

The Green Shed



Spring 2008 Issue 21 News from the Borders Forest Trust

Help Borders Forest Trust to Buy The Devil's Beef Tub!

Borders Forest Trust is delighted to announce that we have taken a legal option to buy a stunning area of land in the central Southern Uplands, Corehead Farm. This unique section of the Southern Uplands covers some 1,500 acres (640 hectares) and contains two of the most iconic and significant landscape features in south Scotland, the Devil's Beef Tub and Hartfell, the highest hill in Dumfriesshire. The farm lies across the landscape and is almost corrugated in appearance because of the many hills and valleys that lie within it.

Corehead is famous for its association with William Wallace, whose sister married the Lord of Corehead Tower, Sir Thomas Halliday; for the role the Devil's Beef Tub played as a hiding place for cattle during the time of the Border Reivers, and as the source of the River Annan.



Corehead Farm, plenty of scope for restoring natural habitats

John and Berenice Williams, the current owners of Corehead, agreed sale terms with Borders Forest Trust because they wish to see the land managed in a way that encourages wildlife and biodiversity and restores traditional agricultural practices. They will continue to live at Corehead and have retained a small section of land around the farmhouse and steading. The legal agreement between the Trust and John and Berenice



The Devil's Beef Tub

was signed at Christmas 2007 and gives the Trust some sixteen months to raise the purchase price for the land and the stock. We are looking to raise some £700,000 for the land purchase, as well as the purchase of the livestock and the Single Farm Payment.

The bulk of the land that the Trust hopes to buy is mostly unimproved hill ground that has been used for centuries as sheep grazing. Very little of the original vegetation remains and woodland and heath have all but disappeared. There is a tiny fragment of native woodland hidden within a steep gully on the Tweed Hope Burn and small patches of heather on the steeper and more inaccessible slopes of Hartfell.

The Trust is planning to restore native woodlands in appropriate areas, montane scrub on the high tops, and heather moorland and wetland wherever possible. We envisage species rich hay meadows and wet meadows within a matrix of native hedgerows on the lower lying ground and wood pasture parkland on the shoulders of the many

hill slopes that lie across the site. We intend to encourage wildlife and habitats to flourish.

Please help us realise our vision for this land by contributing to our Corehead Purchase Fund. The deadline is ambitious but we are determined that we can raise the money needed in time. Any size of donation is greatly appreciated and you can be sure that it will be used for no other purpose than the purchase of Corehead. Please make cheques payable to Borders Forest Trust – Corehead. Many thanks!

Willie McGhee

Stop Press

Borders Forest Trust have now launched their new and improved website.

Long overdue, the BFT website has now been totally redesigned by Factonomy to make the information easier to access and to illustrate our work more fully.

The site can be found at www.bordersforesttrust.org

Features include news, events, information on all our projects and back publications for downloading.

Watch this space for more exciting new features, including our own carbon calculation tool – coming soon.



The Green Shed

The name of our newsletter "The Green Shed" comes from our original office and the spiritual home of Borders Forest Trust. We moved in January 2007 to our new office space within the same complex at Monteviot Nurseries, near Harestanes, Jedburgh.

Wildwood



Richard Cooper of Lloyds TSB at Carrifran

A big thank you to Richard Cooper and the people at Lloyds TSB Scotland who have sponsored the planting of 10,000 trees at Todcastles adjacent to the Moffat-Selkirk road. This funding from Lloyds has allowed us to plant trees in such a way as to create a wonderful open wooded habitat thus providing food and cover for the Black Grouse which are often seen higher up the slopes of Todcastles. In the mid-January snows, volunteers checked the Black grouse lek site and found lots of Black grouse footprints in the snow. This is very early for this activity – 7 males were seen flying off the area during the Sunday volunteer day in January.

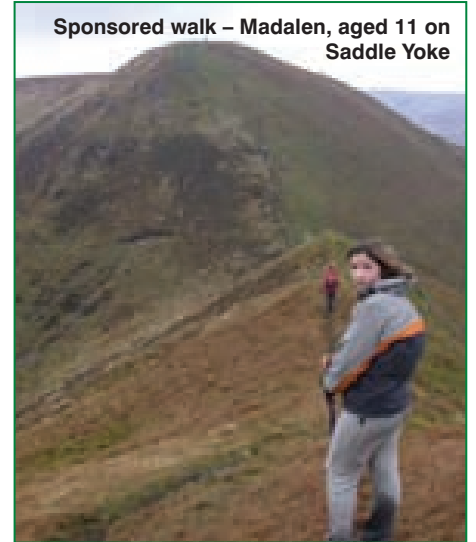
Helen McNeill, Strategic Communications Manager with Lloyds TSB Scotland

organised a staff and families event in December 2007 to see the Todcastles site and to do some tree planting. In spite of foul weather and just before a mighty downpour some 90 trees were planted in the paddock by the very young helped by the not so young.

