Monmouth: 30 acres is ancient woodland and 9 acres are filled with Sitka Spruce. Dave and his family have spent the last five years trying to improve the biodiversity of the ancient woodland by re-coppicing hazel.

Armed with little more than his smartphone spirit level app and with the dog for company, Dave has constructed a wonderful treehouse using decking from B&Q, lined up on four trees roughly 8 feet apart. Using hazel to provide railings for the open sides, he made it safe so that his young children couldn't fall out and added a roof of galvanised corrugated iron.

The compost loo is built on the same design principles, although the platform was based on recycled fence posts. Sacking affords the user a bit of privacy – and was a lot quicker to use than forming walls from hazel or split ash.

Both structures took about a week to construct and are a pragmatic fusion of DIY materials and existing trees – which speeded up the whole construction process. This is a vital consideration when there are impatient children standing by to camp!



Chiltern Woodland Conference



Held in Saunderton at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, the Chiltern Woodland Conference was a well-attended and lively session with much to interest small woodland owners.

Chalara

The first speaker was Alison Field, South-East Director of the Forestry Commission, who reported on the depressing progress of ash dieback and plans to combat it. Unfortunately the spread of this disease is dramatic; in France chalara spread 200km within 12 months, and there is no reason not to expect a similar rate of infection in the UK. Trees that showed early symptoms of the disease in Kent in the autumn of 2012 are now dead or dying, and the disease is moving steadily cross the south-east of England. Chalara is here and there are no disease-free zones in the UK.

This is a bleak message, but although we cannot yet cure or stop chalara, the Forestry Commission has plans in place to alleviate its impact .

What next?

It is highly likely that the majority of Britain's ash trees will become infected.

Chalara seems to affect mature trees more gradually than younger ones. In March DEFRA released the Chalara Management plan, and Alison underlined a key point: 'Trees cannot recover from infection, but larger trees can survive infection for a considerable time and some might not die'.

As coppice and new plantings succumb quickly and dramatically to infection, the FC advise that ash is not coppiced in the areas that are most at risk.

The Forestry Commission is working to establish resistant strains by mass planting of ash in East Anglia and Kent. Trials in Europe have

established that 1% of trees will display tolerance to the fungus and these will be examined for resistant genetic markers and used for breeding work.

Ash trees are the second most common tree in the British landscape and we need to act now to replace them by planting a wide variety of replacements, such as oak, cherry, hornbeam, lime or walnut.

Woodland owners concerned about the disease should consult the Forestry Commission website in the first instance. If you spot an incidence of chalara, report it to your local office. Extensive advice is available here: www.forestry.gov.uk.

John Morris, Director of the Chiltern Woodland Project spoke about the lessons that could be learned from Dutch elm disease.

The loss of elms had a severe impact in the Chilterns: the appearance of the landscape altered, and their demise affected local infrastructure, as sawmills closed, for example. The trees were not replaced and although some survived, the beetle-borne disease is still prevalent. The key lesson would seem to be that trees must be replaced with other varieties.

The importance of ash trees

There are roughly 10 million ash trees in the Chilterns alone. Ash seeds are abundant and widespread, and in many places, ash trees filled the gap left by the elms, often becoming the dominant tree in a wood. Ash is also a common hedgerow tree and is a significant host for lichens.

Even when ash trees die, they remain a valuable part of the woodland ecosystem and although their timber will have no value, contaminated ash remains a useful source of firewood.

Deer

The subject of deer management arose as a result of this discussion. New trees must be protected from deer damage and there was robust debate about how to manage their numbers. If dog walkers are encouraged, deer numbers often decline as the dogs scare them off. Young saplings can be protected (up to a point) by tree guards. However, the feeling of the conference was that more must be done to boost the culling of deer: sportsmen should be encouraged to shoot does, rather than the antlered bucks; there

should be infrastructure established for the processing and sale of venison; one delegate suggested that the re-introduction of wolves would be effective.

