



Fraddon Food and Craft Hall update

By Tim Hutton

Fraddon Food and Craft Hall update

At an earlier meeting a couple of months ago with the Kingsley Group Company who manage the Fraddon Food and Craft Halls it was suggested by them that WCW could have a stand for their products along with display boards etc. It was a suggestion and not a promise, but one we felt would benefit the Company and WCW. After all one person represents that person alone but represented collectively, even by a handful of people, would benefit the group as a whole and would have spin off benefits for the Kingsley Group at the same time.

However some weeks later following a reduction of space available, a dedicated WCW stand was no longer an option. The core group decided that individuals could submit their work if they wanted to but the group as a whole would wait to see if more space became available in the new year.

...some time later, a week before the opening in fact, and resulting from a delay in installing a surf shop on the premises, we were offered collective space by the managing director for the period up until Xmas and possibly beyond.

The space was very generous, the type of display negotiable and the terms, still sale or return, but with a 40% mark up much more favourable than originally suggested. Space too was offered free to demonstrators. The drawback being that they needed the space occupied that week or soon after.

I made a few phone calls and it became clear that the WCW would be unable to put a stand together at such short notice.

Perhaps both sides were victims of their lack of experience, the woodsmen in terms of high turnover retail practices and the Kingsley group with a background in property development, an inexperience in the world of hand made wooden craft and furniture. As one member put it - his chairs for next year were still growing in the woods. We plan our output on a seasonal basis not on a weekly one.

As it stands at the moment, two woodsmen have submitted their work, and we shall wait and see if there is more space available after Xmas for a dedicated WCW display. If you are interested in submitting work please contact Dianne Price.

Tim Hutton

Contact Details

If you have any questions or comments regarding the West Country Woodsmen or this newsletter, please direct them to us.

Tim Hutton
Greyhayes, St Breward
Cornwall, PL30 4LP

Visit our Website
www.westcountrywoodsmen.org.uk

Send us an email
info@westcountrywoodsmen.org.uk

West Country Whinge

Please could any member who has been invoiced and not yet paid their membership fees send payment as soon as possible. It costs time and money to chase up any late payments and ultimately it is all of us who end up suffering.

Anyway, have a good Christmas!

Oliver Russel

Classifieds

Western Red Cedar

Wide selection of boards always available at very good prices. Free sawdust, planer shavings and mulch chippings.

8" chipper for hire with operator £150 per day also mobile sawmill; kilning service available.

Tino Rawnsley: 01208 813490 or 07817 450009

Desperately in need of **coppice poles** 6" + long, straight 20-35mm diameter, standing or freshly cut, hazel, ash or chestnut. Happy to pay a good price for suitable poles.

Also I have some **machines for sale:**

Electra Beckum BAS315 Bandsaw £90.00 (new £300)

Axminster dust extractor ADE1200 £70.00 (new £200)

Ryobi 30mm table saw £100.00 (new £235)

Paul King, Woodland Yurts, 80 Coleridge Vale Rd South, Clevedon, Somerset, BS21 6PG, UK. Tel 01275 879705

Welcome back

Welcome back to the West Country Woodsmen newsletter. After a dormant period which left something of a vacuum at the heart of the Woodsmen, the newsletter is back in a newly revised and designed form. This has been made possible with the support of Rural Enterprise Gateway and the design work of Jacob Old at Starweb Communications. "Not another newsletter" you may say, and it is true there seems to be a new one arriving almost every week from one organisation or another, but this can only be a positive thing, and for the woodsmen in particular its own newsletter will be an essential source of knowledge and communication.

In the words of Bill Copperthwaite, knowledge without action is like having no knowledge at all and it is important that we not only write about various projects but we get involved in them as well. The contents of the newsletter with its calendar of events will make this kind of involvement easier. It is important too that you make the newsletter work for you, so please send us details of events and courses that are relevant and any article no matter how long or short that you feel would be of interest.

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Oliver Rackham lecture

I attended Dr Rackham's lecture at Truro Town Hall on Thursday 24th Nov. The evenings programme was due to start at 7.30 pm and when I arrived at 7.20 pm the hall was already bursting at the seams with people eager to hear the widely acknowledged authority on British Ancient Woodland talk. There was barely even standing room available.

The Mayor of Truro opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone and announcing that he had never seen so many people in the hall at any one time. Next to speak was the chairman of The International Tree Federation, Peter Blake. A very engaging speaker, he introduced the subject matter of the talk and Oliver Rackham himself.

