



THE COPPICE ASSOCIATION North West

www.coppicenorthwest.org.uk

Spring into Course Action!!

NEWSLETTER No 54 Spring 2016

Moss & Height Spring Wood

Our first CANW volunteer workday peeling oak bark in the ancient woodland of Moss & Height Spring Wood near Bouth took place on Saturday 23rd April in a part of the wood that has become affectionately (and aptly) known as Noblett's Knobble.

Initially, the trees were reluctant to surrender their bark, likely due to the prolonged cold spring. However, the appearance of the afternoon sun seemed to free things up a bit. Combined with the selection of some larger trees on the South facing edge of the coupe we had some brief moments of fabulously satisfying bark release. The proceeds of the bark sales go to the Bill Hogarth Memorial Apprenticeship Trust. We're having another session on Wednesday May 18th to bulk up the harvest.

A charcoal kiln was delivered to the coupe by Ian to enable Dan & Mike to charcoal last year's left over timber. Elsewhere in the wood, Sam Robinson has completed the felling of a firewood coupe, now awaiting a horse to bring it to ride side, and Jack Holden has cut a tidy coupe of mainly smaller diameter birch.

A workday was held on Wednesday 16th March, which included assisting dressing out in Jack's coupe along with some of the last bits of Woodland Grant Scheme work.



Ian Taylor's ring kiln being rolled up the Knobble.

Friday & Saturday 18th & 19th March a weekend of workshops and practical work was held at MHSW as part of the Rusland Horizons BHMAT apprentice recruitment days. Welcome to two new apprentices Helen Clarke and Jamie Mann! You'll soon meet them on our workdays and events. Ian Taylor, Owen Jones and Lorna Singleton, Sam Robinson, Jack Holden and the entire Coppice Co-op are their sponsors... quite a consortium.

Duncan Goulder
April 2016

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Saturday and Sunday 14-15th May Weekend in the Woods 2016

in Staveley-in-Cartmel

Come pitch up again for a weekend filled with courses in Chapel House Wood. All courses have been booked full, except for dry stone walling. If you fancy learning how to rebuild a length of damaged wall please contact Grace on secretary.canw@googlemail.com . Cost for members £95, non-members £105, two lunches, one dinner and camping on site included.

Sunday 15th May

Cuerden Valley Fair in Preston

See how the build of the strawbale visitor centre overseen by Straw Works has been coming on. Rides, games, stalls, crafts, dogs, hawks, other animals, and woodland crafts with Twiggy. Entry for Adult s £4, children £2. Family (2+2) £8

Wednesday 18th May

Moss and Height Spring Wood Workday 10am till 4pm

The traditional CANW oak peeling day. Please bring lunch, warm and waterproof clothing, work gloves, sturdy footwear and peeling tools if you have them. Tea/coffee and some more peelers provided. Proceeds go to BHMAT. If you're not sure of directions or the weather turns dodgy, check the website or give Ian Taylor a ring on 07813696161 to confirm whether or not the day is running.

Saturday and Sunday 21-22nd May

Caldbeck Craft Weekend

A Cumbrian craft weekend to celebrate the 30th year of the restoration of Priest's Mill, Caldbeck, a grade 2 listed former watermill. The mill now houses the Wool Clip Co-op, for everything woolly, the Watermill cafe and two craft shops. The weekend will include willow weaving demonstrations by Helen Elvin, pole lathe turning with Ralf Bidder, wire sculpture by Annie Kendall, bee keeping and more. All this plus live music, street theatre (Sunday only) and the unveiling of a bench by Wilson Irving. Open 10.30am to 4.30pm both days.

Friday - Sunday 3-5th June

Holker Garden Festival

We'll be taking the CANW stall to Holker Hall gardens and now we need some folk who would like to demo, sell and talk coppice. Holker is a big three day show, you can do all or just one of them. Please let Duncan know which days you can be there.

Friday - Sunday 24-26th June

Stott Park Earthburn

The annual CANW Earthburn with Sam Robinson, Dave Noblett and Brian Crawley. Three days and two nights of charcoal making. The Mill is open to the public over the weekend, with woodworking demonstrations going on at the same time. It's always a really nice do, with lots of chatting round the burn, cooking sausages, and all the pleasures of applied anthracology. Please contact Duncan if you can take a shift, the more people the merrier.

