



THE COPPICE ASSOCIATION North West

www.coppicenorthwest.org.uk

Spring into course action!

NEWSLETTER No 51 Spring 2015



Fan bird carving with Steve Tomlin, one of the courses available.

Warmer weather is here and a young man's (or woman's) fancy turns to whittling fan birds, carving spoons, making gates and hurdles so to help you learn something new we have the CANW training course guide. An initial attempt at space filling turned into something quite popular and there is now a list of courses on page 6.

NCFed AGM , volunteers required

CANW is hosting the NCFed AGM this year and rather like hosting the Olympics its a big deal. We have to construct a stadium and accommodation and errrrr oh. Apparently its at the Yan at Grizedale (by kind permission of the Forestry Commission) and the camping will be just down the road so no new stadiums are needed. But we will need all the help we can get.

To start off please make sure you are not away

16-18th October and please let Grace Holland know that you are willing to volunteer .

Weekend in the Woods

This years Weekend in the Woods was another

Success with nearly 60 people learning green wood skills, camping, eating cake and eating nice soups and pizzas. The weather stayed dry and there are various pictures of the weekend scattered through the newsletter. Thanks to Grace Holland for organising it so well and Lynne for the wonderful food.

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May 29-31 Holker Show

June 5th Moss and Heights pre work day ,work day.

Any extra hands to help get Dave Noblett's coup dressed out before the horses arrive.

June 18th Ecology course

With Ed Mills at Sales Bank Wood

June 19th Moss and Heights spring Workday. Might have George Newton with his horses doing some horse logging and possible oak bark peeling.

July 25/26 Beacon Country Park

August 18th Dalston Show.

We've been contacted by the organisers of the Dalston Show asking if we'd like to have a stand there and demonstrate. There's money available apparently. Please get in touch if you'd like to go.

September 14-18th Woodland Pioneers

See the BHMAT website

October 16-18 NCFed AGM its at Grizedale and CANW are organising it so any help you can give will be much appreciated. Contact Grace .

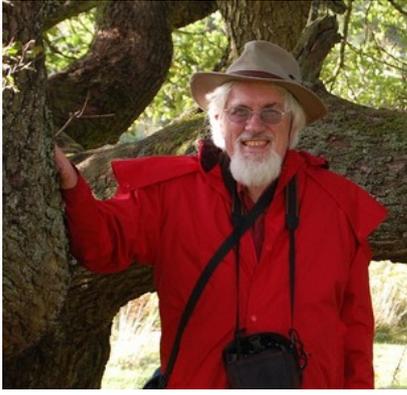


Anne Irving shows off her leather handbag made in Tony Morgan's leatherwork course at WITW



James Mitchell's stick chair course still going at 5pm on the Sunday at WITW

Remembering Oliver Rackham OBE.



Oliver Rackham died on 12th February 2015 aged 75. Rackham was a botanist, historical ecologist and author. He was determined to correct countryside myths and frequently used the word “factoid” to describe something commonly believed to be a fact but was, actually, a myth.

I first met Oliver Rackham around Easter 1982, aged 19, when he was leading walks around Hayley wood near Cambridge. I knew he had written a book about woods but didn't then know he'd written a book about Hayley Wood itself. By 1982, OR had been a fellow of Corpus Christie College, Cambridge for 18 years and was already more influential than almost anyone else in promoting knowledge about ancient woodlands. He famously researched the history of Bradfield Woods near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk and found records of coppicing there dating back to 1251 in the Ely Coucher Book. Bradfield itself had been pivotal in the cessation of the grubbing out of ancient woodlands. In 1968, about a third had been grubbed out and ploughed to make yet another wheat field. A local group of people including James Hart and Colin Ransom (Oliver's good friend and dedicated in so many of his books) put pressure on the landowner and the Nature Conservancy, and the wood was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the remainder was saved. It's now an NNR, managed by the SWT. I was lucky enough to be on the Bradfield Woods management committee in the late 1980s.