Many thanks to all who walked the Wildwood boundary in October during our sponsored event. 21 of us completed the walk, thankfully this year in decent weather and good visibility. Our contractor David Cairns was first round in 4 hours 30 minutes, (we did tell him it wasn't a race!) whilst the casual strollers took a more gentle 6 hours. The boundary fence is in good condition and has now endured seven winters with no problems that can't be fixed – we

haven't had a lightning strike for a few years and fingers crossed it stays that way. Walkers raised an amazing £2,392 – over double our target, and this will be used to fund the high level tree planting at Firth Hope.

Sponsored walk – Madalen, aged 11 on Saddle Yoke



We are now planting 5,000 juniper, willows, birch and rowan trees at Firth Hope over the next few months and we have 4 weekends specially put aside for high-level planting. The materials were delivered by crawler tractor this year after some sterling work by Derek Murray in improving the track through Polmood forest next door. In addition, a further 11ha (18,000 trees) is being planted in compartments 3b and 3c on both sides of the waterfall this spring. This will create a wooded link between our existing planted trees and the montane scrub being established at Firth Hope. We were lucky to secure a Woodland Creation Grant from Forestry Commission Scotland for planting this area as competition for the limited grants was very high.

Any simple task became a feat! Snow at Carrifran



Volunteer Days

at Carrifran this Planting Season:

20th April 2008 • 18th May 2008

15th June 2008

~ ~ ~

Mountain Woodland Planting
Weekends at Firth Hope (meet
10.00am Saturday, camp
overnight at 650m at Firth Hope)

19/20 April 2008 and
17/18 May 2008

~ ~ ~

Further details from the
BFT Office or email
hugh@bordersforesttrust.org

Further planting throughout the valley is being carried out this spring with some 10,000 shrubs being planted to add further diversity. More hazel, hawthorn, willow species and blackthorn will increase the proportion of shrubs at Wildwood enhancing the overall biodiversity of the area in the long term. Many thanks to the David Stevenson Trust for the continued support towards funding these shrubs and the other trees in the valley.

Forestry Commission Scotland inspected the compartments at Carrifran Gangs to check if they had reached establishment for the release of the second stage forestry grant and thankfully they were passed by David Kennedy, the FCS Woodland Officer.

Tuesday volunteers have again been very busy and recently visited an existing ancient woodland remnant in the Yarrow valley to collect soil from beneath birch woodland. This will be



Lloyds TSB planting day, December 2007

Several other volunteer groups have also helped us over the planting season with members of the Green Party planting aspen and the Dirty Weekenders from

activities which will help to counter the impact of the carbon emissions associated with their conferences.



Keen volunteers preparing for the high level montane scrub planting

We have also gained support from the Eco-Schools group of St. Joseph's College in Dumfries. The eco-group of pupils raised £75 from friends, colleagues and parents and decided to donate the money to the Wildwood for tree planting. The group intends to visit Carrifran later in the Spring – taking the public bus to keep their carbon footprint as low as possible. We are particularly keen to work with Eco-Schools groups and show the next generation how we have made a start in restoring native woodlands and capturing carbon.

Hugh Chalmers

used to 'inoculate' our birch plantings at Firth Hope with mycorrhizza – a type of commensal fungus which helps trees take up nutrients from the soil. Three years ago a small trial on birch planting with this soil was carried out at Carrifran and the results were encouraging enough to try the technique out on a wider scale, especially where tree growth is difficult at 700m above sea level.

Edinburgh University spending a weekend of tree planting at Carrifran too. Staff from the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) joined us to plant juniper as part of their drive to reduce their impact on the environment. The Trust is currently working with EICC to develop a carbon offsetting scheme which gives conference clients the opportunity to fund tree planting



Rosalind, Michele and Lesley on the steep part - sponsored walk

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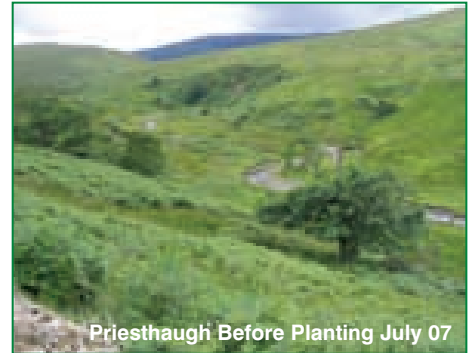
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New Planting for Woodland Habitats

As we near the end of the current planting season we have now added a further 74 hectares of new native woodland to the south of Scotland. Despite poor weather over the autumn and winter, the dedicated planting teams at Priestthaugh and Arkleton farms have successfully completed the planting of 62,000 native trees. The Priestthaugh planting is comprised of 3 compartments creating an area of 35ha of riparian (riverside) native woodland south of Hawick. Arkleton is located further south, in the Ewes Valley north of Langholm and has 7 compartments of native riparian woodlands totalling some 39ha.