CANW AGM 2016

A Summary

The AGM rite was kindly hosted by Edward and Romola at Sprint Mill again, and was very well attended.

Two seismic changes in the committee occurred, and with them two new traditions were born (possibly?). Sam Ansell stepped down as Chair, passing the 'ivy crown' (auspiciously found in a coupe that very day) to Ed Mills; and Grace Holland stepped down as Secretary, allowing Duncan Goulder to don the 'Secretarial Mankini' (not sure how that relates to coppicing, but it happened).

Gratitude was expressed to Sam and Grace for their hard work over the last 3 years and more. Sam remains on the committee, and Grace has kindly offered to continue to organise Weekend in the Woods 2016 (which is a relief because she's brilliant at it).

Rebecca Oaks is looking for someone to succeed her as our representative at the National Coppice Federation. The NCFed AGM is held 14-16 October this year. Have a chat with Rebecca if you'd like to know what it involves.

Rhiannon Westphal, Andy Woodcock and Jon Scragg were co-opted to the committee but were not requested to don anything of note (yet). Once the serious matters were dealt with, Ed Mills' quiz offered an entertaining if challenging miscellany of moths and annual growth rings to identify.

Duncan Goulder



New Faces on the Committee

Here is Jon Scragg from Lancashire:

And here is a bit he wrote:

“On holiday in Devon in 2015 I visited the National Trust site at Cotehele and met a green woodworker (chair maker) named Barry Mays and the greenwood ethos Barry demonstrated has had me hooked ever since. Being engaged on a journey with the wood from tree to end product, and being part of each subsequent process, leading to a closer link with nature, a healthier respect for the environment - all positive side effects of the craft.

Been 'crafty' and making stuff off and on for years, but some research led me to the week in the woods in 2015. I've watched and wondered at the coppicing and charcoal activity at Roddlesworth, a local woods where we have walked our dogs for what must be 30 years. Then Worlds collided at week in the woods when talking with Twiggy who works them - and now I have 1 foot firmly in this new world - just figuring out the next step.

One NCFed up North and multiple greenwood related courses later I wanted to get closer and involved locally, hence offered time to the committee.”

Glad to have you with us Jon! We'll be introducing Rhiannon Westphal & Andy Woodcock of Acorn Coop Support www.acorncoopsupport.org.uk in the next edition of this newsletter.

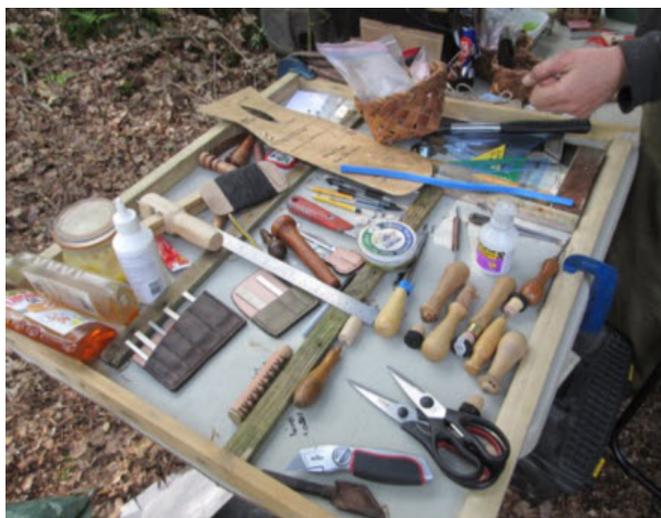
WANTED:
The Bridge Hotel in Kendal is reopened after flooding and looking for artists and craftspersons who would like to exhibit and sell their work. Please give Jackie a ring on 0797 448 1825

It's Not Wood! A Review of a Leatherwork Course

Having watched Tony Morgan giving impromptu leather working lessons at various events over the past year and having a need for various sheaths to protect knives, billhooks etc. from the inevitable damage that occurs, the opportunity to make some leather goods for myself at WITW 2015 was too good an opportunity to miss. This was to replace the various old socks, tea towels, pieces of plywood and string traditionally used for this purpose. Anne also decided she would like to have ago and decided to make a handbag (yes another handbag!).