A fluent and popular writer, Rackham had an idiosyncratic style of speaking which was captivating both in the lecture theatre and in the field. He travelled thousands of miles in his research and educational activities, hardly ever saying no to the request to deliver a lecture or presentation. In 2006 he flew into Manchester from Norway to give a presentation to a

conference on coppicing organised by Alan Shepley and myself for the Coppice Association NW. Oliver never learned to drive and there are many people who talk about picking him up from a station to deliver him to an event, accommodation, or if you were really lucky (as I was), to a lovely ancient woodland somewhere. In his earlier days, he used to cycle many miles out of Cambridge, often with a hatchet in the bicycle basket.

Rackham's academic rigour meant he always went to original sources, never relying on secondary references. His observations in the field of processes have been fundamental to our understanding of the history of the countryside and changes in it. From broad, slow changes through to small, nuanced changes, his observations always seemed (to me at least) original, frequently unnoticed by others and not recorded before.

For those people not fortunate enough to have seen him speak, Oliver's greatest legacy will be his writing. This is a legacy which will endure for a long time - indeed, it will endure until someone can write about woodlands and the countryside in an even clearer style – this legacy won't be eclipsed in my lifetime. *Trees and Woodlands in the British Countryside* and *The History of the Countryside* are the two most popular titles whilst *The Last Forest* was also a best seller, and focussed on Hatfield Forest in Essex. His 1980 book simply entitled “Ancient Woodland” initially didn't sell many copies but was eventually credited with being highly influential in changing the forestry policy on ancient woodlands, and was eventually reprinted in a new edition in 2003 for a new generation of woodland enthusiasts to marvel at.

To whom can we turn now without this inspirational master of woodland knowledge? I feel that our woodlands are just that little bit more vulnerable now without his knowledge, perspective, expertise and words of advice, guidance and leadership.

Edward Mills, March 2015.

. Countryside Stewardship

There have been quite a lot of changes lately in how coppicing is supported by the State. In the past the Forestry Commission (FC) ran the England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and some woodlands came under Natural England's (NE) Higher Level Stewardship grants (HLS).



The photos in this articles are taken at Boundary Field, Yealand Redmayne. This area is in receipt of a HLS grant for fencing, hedge planting, woodland management, conservation grazing etc and has been a boon and a solace to an ex-coppice worker who finds herself wrestling with Countryside Stewardship

There was a bit of confusion over which woods went under one scheme or the other but both schemes had support for coppicing within them. With Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform and a new settlement for EU funding for the period 2014 -2021 there have been many changes.

Firstly the decision was made to bring the two schemes together under one Defra run scheme, then to call that scheme Countryside Stewardship and have it managed by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). FC and NE will still be involved in the delivery.



*Violets
Mini coppice coup within the woodland has been fantastic for hazel regrowth, 6' in one year and lots of lovely coppice woodland flowers.*

The main support will be an area payment for active woodland management such as coppicing but this will only be at £100/ha.

(Compared to £1920/ha under the old scheme)

It won't be a blanket payment over all the woodland owned but just the actively managed areas though I have heard that we will be able to include all an 'in rotation' coppice woodland not just the active coup. There are some capital items that woodland owners can apply for such as deer fencing, stock fencing, temporary fencing and gates.



To make a boundary between my field and the one that is grazed by organic stock, we needed two fences so they didn't consort with my non-organic sheep. (They eat only organic feed but it costs £500 a year to be registered organic) So we got the grant to plant a mixed native hedge. This is after just one year but we did weed and mulch it well.

One of the main changes with the new scheme is that applications will be competitive with application 'windows' and scoring to allocate the grant to the most deserving schemes. So woods that are SSSI's or ASNW will score higher than plantations or undesignated woods.



The hives belong to a neighbour but add to the feeling of bounty and productivity of this 1.7acre field. In the background is the willow bed which has produced bundles of beautiful willow for basket making in the first year and has just been planted up with four new varieties making eight in total

Hutton Roof - Craft wood available

To get a grant, owners will need an approved management plan for their woodland. Woodland owners with more than 3ha of woodland can get a Woodland Planning Grant to contribute a minimum of £1000 to write a Management Plan for their woods. There is a Small Woodland Template which is simpler but has no grant attached.