At Priestthaugh a mix of small seeded tree species, including ash, rowan, bird cherry, holly and alder was planted due

to the close proximity of the site to a red squirrel priority area. At Arkleton however, which is outside the red squirrel priority zone, large seeded oak and hazel trees were included in the planting scheme. It is thought that grey squirrels migrate through and thrive in woodlands containing large seeded trees which provide them with a good food source. The Forestry Commission therefore discourage the planting of large seeded tree species in areas where red squirrels thrive and where grey squirrels are absent. The selection of small seeded tree species at Priestthaugh to try and prevent the spread of grey squirrels will hopefully make a difference to protect the threatened stronghold of red squirrels that we still have in the south of Scotland.



The completion of the planting at these two sites marks the end of the current Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme support managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. This scheme will be replaced by funding from the Scottish Rural Development Programme which we hope will be unveiled soon and open for applications by early summer. In the meantime we continue trying to identify suitable sites for planting and agreeable landowners who will be willing to restore some of our lost native woodlands on their land.

Nicola Hunt



Gala Policies

Despite the wintery weather there is still plenty of activity in and around Gala Policies woodland at this time of year.

At St Margaret's RC primary school, situated on the edge of the woods, the children have taken the woodland into the classroom as part of a project called "The Enchanted Forest." One of the learning outcomes in this project is to encourage an awareness of waste products, the very materials used to create a classroom forest. Life sized trees made of packaging and newspaper adorn the blackboard, decorated with exotic birds and animals. There is a colourful vine made of old tree guards stretching from floor to ceiling. Fish made of industrial plastic tubes woven with tangerine nets swim in a cardboard stream, under insects made of sweet wrappers.

The children of Balmoral nursery have made pine cone animals and insect homes and learned about the lives of woodland animals in winter, with the aid of puppets and taxidermy creatures.

Adults from the Focus Ability Centre made Christmas door decorations from materials collected in the Policies. Since then they have taken part in the Big National Bird Watch and are putting together a collection of photographs taken in the woods.

Pupils of Galashiels Academy have regularly braved the winter weather this year - surprisingly for some it has been their first time in these woods. They all seem to enjoy working outdoors path clearing, litter picking and clearing rhododendron.

At the beginning of December 2007 local residents took time out from Christmas shopping for a short walk around the woodland followed by mince pies and hot chocolate. Several of the children from Galashiels Wildlife Watch Club impressed adult walkers with their knowledge of woodland wildlife.

By Toni Coyle, contracted to deliver the SBC Woodlands In and Around Towns project at Gala Policies.

Collaboration and Co-operation at Woodschool

Making the shift from a career in the commercial business world to self-employed furniture designer/maker was, for Ross Ketteridge, a long-held but seemingly impossible dream. The standard route would have been prohibitively expensive and made it virtually impossible for him to build a customer base at the necessary rate.

Joining the Woodschool in September 2007, after a career in European marketing, Ross has progressed swiftly and already has a full schedule of commissions for the next four months. Since joining, he has produced a collection of pieces including chairs, tables and cabinets, covering a wide range of styles and construction methods.

Ross commented: "The Woodschool is a unique organisation and without it I undoubtedly would have been unable to make such a flying start in my woodworking career. In my opinion, the secret ingredient of the place is the collaborative and supportive spirit of the seven furniture makers. The Woodschool is a true cooperative venture. The collective experience and resources of the makers are shared to create a culture of vibrant creative energy

and rapid learning. Whether it's getting advice on the best way to join two pieces of wood, or how to make that difficult curved profile, or making sure you're setting up the spindle moulder safely and effectively, or simply getting a hand to lift a piece of furniture, the unselfish willingness of the makers to spare their own time to help others is priceless. Working closely with a group of such superb craftsmen is truly inspiring and is allowing me to develop my skills at an amazing rate."

November 2007 saw the latest recruit arrive at Woodschool. Andrew Patterson comes from the world of corporate finance training and has, like Ross, thrown himself into the deep end of furniture making.

Andrew has been honing his skills at both ends of the size scale, tackling a number of commissions for heirloom and jewellery boxes as well as some fine art-deco inspired furniture.