Tony uses vegetable tanned British leather, from Scottish cows, this tanning process uses tannins i.e. from chestnut or oak bark which bind to the collagen proteins in the hide making it more resistant to bacterial attack and more flexible. Other methods of tanning use chrome chemicals or in the case of buckskin the animals brains urgh. A choice of two or three millimetre thick leather was available for our various projects.

A whole new selection of tools was introduced including skivers, awls, burnishers, stitching irons and bevelers which we were to learn to use over the



Tool bench. The crucifix behind the glue pot is in fact a strap cutter.

I had decided to make a billhook sheath, Tony had suggested to us that we could probably make two or three articles once we had become proficient at the various techniques.

The first step was to prepare a pattern to prevent mistakes in the cutting process, leather is quite expensive and mistakes could be costly, therefore

a lot of time was spent in planning the project, deciding on the allowance for stitching and joining and checking the fit on the tool before the final shape was finally marked on the leather using a scratch awl. The construction process also needs to be considered as some areas will be inaccessible once all the parts are assembled.

The leather was then cut to shape, and dyed to the required colour, the dye used was an 'institutional' non-flammable dye suitable for use in prisons, hospitals and schools presumably to prevent the various inmates or pupils using it for nefarious purposes. For edge tools a welt was included between the two pieces to prevent the sharp edge cutting the stitches.



The pattern and leather cut and dyed.

The process of joining the various pieces by stitching or riveting or both, could then commence. The stitching line being marked on the outside face of the article. A stitching iron, basically a fork with equally spaced prongs usually available at 6 to 12 stitches per inch, was used to mark the stitch positions.

To temporarily hold the various pieces together and prevent slipping as they were stitched they were glued using a PVA adhesive.

Now came the time to stitch the various pieces together, a stitching pony, a simple wooden clamp, held between the knees provides a third hand and allows both hands to be free for stitching.

The saddler's harness needles used are relatively blunt, the thread being pierced to lock it onto the needle. The length of thread required is about four times length of the stitch line plus a little extra which meant my thread from the main body of the billhook sheath was about 2.40m long, not an easy thing to manage. Following the marks made earlier by the stitching iron, each hole was pierced with a very sharp stitching awl and the seam sewn

working from both sides using saddle stitch. This two way threading means if one thread is cut or breaks the whole thing does not unravel.

A final hammer down to flatten the seam, then dye and burnish the edges until it's so shiny it squeaks, and the sheath was finished.

It became clear that the billhook sheath was a large undertaking for the weekend with a lot of time consuming stitching through two or three layers of 3mm leather. So homework was required with a number of necessary tools kindly loaned by Tony. Completing the stitching at home was a bit easier, sitting on a tall chair with bright sunlight and the final oiling and waxing brought out the patina of the leather. The finished sheath looks fantastic, almost too good to use in the woods, and has now proved to be a very practical and somewhat stylish piece.



The finished billhook sheath.

Others on the course opted for simpler objects, axe, knife and drawknife sheaths some with riveted fastening rather than the time consuming sewing. Mike managed four objects and could have made more were it not for a ewe about to lamb early on Sunday afternoon.



Mike's selection of tool covers.

This course was a great introduction to leatherwork processes and techniques and I left with a number of useful articles which should last a lifetime if well cared for. I now have more leather to make some simpler axe and drawknife sheaths, hopefully they will be as good as the billhook sheath.

Thanks to Tony for sharing his skill and knowledge and to the others on the course for their help and support over the weekend.

Wilson Irving
June 2015

P.S. You can go on a leatherwork course with Tony too. Bodger Morgan teaches the making of tool sheaths on the two day course the 24-25th of June.

Or you can order a sheath to fit your billhook made with extra detail, pouches and loops exactly like you want it. Hand stitched, hand dyed, **tough** 5mm thick cowhide with gleaming burnished edges and finish with natural oils and beeswax. It's £65, or £85 with pruning saw pouch. With this sheath you'll never loose your billhook!