Conference summary

We should not despair about the future of ash trees. The FC admit that they are feeling their way through this crisis, but they are trying to be proactive in their response to the march of chalara and recognise that the problem must be tackled collectively by us all.

Pine martens vs grey squirrels

Jonathan Spencer of the Forestry Commission held the audience enthralled with his presentation about pine martens.

Pine martens, which Jonathan fondly described as arboreal ferrets, once ranged throughout Britain, are absent from most of England and Wales, persisting in only isolated pockets, although they are now recovering in Scotland. Hunted for their fur, they were eradicated in England by the late 18th century, although in 2010 scat evidence suggested that a few may inhabit Kidland Forest, Northumberland. The Vincent Wildlife Trust, a wildlife conservation charity, gathers and evaluates evidence of pine marten sightings within the UK and runs a conservation project in Wales.

There is a large pine marten population in the west of Ireland, where they thrive. Woodland managers have noticed that where pine martens and grey squirrels come into contact, the grey squirrel population goes into decline – and in Ireland this has led to a revival of red squirrel numbers. The grey squirrels are either killed or are so stressed by the presence of the pine martens that their reproductive biology declines. Interestingly, red squirrels, which are about half the size of their grey cousins, seem to escape the attentions of the pine martens, as they are able to escape them more easily.

British forestry experts have viewed with



Pine Marten (photo courtesy Vincent Wildlife Trust/Colin Smith)

considerable interest the research carried out at University College Galway by PhD student Emma Sheehey. Researchers have discovered that there is a very high density of pine martens – 3.5/km² – and it may simply be the high numbers which have led to the decline in the grey squirrel population. It is a fascinating project, which is now scientifically examining anecdotal evidence. The Vincent Wildlife Trust are considering using a trial site in Britain to reintroduce pine martens under controlled conditions to assess their impact.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project, please click on these links:
www.woodlandmammals.com
 Vincent Wildlife Trust: www.vwt.org.uk

Alvecote Wood – top of the tree

Congratulations to SWOG's own Sarah Walters and Stephen Briggs, owners of Alvecote Wood, which has won the Royal Forestry Society Excellence in Forestry Award for Small Woodlands in 2013. Sarah explains how they did it.

First of all, it was never our intention to try to win an award. All we really wanted to do was take a neglected piece of woodland, and through good management, improve it as a habitat for wildlife and make it available for use by community groups.

So how to do it? The key things we did to improve our wood were: get advice, and get more advice; research the history of the site so we knew what we were dealing with; get a management plan in place; get help with costs via Forestry Commission grants; get good equipment; get training; then do the work. We had excellent advice from a wide range of sources including the Forestry Commission, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, an experienced local naturalist called Maurice Arnold, Pond Conservation, Butterfly Conservation and the Warwickshire County Forestry Officer. Obviously some of this advice

'What really tipped it for us was the excellent new planting they have done in a field they bought adjacent to the mature woodland. They also have good regeneration of oaks in the mature woodlands, use their woodland produce and hold open days. It is one of the best small woodlands we have ever seen.'
(RFS Judges)

is contradictory, but we pulled it all together, and blended it with our own knowledge of the site (both its current state and its history) to come up with an appropriate plan.

Grants and kit

We also needed to secure access around the site, security for the site, and get appropriate equipment. We were lucky to get some grants for fencing and making forest tracks from the Forestry Commission, and were also very lucky

to get a good, if elderly, Massey Ferguson tractor from a local farm auction, and a rotary slasher at a good price from a local dealer.

Habitats were relatively few in number, with no glades or rides (woodland wildlife predominates around the edges of clearings and rides), little in the way of regeneration, a single silted-up pond, a meadow that, without management, lacked diversity, and a lack of a shrub layer, and lack of diversity within that shrub layer where it existed.