What is not yet clear is how the FC and NE elements will interact. We are told that there can only be one application per holding per year for area payments so if the woodlands are part of a larger agricultural estate then coordination will be needed between the woodland and agricultural elements. NCFed have been engaging with the policy makers over the changes and the concern is that there will be a reduction in active management in woodlands where operations are not economic. Local coppicer and newsletter editor Ian Taylor wrote to Tim Farron MP who took his concerns up with George Eustice MP, Under-secretary of state for Farming Food and Marine Environment. The letter received in return outlines the rationale for removing support for coppicing ie that 'coppicing is now an economically viable operation due to the increased value of wood fuel' also that EU rules state that the grants can only be paid for 'income foregone' and actual costs incurred through delivery of schemes.

This poses the question as to why farmers are subsidised to produce environmental benefits whereas coppice workers and woodland owners are not seen to be suffering 'income foregone' by working in an environmentally sensitive way. After all we could all get a grant (40% Countryside Productivity) for a big machine and go and pull out 20 tonne of timber a day with scant regard for the woodland flora and fauna.

That way perhaps we could say that Coppicing is now economic!

Rebecca Oaks

Dan Sumner has been coppicing and felling for Cumbria Wildlife trust on it's Hutton Roof Nature reserve, a wonderful site up above Burton in Kendal and home to a host of rare flora and fauna. This is part of a ten year plan to bring a large area back into a coppice rotation.

- Previously every thing has been burnt or stacked and left to rot after cutting and Dan is now working with the Wildlife Trust on a contract basis to manage the site more sustainably using horses for extraction where practical.

A great deal of the poor quality material will be charcoaled on site or sold as firewood to a local merchant. Bobbin wood is going in to Stott park

bobbin mill. Ash yurt poles have been selling like hot cakes and Jack Holden (Ian Taylor's Apprentice) has been beavering away at some ash craft wood and has made a lovely adze handle amongst other things. Although not much of a

craftsman himself Dan is keen for as much of the material as possible to be put to good use and has the following list of goodies for sale cheap (ish) to a good home.

- Good clean ash craft wood, 6-9 inch diameter in 3 m length approx. 1-2 ton.
- Ash coppice poles 2-4 inch diameter in random lengths.
- 150-200 yurt poles (ash and hazel)
- A heap of bean poles, canes and whips.

Hedge stakes (ash and hazel).

All sorted in stacks at ride side. Can deliver or pick your own for knock down prices. Handy location near M6 junction 36. Get them quick before they all go in the charcoal pot!!

Dan Sumner can be contacted at home on 015394 31189 or at dansumner@phonecoop.coop

Hutton Roof nature reserve is open to the public and is well worth a visit even if you don't want to buy a stick! Contact Wal at Cumbria Wildlife Trust for more information.



Training Courses 2015

List of training courses for your delectation.

May

30th Fan bird carving with Steve Tomlin at Sprint Mill , Burneside. £85

<https://stevetomlincrafts.wordpress.com/fan-birds/>

June

2nd June WILLOW WEAVING - GARDEN STRUCTURES

Tutor – Hannah Ehlert

This workshop will teach you some of the traditional principles of weaving, especially willow and hedgerow weaving. Just in time for summer, we will use these to make a garden structure such as a willow tepee. These are beautiful and useful to support roses or climbing annuals, peas. No previous experience is required.

Code – MAY WW

Fee A £35 B £28 £17.50

booking forms on this website:

<https://www.breweryarts.co.uk/adult-education/listing/WILLOW-WEAVING-GARDEN-STRUCTURES>

3rd-7th June Straw bale building course
Spalding, Lincolnshire, £390.00 for 5 days (lunch inc)

Tutor Straw Works

Contact strawworks@gmail.com

6th June Tool Sharpening

Tutor Louis le Glas £50

info@coppicecoop.co.uk

0776 6629 533

13th June

Make a willow wigwam plant support

Tutor -Helen Elvin

Location : Scale Bridge Wood Wasdale

helen@elvin3.orangehome.co.uk

07706 918824

www.elvincrafts.co.uk

13th-14th June

Willow Baskets

Tutor Tony Morgan £100

info@coppicecoop.co.uk

0776 6629 533

16th-17th June

SWEDISH WOOD CARVING

COURSE INFORMATION

Tutor – Hannah Ehlert

This two day workshop will introduce you to Swedish carving techniques and getting an eye for “art-objects in the trees”. You will have the opportunity to produce a choice of decorative and useful household items or figures. The Swedish traditions of carving use mainly axe and knife, unlike most sculptural carving that works with lots of chisels. A clear focus will be put on teaching safe axing and knife cuts, to allow you to continue at home on your own. Suitable for all abilities.