Tony has such confidence in the durability and **toughness** of his leather products that he offers a free repair service. If it breaks (after sensible use and care) then just post it back and he'll fix it for free. Now that's service.



See more examples on www.bodgermorgan.co.uk
Remember: *It's safer with a sheath.*

Training & Courses



Saturday and Sunday 14-15th May Dry Stone Walling Basics Weekend in the Woods 2016 in Staveley-in-Cartmel

There are still some spots left on the dry stone walling basics course with Dan Sumner! Learn how to restore a length of damaged wall in Chapel House Wood. To book, email Grace on secretary.canw@googlemail.com. Cost for members £95, non-members £105, two lunches, one dinner and camping between the bluebells included.

Friday till Sunday 20th-22nd May Build Your Own Coracle with James Mitchell



Build and paddle your own unique boat from a design based on the Irish Boyne coracle. You will be putting together

coppiced hazel poles, cover them with calico, paint this with bitumastic paint, make a paddle and learn to paddle it under the expert tuition of James Mitchell. No previous experience necessary. You will need a roof-rack, trailer or medium sized car to take your coracle home! The fee is £180 for three days in Bodfari, Wales, with free camping included. Book your spot at woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

Saturday and Sunday 21-22nd May Traditional English Longbow Workshop with Tony Saunders

If Tony's longbow making course at Weekend in the Wood was booked full before you could get a spot, here's another chance. Learn to select,

shape and train coppiced Cumbrian Ash into a beautiful bow, make your bowstring and learn about the history of British martial arts. The fee is £150 for the weekend in Bodfari, Wales, with free camping included. Book your spot at woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

Saturday – Bank Monday 28-30th May Woodland Explorer Residential with Woodmatters

in partnership with the National Trust

Three unforgettable days for 8-14 year olds to do what 8-14 year olds do best: making whatever you need for setting up a good camp using knives, sticks, plants, rocks, tarps, cords and lots of fire. Ro and Gareth will be bringing their tools and skills to share so you can make art, bows and arrows, mallets, tent pegs, proper shelters for sleeping in, and find out about what animals are around the camp near Windermere just from the prints and traces they've left. Price: £175 (1st child in sibling group) (£160 additional siblings). For more details look on www.woodmatters.org.uk/course/detail/woodland



Sunday 22nd May Fanbird Carving with Steve Tomlin Greenwood Days, Ferrers Art Centre

Down in Leicestershire Steve Tomlin will be teaching how to carve these amazing and charming birds from a single piece of wood. Take a look at selecting wood and preparing it for carving before you learn to carve your own bird using simple tools and Steve's own specially developed techniques. Fee £85. To book please use the form on www.greenwooddays.co.uk/product/fan-bird-carving-22nd-may/

Saturday 4th June

Willow Piglets with Willowpool Design

A workshop to create unique woven piglets. Learn about 3D willow sculptures and perfect the random weave. An enjoyable day suitable for all abilities. Fee includes all materials and is £65-£75 depending on venue. For more information about the workshop location please email Steve and Simone at livingwillow@hotmail.com



Sunday 5th June

Lakeland willow sheep with Willowpool Design

Weave your very own Lakeland willow lamb or sheep, wonderful for your garden! Fee includes all materials and is £65-£75 depending on venue. For more information about the workshop location please email Steve and Simone at livingwillow@hotmail.com

Friday and Saturday Sat 10th-11th June

Willow Baskets with Tony Morgan

Over the two days Tony will guide you through the techniques of using willow to create an English round basket. Fee £110. For booking form at bottom of page visit:

Wednesday 22nd June

Scandinavian Shrink Pot Carving with Woodmatters

Create beautiful natural pots from greenwood, using the shrinkage of the tree as it dries out to create a sealed pot. Carve a base out of dried wood. Work with the natural properties of green wood by hollowing out a section of branch that shrinks to fit the base. Traditionally carved in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia and North America, this is a interesting introduction to

green wood crafts. Courses are held either at The Woodland Workshop or The Footprint, location will be confirmed at booking. Fee £60. To book please visit www.woodmatters.org.uk/course