Regeneration

Our response was to institute a programme of clearing rides and creating glades, restoration of



the meadow, restoration of land drainage, reduction of bramble, nettle and elder, and targeted planting of species already on the site, but in lower than expected numbers, such as hazel, ash and field maple. We also re-instated an over-stood coppice, to provide a supply of firewood, as well as rejuvenating the habitat for wildlife and planted a new roadside hedgerow. Finally, we put in six ponds, as part of a project that involved moving the road entrance, building a forestry road into the site and building a barn building for our tractor and other equipment.



We didn't do any of this stuff overnight. It was very important to nibble away at things a little bit at a time, over the course of our five-year plan, so that no habitat was drastically changed all at once. This would allow any creatures dependent upon that habitat to adjust to its changed status and extent. None of it was easy, and we had a minefield of regulations to get through, including a site-wide tree protection order (TPO) on our woods, which meant planning permission was needed for much of our work, including pruning and tree-safety work alongside the road. A woodland management plan was put in place, together with a felling licence, which allowed us to fell trees provided it was part of the management plan.

Betty's Wood

In 2010 we took a deep breath and bought an adjacent field, taking the site up to 20 acres in total. We carefully planned new woodland on this site, to include the maximum allowable open space (40%), as well as meadows, rides and

five more wildlife ponds in the damp areas of the field. The woodland – named Betty's Wood – was planted in 2011 and included a large segment of native broadleaved woodland, a large swathe of wet woodland and an area of natural regeneration around the borders.

We have seen an increase in wildlife diversity since we started managing the woods, and we record it all. It is lovely to see wildlife moving in when we create appropriate habitat, including the brown argus and dingy skipper butterflies that we have targeted.

We did not set out to win an award. We set out to do the best job we could for the local wildlife, and then to make it possible for local people to enjoy it, without compromising the wildlife. We love working at the woods, and are very lucky that we live a little over a mile from it, so we can visit every day. Why we won, I am not quite sure, but I'm glad our little woods found favour with the judges. We love it, and were glad they did too.

Visit Sarah's website for more information about what goes on in Alvecote Wood:
www.alvecotewood.co.uk

WOODFEST WALES



It was a 400-mile round trip to get to Woodfest Wales, but it was well worth the journey. Held in the grounds of the Kinmel Estate in North Wales with sweeping views over the Irish Sea, the 2013 show was a terrific showcase for all kinds of woodland crafts, sports and products.

SWOG shared a corner of the Woodlands.co.uk stand, and a steady stream of people stopped by to talk to local agents Chris Colley and Jon Swain about the whys and wherefores of buying a wood, while I chatted to others about SWOG.

It was fascinating talking to people about what they do in their woods and hearing about how much enjoyment they get. For many, it is simply a place to relax, for others, such as the man whose house was damaged by a falling Pacific redcedar, their woodland needs more

active management. There were a few curious passers-by who initially couldn't understand the point of woodlands, but they were outnumbered by many more who longed to own their own woodland.

Watching the timbersports is amazing and I was blown away (almost literally, as it was extremely breezy) by the chainsaw carving. The pole climbing demonstrations drew gasps of admiration from the crowds and the small businesses who had turned up to demonstrate their crafts – from green woodworking to charcoal burning, and bee-keeping to clog making – seemed to attract very healthy crowds.

It's a fantastic event, but what is really inspirational is the level of commitment to the natural world and traditional skills.





Above from left to right: from logs to clogs – Phil Howard makes traditional leather and wood clogs. Middle: chainsaw skills competition. Right: Sion Jinkinson with his charcoal burner.

Right: horse-logging demonstration.



Below: A glorious view of Woodfest, with the pole climbing to the right and chainsaw carving arena in the foreground.



Working in the woods – the ultimate therapy



Rich Hare describes how his woodland skills helped him come to terms with his mother's death.