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Oliver Rackham lecture

By Jane Bailey

Dr Rackham talked us through the history of woodland in Britain. Starting at the last ice age, he described the various types of woodland settings, including: wood / pasture, hedgerows, plantations and gardens and orchards. Also, explaining how the various types have evolved from the primitive wild wood. He then went on to explain the evolution of Cornish woodland and its similarity to other Celtic woods found in Wales and Scotland. He used Calamansac wood on the Helford River as an example, as it is the earliest recorded surviving wood in Cornwall.

Throughout the talk Dr Rackham illustrated his evidence and examples with slides showing maps, pollen core data and pictures of various woodlands. Cores taken at Porthleven show that Oak and hazel predominated there, along with Alder, pine, yew, birch and elm, but not lime and beech.

Working up through history Dr Rackham continued his talk describing the different uses of wood, both domestic and industrial. Evidence of historical features include: water wheels, charcoal hearths, coppice stools, old sallows and plant species typical of ancient woodland.

He went on to explain how large scale replanting in Britain between 1950 and 1980 destroyed a lot of ancient woodland that was left after earlier clearing. And ended his talk with an example of the recent practice by many of the larger woodland organizations to replace pine plantations with broadleaf trees, showing areas of Wentford Forest bought by the Woodland Trust.

Although Dr Rackham's history of British woodland only lasted an hour, it was very comprehensive and I came away feeling as though I had absorbed a volume of research papers. It was a very interesting talk, which was followed by the opportunity for the audience to ask questions of Dr Rackham. His approachable manner and clear answers ensured that a lot of people put their hands up.

The evening was rounded off by a brief but informative talk by Colin Hawke, the natural environment officer for Cornwall County Council (and West Country Woodsmen member) about Phytophthora pathogens. Unfortunately these pathogens thrive in damp / wet conditions and

Welcome back

By Tim Hutton

hence are cause for much concern in Cornwall; they are responsible for diseases such as sudden Oak death. Details about Phytophthora can be obtained from www.cornwall.gov.uk/government/trees

A final impassioned plea by the charming chairman of ITF, Peter Blake for everyone to take an active part in trying to lobby town planners to plant trees alongside new housing developments was a fitting close to a very thought provoking and enjoyable evening.

Jane Bailey

Join West Country Woodsmen

Becoming a member of our vibrant group couldn't be easier. Just request a membership pack from our website.

www.westcountrywoodsmen.org.uk

Welcome Back...

There has been some talk recently about the number of organisations working in similar areas and whether the woodsmen should consider merging with another group to have a stronger voice in the forestry sector as whole.

Even a German forester I met recently returning from Scotland commented positively on the number of woody based organisations in the UK as compared to Germany. This is surely a good thing but it does raise questions as to whether small organisations can have any influence in the bigger scheme of

things- a small tree in a big forest can struggle for the light. Is it easier to stimulate change from within the mainstream or from the edges?

Jonathon Porritt, for example, long time voice of the Friends of the Earth, now advises multinationals on how to improve their environmental credibility. Alternatively, other groups, like Riverford Organics for instance, prefer to challenge the mainstream from the margins by rejecting the homogeneity of the supermarkets in order to maintain some level of integrity and commercial independence.

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Pentiddy Woods

By Anthony and Ele Waters

There is no right or wrong to this debate but there is a need to define for a particular group the best way to reflect and implement the members' points of view. Perhaps in this respect the Woodsmen may do well to remain independent for the time being. The network attracts such a broad spectrum of woodland and forestry practitioners, from sculptors to managers, basket makers to timber framers, it fits awkwardly into any specific sector or category. Like natural bio-diversity this must be a healthy situation, encouraging a high level of communication between disciplines and enabling us to remain receptive and flexible to change.

With the Woodsmen's commitment to sustainable business practice and education at community and apprenticeship level, we are working towards improving the health of our local woods and woodland culture. This approach will be less easily compromised working at a local level from the ground up with appropriate scale business practices. After all, the small trees in the big forest will eventually become the forest itself.

There is of course a huge difference between being independent and being isolated, and it would be self defeating to become marooned in some woodland Never -Never land. The need to make the connections with other related groups and organisations has never been so strong whether they share our point of view or, on occasion, are at odds with it.

