



THE COPPICE ASSOCIATION North West

www.coppicenorthwest.org.uk

Horses ,squirrels and moths issue !

NEWSLETTER No 49 Spring 2014

Horses at MAHS

Three generations of one horse logging family were at Moss and Height Spring wood in April.

From left to right, Kevin, Saskia and George Read made their annual visit to MAHS to move wood out of Sam Robinson's section. Twenty people attended the workday and approximately sixty sausages were eaten, several poles were peeled, trees were felled with axes and cross cut saws and the sun shone .



Westmorland Red Squirrel society

We've been contacted by the above requesting information on any grey squirrels you see. Full article on page 5.

Chairman gives birth

Congratulations to illustrious chairman/person /man/woman/pet Sam Ansell and his partner Di have had a bouncing baby boy Ash Larfynn Ansell. Di and the baby are doing well.



Oak bark peeling at the MAHS workday

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Events

12th April **Damson Day**, Lyth valley (west of Kendal)
CANW has a stand again at this popular little show. See
The damson blossom, partake of the damson related
beers, waft adzes round by your angles. Sam Ansell organising
the canw stand.

17th-18th May 2014 **Weekend in the Woods 2014**
Staveley in Cartmel
Courses to be advised, get it in your diary.

30th May -1st June **HOLKER SHOW**: 30th May- 1st June 2014.
We have a stand at the Holker Show and will need demonstrators to
attend please. Let me know if you can make it for 1 or 2 or 3 days.
We usually get a handful of free passes, so friends and family might
be able to get a freebie too! Grace

13,14,15th June Stott Park Bobbin Mill, earth burn and cellidh ,
being organised by Dave Noblett and Sam Robinson (mob 07818
707015). Help needed making the heap, staying awake overnight and
bagging up the charcoal. Find out how it was done .

1st-5th September **Woodland Pioneers, Staveley in Cartmel**

Committee news

The AGM saw most of the membership now joining the committee
in one guise or another. This is great news for keeping a bit of youthful
vigour to the Association. Most significantly Brian Crawley has now
handed over responsibility for Treasurer to Louis Le Glas. After a
mammoth stint as treasurer (at least 15 years) in which time he has had
to cope with decimalization, the invention of the Babbage difference
engine and ever increasing numbers going on Weekend in the Woods.

Brian will still be on the committee and no doubt guiding Louis in
the right direction, but I'm sure we would all like to thank Brian for his
calm and conscientious service over the years. Luckily Louis did
astrophysics at university so should be able to cope with the big
numbers involved .



*Brian discussing with Dave Noblett about the
height of his stumps.*

Be at the cutting edge of heritage tool project

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We are The Woodmanship Trust, a Cumbria based charity which has recently been awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Sharing Heritage' scheme to create a heritage tool library for public use. We believe in keeping alive traditional rural skills that do not depend on oil or electricity. We believe in sharing resources. Creating a hand tool library will make all of this possible.

Over the coming months we will catalogue and restore one elderly man's incredible collection of hand tools relating to rural industries. Former farmer, bow top wagon builder and charcoal maker Walter Lloyd, 89, has kindly agreed for his collection to be made available to the public. He is deeply knowledgeable and experienced in the uses of these tools and it will be a blessing for current and future generations to achieve this in his lifetime, before this knowledge is lost.

To achieve this we need your help. We will be holding a series of work days throughout the Spring (March to May) on location in the beautiful South Lake District to sort the tools for refurbishment from his considerable collection. Then with the help of blacksmiths and tool specialists, we shall restore them to their former glory, ready for use.

If you have some interest in heritage rural industries and think you could spare at least 3 days in Spring for sorting, cataloguing and refurbishing this collection, please contact project co-ordinator Sarah Thomas on walterstools@gmail.com, with expressions of interest.

Over the summer and autumn there will also be a series of specialist-led workshops to instruct on the tools' uses.

Please follow us on Twitter @WaltersTools

BHMAT news

Buzzbank campaign is currently at £2580

towards its first stage target of £4000 with 57 people donating. Pretty impressive so far but if you feel the need to donate to the worthy cause of training the next generation of coppice workers you should go to:-

<http://www.buzzbnk.org/coppice>



BHMAT's latest apprentice is Stephen Kershaw who has now started with

Ian Taylor

Moss and Height Spring woods



Work days have been going on through the winter, and another section is nearly finished by Dave Noblett. A succession of high winds and wet weather blew over a number of trees including this oak across the B.O.A.T. Near where we usually park.