Friday and Saturday 24th-25th June

Leather Tool Sheaths with Tony Morgan

Keep your woodworking, gardening tools and fingers safe by making leather sheaths. You will be able to make one or two of the following: billhook holster, or axe sheath, or knife sheath. It's £100 for two days + cost of leather (£10 per square foot). For your booking form please visit coppicecoop.co.uk/courses.php

Wednesday 6th July

Rustic Furniture Course with Woodmatters

Make a rustic greenwood bench or simple stool using hand tools. Your bench will look fantastic indoors or out. Courses with Ro and Gareth Thomas are held either at The Woodland Workshop near Kendal or The Footprint near Windermere, in the Lake District. The location will be confirmed at booking. Fee £85. To book or view other dates for this course please visit www.woodmatters.org.uk/course



Saturday - Monday 9th - 11th July

Oak Swill baskets with Owen Jones

Three intensive days of cleaving, boiling, riving, dressing, bending & weaving oak and hazel into your own traditional oak swill basket. No previous experience in basketry or green woodworking is required. The fee of £180 per person includes all materials, a vegetarian lunch each day, hot drinks. For more information and to book please visit www.oakswills.co.uk/workshops.html

WANTED: Moth sightings

When you are working outside please keep your eyes open for *Anania funebris*, a fast flitting tiny moth with a wing length of only 1 cm. This nationally scarce species has previously been recorded in the Morecambe bay area. A more robust dataset is needed to assess if current woodland management work, aimed at threatened fritillary butterflies, is also benefiting this day-flying Pyralid.

Anania funebris has striking white spots one black and will fly prominently in sunny weather from May into the first week of July. So please don't be put off by thinking that you may not have the necessary expertise. Anyone who has an interest in watching butterflies and day-flying moths can make a very positive contribution



Photograph by David Benham

All records from any site are welcomed. Please record any positive sightings on the "Sightings" page of Butterfly Conservation's Cumbria or Lancashire branch websites, as appropriate: cumbria-butterflies.org.uk/sightings/ lancashire-butterflies.org.uk/sightings/

Next issue

Please send any articles, pictures or drawings by August 25th to florisabbes@gmail.com

Thank you for sending your article pictures separately.

Woodland Delicacies No 4. Candied flowers

Gait Barrows is looking absolutely stunning at the moment. Wild woodland spring flowers like *Primula* and *Viola* spp. are thriving in the sunlight and heat hitting the forest floor of many newly coppiced coups. They're edible for humans, but also important food and larval plants for butterflies, so pick from your own garden and pots instead.

Out in the woods see if you can spot where Duke of Burgundy has been eating holes between the leaf nerves of Primrose and Cowslip. Can you find spiky Fritillary caterpillars under the leaves of violets?

Primroses and violet flowers look stunning on salad and cakes. What would CANW be without the cakes of Anne Kenyon, Sue Gibbs and Wilson Irving?

While you can have them *au naturel*, a beautiful and satisfying way to conserve these edible flowers for just a little longer is to sugar them. Vigorously whisk an egg white and a teaspoon of water to break up the strands. Hold the flower at the base with tweezers and with a small paint brush apply the egg wash to the flower. Sprinkle with fine caster sugar and dry overnight on wax paper.

Should you become totally addicted to candying tiny flowers, the flower of a lilac tree is edible too. Does it coppice? Yes it does! Growing lilac flowers from coppiced stools is the standard in the woody stemmed cut flower industry.

If you'd like an alternative to candying with egg whites just send a message to your editor.

Membership is open to ALL, you can be a craft worker, charcoal maker, naturalist, artist, coppice merchant, woodland owner, or just a wood lover who cares about the future of our broadleaved woodlands and wants to help promote them. A standing order form is available on www.coppicenorthwest.org.uk/joining.php Current annual memberships are due on January first.

Please enrol me/us as:

- Standard membership £15
- 2 at one address £20
- Concessions, unwaged or student £8
- Associate Member (under 18 years) £8
- Organisation £20

Date:

Signed:

Name(s):

Address:

Date of Birth (if under 18):

Tel:

Email:

Send this form together with your cheque made out to "Coppice Association North West" to:

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