Tim Hutton

Pentiddy Woods

The 4-year planting plan to create a 7 acre community coppice with free public access at Pentiddy Woods began at the end of November. The field neighbouring the existing community woodland saw 30 people joining in with the first planting, successfully planting 700 trees in the glorious sunshine, aided by copious cake and much joviality.

The planting is supported by the Woodland Trust (each child planting a tree on the site will receive a woodland goody-bag, and they have provided £100 towards costs)

The Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) is the main funding body for the whole plan.

The coppice has been designed to supply the project with a diverse range of timber for a variety of products. Hazel, Sweet Chestnut, Ash and Lime are the main 'crop' species, with Alder to deter deer and willow as a sacrificial crop for the deer around the edge of each coup.

The 1st of December saw 50 staff from the Groundworks Trust and 2 inner city school groups coming out to help plant more trees and enjoy some hands on environmental education in the existing Mature woodland.

The second open planting weekend is set for 11th and 12th February 2006. All are welcome to join in from 10am – 4pm with refreshments provided. Please bring a spade and lots of digging power!

Other future developments in this open access area are a woodland shelter / classroom structure and thoughts on providing an area for green burials.

Looking forward to seeing you all on February 11th and 12th!

Anthony and Ele Waters

Submit an Article

It's all very well having a spanking new newsletter and people who have the time to put it together and send it out but it can't happen without your help.

Please take a moment to jot down some words and send them to us for inclusion in the Spring edition of the newsletter.

We need:

Events, talks, workshops.

Work opportunities, wants & sales.

Articles for discussion - where is the industry going? Where should it be going?

Send any articles and items to Tim Hutton. Images are always most welcome too!

Basketmakers South West

At the recent BSW AGM concern was expressed that most of the group's activities took place in Devon and that we should try and lay on some events which would be more accessible to Cornish members.

It was suggested that we should link up more with other like minded groups for joint activities. BSW has a "Summer Meeting" - normally in June or early July which is a social gathering with everyone bringing food for a shared meal. This year's event was held at Rose and Kevin McCabe's new cob house at Ottery St Mary where we made cob and members demonstrated baskets.

Last year we visited the Yarner Trust where we had a guided tour of the organic garden and willow bed, inspected the straw bale workshop and compost loos. People again demonstrated basketmaking and brought along work done recently.

I undertook to approach West Country Woodsmen to get their views on having a joint event "somewhere in Cornwall".

Any suggestions for a venue? We give a donation to the hosts and have a small collection on the day to cover the cost of tea / coffee etc. (Tim Hutton's yurt making exploits sound interesting. Would that be a possibility?)

Any thoughts / ideas would be much appreciated.

Don Gaskins

China Clay Woodland Project - Mid Cornwall

We've all looked at those massive china clay spoil heaps around Bugle and St Austell, that stand out as you drive up and down the A30, and wondered what will Imerys (who took over from English China Clay, and are French owned!) eventually do with do with them?

Well, now English Nature has teamed up with Imerys, Cornwall County Council, Defra, The Forestry Commission and various others and set up the China Clay Woodlands Project. Over the next three years this project aims to create and restore 780ha of 'regionally appropriate native broadleaved woodland' on china clay land, tips and spoil heaps. The work has been split into 27 different sites, spread throughout the 26 square miles of the China Clay industry in Mid- Cornwall. There will be about 350ha of new tree planting taking place, predominately on the lower slopes of the large spoil heaps. The rest of the project is inter planting and regeneration of existing woodland and old plantations.

The species being planted are all native, mainly sessile oak, ash and alder as a fast growing 'nurse species'. I think the alder will be removed, once the oak is established, to give the characteristic local broadleaved woodland. The aim of the planting is primarily screening, landscape enhancement and wildlife habitat, it will not produce any significant timber, the land being too exposed, too steep and the soils too loose and sandy. However the effect on the landscape in the area, in 20 years plus, should be dramatic and the partnership should be applauded for this.

The planting should start this month and will be spread over the next three years. So, as you all sit in your dry, wood-burner heated workshops, whittling your coppice sticks, spare a thought for the poor tree planters, on those spoil heaps, in the rain, planting up the land for your enjoyment!!

Oliver Russell

Forest School Leadership Course

Forest School is a Danish concept that relies on learning by experience and uses a woodland setting as the 'classroom'.

Introduced to Britain in 1993, Forest Schools are now springing up across the UK.

Forest School practitioners focus on the individual needs of children and young people, helping them to develop social skills, self-esteem and independence.