When my mother died before Christmas, it was a bit of a shock. I suppose it should not have been unexpected as she was 80 and in poor health, but

all the same when she succumbed to a stroke in just a matter of hours, the whole family was left with a numbness and disbelief that anyone who has experienced the sudden loss of a loved one would easily recognise.

People deal with grief in different ways. I found that keeping busy was the best way for me to cope. This is just as well as there is a lot to do! Forms and paperwork have to be dealt with, friends and relatives need informing and of course, there is the funeral to arrange. If it was a shock to lose my mother so suddenly, then the cost of all these arrangements was equally so. There is little you can do about most of these costs, but with the cheapest coffin costing over £500, I was certain I could make one from the woods costing little more than my time, and I'm sure that my mother, who had always abhorred wasting



money unnecessarily, would have appreciated it more.

I had in mind an old larch tree which needed taking down. It was part of a nurse crop for a stand of beech planted in the sixties, but this one had blown over in a storm and was leaning against another tree quite precariously.

I use a logsol timberjig and a homemade log ladder which is relatively easy to move around. I have previously written a review of the set up on the forum here. It has its



Working in the woods – the ultimate therapy



shortcomings, but proved ideal for this kind of one-off project.

Sometimes if a tree has been under the tension or compression of a hang-up, it will split or shake when it hits the ground, but this one stayed together nicely. I saved the quarter-sawn boards for the main lengths as I figured these would have less chance of splitting or moving. Fortunately, the weather was cool and damp, so all the components stayed together pretty well. I wanted a simple, natural-looking construction, so I didn't try any fancy mitred joints or anything, I just overshot the corner joints, left the bark on the waney edge of the lid and base, then put on some simple rope handles.

I was pleased with how it turned out and

I'm sure Mum would have been, too. It had taken me a couple of days and cost me a pocket full of change for the fixings and the rope. More importantly, though, it concentrated my mind and gave me a purpose during what for anyone is a difficult time. It was proof yet again that working in a wood and with wood is such a great therapy, one that seems to be innate. In this case, for me, it was the 'ultimate' therapy.

Links

Woodland therapy sessions improve patients' health: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/>
Woodland Trust on woodland therapy
Woodland burials



EPS Training

The Forestry Commission (FC) in England have organised a series of events designed to make their own employees, agents and managers of FC woods, and those who are in receipt of FC grants aware of their responsibilities to European Protected Species (EPS). The aim was to allow owners and managers to comply with the law while still managing their woodlands to improve habitat in the long-term. Sarah attended a Forestry Commission meeting in Fineshade Wood near Corby. Each workshop is tailored to the region in which it falls, this one covering the Midlands and East Anglia.

The sessions started in the classroom with a brief introduction to the legislation and the species involved, then sessions led by experts on bats, native hazel dormouse, otters and great crested newt. Smooth snake and sand lizard were not covered as they do not occur in the Midlands.

The group then spent most of the day in the woods, exploring habitats and discussing issues around how to manage the woodland while still preserving the habitat and complying with the legislation.

The Law – Neil Riddle

EU Habitats Regulations became law in the UK in 1994, and most of the affected species are found in woodland. These are all 17 species of UK bats, hazel dormouse, otter, great-crested newt, smooth snake and sand-lizard. The latest amendment in 2007 removed the defence of incidental, or inadvertent, disturbance.

Habitat management should not be compromised, provided you plan what you are going to do and write down how you have considered EPS and the implications of your work.

Field visits

Our first stop was to help identify trees that bats would favour – this included a tree with a row of woodpecker holes, and a tree with old-growth ivy. We thought we were aware of bat habitats,

but they can squeeze into surprisingly small spaces, and it was helpful to see some of these, such as ivy.

We then moved on to a riparian habitat – a small stream that is a river tributary. It doesn't look that much, but is ideal habitat for otters. Indeed, there was an animal track running alongside that would be exactly what otters might choose to use. Any wooded area like this, with alder carr or coppice, overhanging trees, plenty of undergrowth, plenty of tree roots with crevices in which otters can rest would be ideal for the otter.