There are regular work days (usually one a month) and to get the date of the next one look on the calender on the CANW website. All are welcome and there's usually tea and a fire available.

Jim Miller



Jim Miller died suddenly just before Christmas and his contemplative Buddhist funeral service was held on 6 January at the crematorium in Barrow-in-Furness looking down on the area where he grew up. The service was well attended especially by a good turn out of coppice friends. A wreath incorporating some charcoal had been provided by the Association.

Jim had been born in the Britannia at Penny Bridge in 1944 where his father had been publican but at an early age moved to the Ormsgill Hotel in Barrow-in-Furness where he spent his childhood. A connection between us existed here that we were unaware of 'til much later as I was brought up on Schneider Estate, next to Ormsgill, but we never knew each other then. Jim qualified as a draughtsman at Vickers Armstrong in Barrow but then joined the merchant navy, travelled the world on supply boats to cruise liners, qualified as Chief Engineer and ended up on North Sea oil rigs. He had been retired only a few years.

With his wife Yvonne and three daughters Jim lived his married life in Lowick Green on the edge of the Lowick Common and when it became available a number of years ago he took on the responsibility for

its upkeep. Always having an interest in wildlife and conservation he spent much time out on the common with Tilly. She was the latest of a number of rescue dogs that accompanied Jim, most of the time, on his sojourns on the common and in the local woods especially Moss and Height Spring. Tilly has gone on to a lovely new home in Arnside. Jim supported many charities like Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Bay Sustainability Action Group, Friends of the Earth, RSPB, The Dog's Trust, Lancaster Canal Trust, Water Aid and Sight Savers. His love for Land Rovers was often very helpful to us but not always appreciated by his family when rescues were necessitated due to "intermittent faults".

Jim's main connections with Louise and myself date back to early 1970s and Ramblers Association activities in Furness. A new local group had just been formed and walks and working parties with our young families were very popular. Not having seen him for some time we were very pleased when he re-appeared in the early 2000s in his newly acquired forward-control Land Rover when we were working with BHMAT apprentice Vince in Moss and Height Spring Wood. A beneficial friendship sprouted from then.

At one of our early charcoal earthburns at Great Tower Scout Camp, Dewi Jones and myself were just contemplating how the two of us, who were left on site, were going to look after the first night of the burn when Jim arrived and saved the day, or night, as he continued to do on many more occasions. His enthusiasm for the woods resulted in enrolment as a CANW committee member and unofficial ranger for Moss and Height Spring Wood. His kindness and willingness to help, his laid back approach and his dry, cheeky sense of humour will be greatly missed especially by me.

Brian Crawley
March 2014

Let's work together

Bob Cartwright

Secretary Westmorland Red Squirrel Society



Red squirrel -photo by Neil Salisbury

‘Active woodland management for a sustainable future’ is an objective of the Coppice Association which we share. But why should the Westmorland Red Squirrel Society champion effective and sustained management of our woods? Because without the diverse habitats they provide, our native red squirrels would almost certainly – and literally – be a dying breed. Whether you’re into coppicing or just love our woodlands you’ll probably know the tree damage that grey squirrels can do; and to woodland bird populations by predated their eggs. And it’s well known that grey squirrels out-compete red squirrels for food, breed more young and host the squirrel pox virus that is so deadly to reds.

What is perhaps less well known is that almost twenty years of concerted grey squirrel control by volunteers, contractors and landowners, is turning the tide, halting the spread of greys in south-east Cumbria and allowing the reds to recover their territory. In 2013 the Westmorland Red Squirrel Society, a registered charity with almost 200 members, recorded nearly 3000 grey squirrel kills from Grasmere in the

heart of the Lake District National Park to the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the south, and between Coniston in the west and the M6.

Red sightings are increasing at an encouraging rate, suggesting they’re recolonizing new areas as well as thriving in their heartland. There is every indication that this recovery is directly linked to intelligence-led grey control: when we get reports of greys we can liaise with landowners and their keepers, or negotiate agreements so that our trained volunteers and contractors can trap or shoot. In reducing the competition posed by the greys and the accompanying threat of disease we now have good evidence that we’re progressively saving our reds from extinction and actively protecting the trees and woodlands from the significant damage grey squirrels cause. Whether you’re a coppicer or just someone who regularly enjoys our woodlands your squirrel sightings, red or grey, provide vital information to organise our conservation work efficiently and effectively. You can register what you see on our website at <http://www.westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk/sightings.htm> or by ringing 07836 584201 or 01539 821714.