Forest School activities develop practical and intellectual skills, which can be linked to the National Curriculum and early learning goals of the foundation stage curriculum. Groups of children spend a half day every week in a woodland setting, where they can build a shelter, learn survival skills and take part in teambuilding games.

Pentiddy Woods, Pensilva will host Cornwall's first Level 3 Forest School Leadership Course

Starting in June 2006, validated by the Open College Network. It teaches how to plan suitable outdoor activities for children, applying rigorous health and safety practice and includes an advanced specialist First Aid Certificate. The training also covers child development, natural learning patterns, self-esteem and management of anti-social behaviour.

Student entry requirements:

- Must be over 21.
- Holder of a level 2 or equivalent teaching and/or playwork qualification.
- Or, a portfolio showing sufficient relevant experience in working with groups of children in an outdoor setting.
- Holder of a current valid police check (Enhanced CRB disclosure)

The course format includes a weekend of First Aid training, 3 weekends of Forest School training, a residential weekend, a one-day coursework completion tutorial and an assessment. The course will take approx. 6 months to complete.

For more information about the course or to register your interest, call Marijike Shakespeare of The Forest School Training Company on 01363 84513

Jane Bailey

An Appropriate Solution

What is 'Appropriate technology'? Appropriate in scale? right for the job?. Do you need a sledge-hammer to crack a nut? Finding the right tool for the job is something that comes with experience, your own, or other peoples. A good recommendation from someone who 'knows' is worth a lot, saving the time and expense of making the wrong choice.

Working in small woods is a prime example of where appropriate technology can be used to great effect

Not very long ago, within living memory, a woodsman carried his simple and effective tools into the wood, the axe and saw. He did his job by his own effort. But a felled tree is heavy and that's where he needed help. Without the horse and harness a woodsman could only take what he could carry.

It is this premise that led me to make chairs. I could go into the woods with a minimum of equipment and walk out with the components for a chair, an axe, a saw and a froe were all I needed. The next big 'leap' was to make myself a 'shaving horse' an ancient device for holding the wood still while you worked on it with a draw-knife. This was a revolution, this way of working wood although not 'technical' suits the nature of the material. Green wood just loves to be worked in this way with an edged tool. It is immensely satisfying to shear off a good shaving of Chestnut or ash in this way, quiet, dust-free, highly efficient and wholesome exercise. There is something very therapeutic about it. By working with the innate qualities of the material with these simple but highly effective tools a completely different way of working wood opened out before me. Instead of being an inert and passive 'engineering medium' a whole new set of paths, challenges and solutions presented themselves. Instead of dominating the material with machines, making became a collaborative process between me, my tools and the tree.

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10 Acre Wood For Sale

By Jane Bailey

10 Acre Wood For Sale

Some of you may have seen the advert by Millers Countrywide offering 10 acres of woodland at Polmorla for sale. The advert doesn't really explain the full nature or give a clear picture of the outstanding beauty of this area. The reason being, that I don't truly want to sell it. I have been forced into a tight financial corner but also have to admit that 10 acres of semi-natural ancient woodland is rather a lot to look after single-handedly.

I received a phone call enquiring about the woods from a couple living locally; we met at the woods and enjoyed a stroll over the autumn leaf carpet while chatting. It turned out that they have similar dreams to myself regarding conservation of our heritage, sustainable living, education and simply enjoying our natural environment.

A partnership was mentioned during viewing, due to the struggle of achieving the dream single-handedly, which the previous owner had also found. This got me thinking about the possibility of a community project. So, if there were anyone else who would like to come and have a stroll through 10 Acre Wood and chat about their woodland dreams and the possibility of buying a share into that dream; please contact Jane Bailey on Tel: 07960 757494.

Jane Bailey

Events Calendar

14 Jan 2006: Hedgestepping (laying)
Deer Park Farm, Trushan, Nr Chudleigh. 9.30am - 4.30pm. £10/day DRST members, £15 non-members. Contact: Jennie @ 12 Crest Hill, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0AN or telephone: 01364 642480 after 6.30pm

13 Feb 2006: Practical Hedgelaying
2 Day course, £35. Contact: Kathy Lewington, South West Forest. Tel: 01409 221896

9 Mar 2006: Coppice Management and Working. 2 Day course, £35. Contact: Kathy Lewington, South West Forest. Tel: 01409 221896

23 Mar 2006: Deer Awareness for Woodland Owners & Managers. 1 day course, £35. Contact: Kathy Lewington, South West Forest. Tel: 01409 221896

22-23 Apr 2006: Somerset Willow Fair, Montacute. Contact: Veronica Johnston, Tel 01769 574402 Email v.b.johnston@fhsinternet.com

28 Apr 2006: West Country Woodsmen Visit and Guided Walk to Hunters Moon. Dartington Forest Research Centre... Details to follow.