The next stop was hazel coppice, ideal habitat for the dormouse. It was interesting how forestry operations were being planned well in advance for an area to be coppiced soon, including planning an extraction route to minimise

potential disturbance. Plans to retain corridors of canopy along which dormice could move were explained, as well as the management of the coppice on a patchwork basis. This means that instead of felling, say, 10ha all in one place, this is spread into ten smaller patches, giving the dormouse room to move around. The management of deer to allow regeneration and provide a habitat succession for dormice was also discussed, and we were shown the difference between areas with and without adequate deer exclusion.

The final stop was a pond suitable for

It is an offence to do any of the following:

- Capture, kill or injure any EPS
- Deliberately disturb any EPS
- Deliberately take or destroy eggs
- Deliberately damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places

great-crested newt (and as it turned out, for otters too). In an open area within woodland, this had lots of emergent vegetation, and plenty of tussocky grass providing a route to the wooded area, all of which are suitable cover during the terrestrial phase of the newt's life. Again, the key to management was to ensure that disturbance was kept to a minimum during breeding season, that connections were maintained, escape routes retained, and clearance limited to a small proportion of the whole area.

Key points

- Know what the EPS are and what habitats they favour
- Consider EPS and their favoured habitats in the management of your woods
- Show you have considered EPS in your operational management and write it down!

- Think about connectivity between ponds, along rivers and streams, and around the perimeter – if you are disturbing creatures inadvertently, have you left connections along which they can escape and alternatives in which they can roost or shelter?
- Manage your wood on a patchwork basis – nibble away at little bits rather than sweeping large parts away all at once.
- The Police Wildlife Crime Officers have also received this training – you have been warned!
- Don't be put off managing your woods – all these species depend on provision of a succession of habitat, and management benefits them in the longer term.

More information, with advice on good practice, is available on the Forestry Commission web site at:

www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies

A full list of European protected species is [here](#).



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>



Woodlands.co.uk and SWOG will be exhibiting at Wild About Wood, Treefest and Bentley, so please stop by and say hello.

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/

Royal Welsh Show

22-25 July 2013 Llanellwedd, Powys
www.rwas.co.uk/royal-welsh-show

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.)

Making nests for long-eared owls

Surprisingly, long-eared owls do not build their own nests, and there are only about 2,000 pairs, which usually adopt unused nests of other species. The North Wales Wildlife Trust is encouraging the public to build nests and place them in suitable trees.

How might 3D printing affect woodlands?

Angus takes a huge technological leap and tries out a 3-D printer, while musing upon its uses for woodland owners.

Dutch Elm disease and Brighton's National Collection of elm trees

Oliver visits the largest collection of elms in the UK.

Bleeding yew tree in Pembrokeshire

Angus visits the 6th century church of St Brynach, Wales, with a remarkable yew tree in the churchyard.

Churchyard Scything with Austrian Scythes – and manual baling

Sion Jinkinson and the 'Living Churchyards' project in North Wales.

Coppice and wood pasture

Lewis discusses the origins of coppicing and how areas of woodland were managed for different purposes.

Feast in the woods

Rebecca Cork on pop-up camping –

using woodland to create a temporary community to feast in the woods.



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.

In the latest video, Ian Barnett demonstrates how to make wooden gypsy flowers using a draw knife and coppiced hazel. He shows the different effects achieved by using green wood and dry wood, and describes how gypsies used to dye them before selling them.



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.

Recent chat has featured a discussion

about woods in fiction - can anyone recommend a good book about woods or forests?

There are also a fair few offers for SWOG members - money off Andy Noble's bushcraft, contracting by Andy Fox and the offer of a bit of glamping near Robertsbridge. A couple of members discussed the late-blossoming of hawthorn this year, and another wanted advice on the propagation of rowan trees.

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/