Let’s work together! If you would like to know more about our activities contact me at secretary@westmorlandredsquirrels.org.uk or on 015395 61514. Thank you.

Trapping Moths at Sales Bank Wood.

Although I've been looking after Sales Bank Wood since 2003, I didn't run a trap in the wood until March 2011; I started recording moths in the garden in 2008. Sales Bank Wood is recorded on Natural England's Inventory of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, and it is mentioned in a Royal Commission of 1567. So, it's been there for a long time and hasn't suffered from long periods of grazing by livestock – at least recently. It has a typical mixture of oak, birch and alder, with a good shrub layer of hazel, holly, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, bird cherry and dog rose; there are good numbers of sallow with a few sycamore, ash, elm, beech and Scots pine. It has been coppiced on and off since at least the mid-18th Century; the last main cut was around 1960 but since 1998, it has been brought back into coppice management with a coupe being cut each year, making for a good variety of age classes. Over the last ten years, I've recorded 144 plant species; of these, 20 can be classified as ancient woodland indicator plants. The woodland faces mainly east and even during gale force westerlies, the main track and easterly edge can be very sheltered. Due to this easterly aspect, any snow that falls lies on the ground many days longer than by the estuary, only 2 miles to the south; the steep lanes mean that in cold spells the wood is effectively cut off without a 4x4 vehicle in which to get there. Over the last 3 years, I've run 8 traps in the wood – far fewer than I would have liked, but with a full time job, a family at home and a run of indifferent summers, it's easier said than done to trap away from home. I have been somewhat reliant on getting my cheap and nasty generator to start, or relying on help from others. Martin Tordoff has helped on 3 occasions and in 2013, Graham Finch ran the only two traps. I have recently invested in a new generator, so hope to run many more traps there in the future! I've normally put out an MV 125

with a 60W actinic, far enough apart to be just about out of sight of each other.

My very first evening there in March 2011 was with Martin and yielded 16 species, including early tooth-striped, oak beauty, shoulder stripe and, perhaps our highlight, 2 yellow-horned. Fired up by Martin's enthusiasm, I ventured out again on 1st May and bagged 21 species. The prominents dominated that evening with coxcomb, iron, lesser swallow and 5 great prominent. Marbled brown, nut-tree tussock and pale tussock were also lovely to see. There was a very fresh scorched wing, one of my favourites which I sometimes get in the garden too. Martin came out with me again on 7th June – numbers weren't great but we saw common lutestring, satin lutestring, green silver lines, lunar thorn and small rivulet. We caught a rather plain, whitish-looking carpet which Martin identified as a waved carpet. The next day, he reported that it was probably only the second record in the area for 20 years or so. We also confirmed the site as one for Devon carpet, making 32 species for the night, despite some cold rain.

On 30th July 2011, I bagged 43 species. The most memorable aspect of that night was the huge number of bird cherry ermine, coating all the vegetation surrounding the trap. Other moth numbers in double figures included green carpet, July highflyer, small fan-footed wave and lesser swallow prominent. In 2012, Martin and I went out again in late March and caught a similar range of species to the previous year adding lunar marbled brown, early thorn, water carpet and red chestnut to the list. My next session was on 9th August when 47 species were recorded. There were plenty of bird cherry ermine again and green carpet was the second most numerous moth that night. Also added to the list were orange swift, phoenix, swallow-tailed moth and the highlight for me - scallop shell.

Working in the wood during the day, I have recorded *eriocrania subpurpurella*, *micropterix aureatella*, *adela rufimitrella* and *Nemophora degeerella*. This last micro is also known as Degeer's longhorn and is truly remarkable. On its 1cm long body, it holds antennae which are probably 5 or 6 cm in length; it's a wonder it can fly at all. It's a beautiful little dark brown moth with a striking gold band and well worth looking out for above sheltered bracken beds in June.