I was working 'with' the wood and the woodland. Using mostly hand tools, I was taking small trees, thinnings and making room for the others, allowing light onto the woodland floor, therefore encouraging new growth and biodiversity by coppicing.

It dawned on me that if we could work in this collaborative way with nature, then we could have our 'stuff,' our artefacts, without destroying the environment which ultimately supports us. The technology I was using was 'appropriate' not only to the job it was doing, but to the scale of the resource i.e. my pocket and the woods I was working.

However I was being asked to make tables as well as chairs and tables need planked wood. The next step of 'evolution' was the mobile sawmill, which immediately presented me with a new scale of challenges and ecological considerations. Planks come from bigger trees; I would need to extract the logs from the wood to a suitable site for further processing. Getting the logs out was a big challenge. I would need either a horse and harness or a tractor and winch.

I had the money for neither. A horse would need a field, feed, a horsebox for transport to the woods and regular year round work to keep fit for the heavy work of pulling logs. A tractor and winch would also need a trailer to get to the woods, quite apart from the damage that it does in compacting the ground and the scars gouged in the woodland floor by dragging the logs through it.

The technological 'revelation' came when I was in Wisconsin looking at Jim Birkemeier's solar kilns.

He took me to meet some Mennonite woodsmen who still use horses for extraction. They had a rather primitively welded up modern take on the old Timber 'Bob' or 'Arch,' it worked amazingly effectively. Later during my stay I used a similar device called a 'fetching Arch' this, used in conjunction with a tractor mounted winch could extract logs from way off the woodland ride without the normal damage to the forest floor. Jim called it 'Arthroscopic logging' like keyhole surgery!

Unable to find any thing like it in Europe when I got back, I made up prototypes of my own 'take' on what I had seen. They worked! I made two sizes one for large logs up to 26" diameter and 16ft long that could be winched and / or towed behind a tractor, ATV or other vehicle. And one for logs up to 12" diameter and 16ft long for extracting logs by hand ('Human Logging') which could also be used behind an ATV.

Over the last three years I have refined the idea and now use them all the time.

These simple tools have revolutionized the way I work, not only in the woods but also in the saw-yard. Now I can pull out 'hang ups', extract logs from deep in the woods and transport them to the yard by road. I can move heavy beams, house timbers and saw logs around the yard single-handedly manoeuvring them into position to load onto the mill without rupturing myself or doing myself a mischief.

Working in the woods without 'Big equipment' is still a very physical job but with the appropriate tools you can achieve what needs to be done safely, economically and effectively.

If you would like further info on the RWP Logging Arches and other 'appropriate technology solutions' for Woodland work:

Contact Tino Rawnsley.
Rawnsley Woodland Products
Waverley, Burlawn, Wadebridge,
Cornwall PL27 7LD

Tel 01208 813490 Mob: 07817 450009
Web: www.cornishwoodland.co.uk

Tino Rawnsley

Logs to burn! Logs to burn!
Logs to save the coal a turn!
Here's a word to make you wise
When you hear the woodsman's cries.

Beechwood fires burn bright and clear,
Hornbeam blazes too,
If the logs are kept a year
And seasoned through and through.

Oak logs will warm you well
If they're old and dry,
Larch logs of pinewood smell
But the sparks will fly.

Pine is good and so is yew
For warmth through wintry days
But poplar and willow, too
Take long to dry and blaze.

Birch logs will burn too fast,
Alder scarce at all.
Chestnut logs like smouldering flax,
No flame is seen.

Pear logs and apple logs,
They will scent your room.
Cherry logs across the dogs
Smell like flowers in bloom.

But ash logs, all smooth and grey,
Burn them green or old,
Buy up all that come your way,
They're worth their weight in gold.

Traditional English Rhyme
Submitted by Jane Bailey

Next WCW Meeting

The next West Country Woodsmen meeting will be held on

27th January 2006
at 7.00pm at Jamaica Inn,
Bolventor, Bodmin

Woodland Quiz followed by
Future Woodlands: Climate Change
and Nativeness, a discussion
with Martin Crawford.

Visit our website for more details.
www.westcountrywoodsmen.org.uk