15th-19th June Straw Bale building

West London, £390.00 for 5 days (lunch inc)

Tutor Straw Works

Contact strawworks@gmail.com

Tues 16th & Weds 17th June

Code – JUN SWC

Fee A £70 B £56.00 C £35

booking forms on this website:

<https://www.breweryarts.co.uk/adult-education/listing/SWEDISH-WOOD-CARVING>

18th June

Ecology course with Ed Mills

contact Kath Morgan

(info@coppiceapprentice.org.uk) for more info and to book on.

19-21st June Swill basket course at Owen Jones' house

Email: owen@oakswills.co.uk

Tel 01229 885664

Courses cont.

July

16th July

Weave a small willow frame basket

Tutor -Helen Elvin see 13th June for contact details

25th-26th Hazel Hurdles

Tutor- Sam Ansell £110

info@coppicecoop.co.uk

0776 6629 533



August

1st-3rd Swill basket course at Owen Jones' house

Email: owen@oakswills.co.uk

Tel 01229 885664

8th August -make a willow animal sculpture

Tutor Helen Elvin see 13th June for contact details

15th-16th August -weekend willow shopper basket

Tutor -Helen Elvin Scale Bridge Wood ,Wasdale

see 13th June for contact details

September

14th-18th September

Woodland Pioneers -Stavely in Cartmel



BHMAT introduction to coppicing week

Treen with Twiggy

Riven Oak panels -Owen Jones

Coppicing -Sam Ansell and James Benson

Greenwood Stools -Lorna Singleton

2 -2day course

Pole Lathe with Maurice Pyle

The 1 tree challenge - James Mitchell

1-4 day course -Picnic Table -Ian Taylor

Full details info@coppiceapprentice.org.uk

www.coppiceapprentice.org.uk



October

3rd-4th Oct Charcoal Production

Tutor Sam Ansell £100

info@coppicecoop.co.uk

0776 6629 533

November

7th Practical Coppicing with Sam Ansell £50

info@coppicecoop.co.uk

0776 6629 533

StrawWorks

Have a number of straw bale building related courses coming up in the summer at Cuerden Valley park near Whittle Le Woods that haven't been finalised yet. If you are interested in :

Car Tyre Foundations,

Strawbale Building,

Clay Plastering and Lime Rendering watch their website www.strawworks.co.uk

Charcoal Bags

Selway packaging hold a stock of 'British Barbecue Charcoal' bags and at last count there was about 600 of each size left. You need to order them, directly from Selways on 0118 9462333. You need to ask for the green print Woodland Ways bags or you might get the even more out of date Coppice Association bags. The NCFed is going to try to get a new bag designed with up to date information but its unlikely to appear in time for this season.

Moss and Heights Spring

Theres been quite a lot of activity in MAHS over the winter with Sam Robinson finishing a coup and a half and Dave Noblett managing to get his coup cut before his serious knee operation put him out of action for a year. These 2 coups have now been temporary deer fenced but Dave's compartment needs a bit more dressing out. There's a work day on Friday June 5th if you can help out and also on June 19th when its hoped to have George Newton and his horses in and possibly some oak peeling.

Ian Taylor and his new apprentice Jack Holden have also cut a glade down near the gate as part of the management plan.



Lesley and Graham admire a stick at one of the MAHS work days

Steve Tomlin's woodland Recipes No 1. Noyau



Noyau

Ingredients:

1 bottle of gin (700ml)
225g white sugar
200ml brandy
400ml young beech leaves

Method:

Only use very young beech leaves, freshly stripped from the stem. Add these to a bottle or glass jar (with a secure lid) until the vessel is half full. Add the bottle of gin then stopper the jar and store for 3 weeks before straining the alcohol off. Meanwhile add the sugar and 300ml water to a pan and bring to a boil. Take off the heat and allow to cool before mixing with the flavoured gin and the brandy. Pour into bottles and store.

SteveTomlinCrafts.wordpress.com

Next issue

Deadline September 1st

Any articles gratefully received.

Preferably by email with pictures separate to iantaylor@uk2.net.