I didn't get out again in 2012 and my only outing to the wood in 2013 was with Graham Finch and his wife Anona, on holiday in the Lake District from the Midlands. On a cool 31st May, we recorded 37 species although Graham and Anona stayed much later into the night than I did. They added purple thorn, white-pinion spotted, poplar hawk moth, pale prominent, buff tip and pale-shouldered brocade. They recorded an astonishing 38 nut tree tussocks over their three traps; also there in good numbers were scalloped hazel (25), common lutestring (14), barred umber (18), flame carpet (18) and brown silver-line (31). The latter also fly by day and its larvae use bracken as a host plant; when giving guided walks, people often ask whether bracken is a plant to worry about and whether I control it – I always have the brown silver-line in the back of my mind when I give my answer that it's a native plant and an integral part of the woodland ecosystem.

A couple of days later, Graham and Anona added peach blossom, v-pug, clouded silver and pebble prominent; there were 28 common lutestring and 19 marbled brown on that night.

So, the woodland moth list now stands at 135. I've always put the traps in the same place but in 2014, I hope to put them in some different areas to see what comes in – there are some lovely areas of wet woodland and some quite rich, flowery areas that have been recently coppiced. I've never run a trap all night, so I plan to do this as well in 2014. I'm hopeful that there is enough common cow wheat to sustain a population of lead-coloured pug and the same for bilberry pug in areas of bilberry. With such a rich and varied ancient woodland, I hope to add many more species to the list. You know where to find me during national moth night in 2014, but I also hope to spend one of the 3 moth nights at Moss & Height Spring Wood – look out for confirmation of the date from Grace. The sun sets at 9.20 so we won't be switching on the light until about 10pm, so get set for a late night!

Edward Mills

January 2014

First published in Butterfly Conservation NW branch newsletter

Oak bark

The oak bark tannery at Colyton has said they want to collect more bark this autumn. They usually collect every two years but would like as much as possible this year as well. The peeling season runs from early April (depending on the weather) to early July, and the bark can be peeled off the logs with just about any flat ended tool, from squashed pipe, old screwdrivers to blacksmith made proper peelers.



Stott Park Bobbin wood supply

Stott Park is wanting in the region of 20 tonnes of bobbin wood this winter. The spec is 2-3 inch diameter, clean straight, 7 foot + (they were looking for some 14ft bits if you have them) metres long. Can be any species except Oak. It needs to be fresh cut.

To keep it simple Stott Park just want one invoicing point so:-

1) organise with Stott Park to deliver your bobbin wood

(Mick 015395 31087)

2) Agree a weight with them when you deliver

3) Invoice CANW for the delivery

We are experimenting with this a bit and you may have to wait till CANW gets paid to get your money.

Charcoal News

Horticultural charcoal (biochar) is brilliant. It does everything, improves soil structure, sweetens soil, stops leeching of nutrients, releases nutrients to plants, holds onto moisture, can be used in Sam Robinsons boots to reduce odour and a myriad of other uses. However I had an email from a lady in London wanting charcoal for a dehumidifier:—

‘There is a long tradition of using charcoal in Japan for purification purposes. Occasionally you find a beautiful mound of natural charcoal sticks artfully arranged in the lavatory area of a hotel/inn or restaurant, put there as a deodoriser. People also pop bags of charcoal in between their futons for storage or you can find it underneath the tatami grass mat floorboards in people's housing - there's a lot of humidity in Japan in the summer! Lately, more and more larger buildings are being built in more Eco-sustainable ways so that less energy is needed to keep them cool in the summer and warm in the winter. An example that comes to mind is a school in the Tokyo area with a large tunnel built underneath it. The air in the tunnel naturally stays at 13C throughout the year and this cool (or warmer in the colder months) air is channelled into the classrooms. To help keep what could be dank dark air from a deep pit dry and pleasant, sacks of charcoal are placed in the tunnel to treat and condition the air.’

Charcoal bags

Selway packaging have sent their latest prices for the CANW charcoal bags

Coppice British BBQ Sack Small 305x125x530
26p plus VAT (10litre)

Coppice British BBQ Sack Med 305x125x740 27p
plus VAT (20litre)

You need to ask for the bags with green printing or ‘the Woodland Ways bags’ or you might end up with the older black print coppice association bags.

SELWAY PACKAGING
0118 9462 333

BBF conference

The British Biochar Federation is holding a conference on July 7th in Oxford



2 hand Cross-cut saw in action at the MAHS workday

Next issue

Deadline June 30th

Any articles gratefully received.

Preferably by email with pictures separate.