Andrew has his own impressions of the last few hectic months. "Starting out up the steep learning curve at the Woodschool requires one to throw oneself in and accept that, while the first

few mortice and tenon joints might not be perfect, the other makers are always going to be supportive, and you will not be short of suggestions on how to improve things. The collective knowledge of the makers and their willingness to share their time and experience is one of the great strengths of the Woodschool. Gaining knowledge and experience while trying to build up a business is always going to be a daunting task, which is where the structure of the Woodschool provides a rather unique opportunity. To gain workshop experience in close proximity to other makers tackling a wide and highly varied body of work gives great insight into what it takes to make a living as a cabinet maker. Tied to that, the Woodschool vision of making pieces from sustainable local wood provides any potential customer with an additional dimension to the pieces they are buying and adds to the selling strength of our products."

Eoin Cox



Ross and Andy
Woodschool new kids on the block

New staff member for Green Grounds



St. Ronan's Wetland prior to work

The Trust would like to welcome our new Green Grounds and Education Officer Diane Bennett. Diane started on the 10 March in a part time post dedicated to supporting schools and community



Planting the Wetland Garden Hedge at St Ronan's Primary

groups to improve their school grounds and community spaces and increase the educational and biodiversity value. Diane joins us from the Tweed Forum where she was employed as a Community Wildlife Officer and before that she worked as a ranger and school teacher in England.



Stirches Primary Eco Committee
Tree Planters

This post is funded by Scottish Natural Heritage who also provide grants for school projects too. Anyone interested in a Green Grounds project can contact Diane at the office or by email diane@bordersforesttrust.org

Before Diane started the post had been split between Anna and Nic and over



New sign on the Tree Trail
at Lilliesleaf Primary

this last season they have supported projects including bird and bat box construction for the wildlife garden at Coldingham Primary, the creation of a wetland garden and boundary hedge at St Ronan's Primary in Innerleithen, planting in the new planters at Parkside Primary in Jedburgh and the finishing of a Tree Trail in the nature garden at Lilliesleaf Primary and a new project at Broomlands Primary in Kelso.

Nicola Hunt

Borders Teachers line up for Forest Schools Training

Over the last few months my Forest Schools Projects have continued to flourish and I've been kept very, very busy trying to keep up with demand. Following the success of some of my earlier projects, I now have a list of 14 schools in the Borders who would like their pupils to have the opportunity to participate in a Forest School Project. The enthusiasm for the project is fantastic and I just hope I can manage

from outdoor lessons based on the Forest School ethos.

Following a couple of meetings with senior Education staff at Scottish Borders Council (SBC), Borders Forest Trust were given the go-ahead to add a series of Forest School Taster twilight sessions to the SBC Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme for local teachers.

During September and October 2007 four sessions were held in a variety of locations, Central Borders, Berwickshire, Peeblesshire and a special request led to another being organised specifically for teachers at St. Ronan's Primary School in Innerleithen.



Duns F.Sch - Making Smelly Cocktails

requiring very few props that they could try with their pupils the next day. All of the courses ended with a summing up session around a campfire and toasted marshmallows (very popular!).

The feedback from the courses was great. As a result, we now have a list of 48 (still growing!) teachers who are keen to work towards a Level 1 Forest School Qualification. This is a basic Forest Schools award that I am able to deliver as a qualified leader. The course aims to provide; knowledge of Health and Safety in the outdoors; ability to risk assess different outdoor spaces and also provides a good repertoire of outdoor activities.

Of these 48 teachers, 15 would like to go on to work towards the ultimate Level 3 Forest School Practitioner (Leader) Award. This is great news, as we could potentially end up with a very advanced local set up with a Teachers Forest School Network.... exciting stuff! The bad news is, that this level of training comes at a price, and although SBC are supportive, they are unable to offer any funding to help subsidise a potential Borders based course. Although it's disappointing that we haven't received the same Council financial support as similar projects in Edinburgh and Glasgow, we can't let these enthused teachers down... I will be endeavouring to access grant funding over the course of 2008 so watch this space!

Anna Craigen



East Saltoun Visit to Wooplaw - Picnic Lunch

to visit everyone over the course of the year! As a way of further developing Forest Schools in the region, I've been considering different methods for rolling out this valuable educational technique in a sustainable way. The conclusion is - to get local teachers trained and confident in delivering more activities outdoors, enabling more kids to benefit

Overall, 54 teachers attended the courses, which aimed to: give a brief overview of what Forest Schools (FSs) are about; emphasise ways in which FSs can tie in with Eco-Schools Projects, Green Grounds Projects and the new Curriculum for Excellence (ACE). We also aimed to provide teachers with some very simple cross-curricular activities

Photographic Competition – 2008

Woodlands, Trees and Wildlife through the Seasons

BFT's photographic competition runs from now until May 16th 2008 but you can submit photographs taken at any time.

Categories for Children (up to 12 years) Youths (12 – 18 years) and Adults.

All photographs must be supplied in Digital format. Great prizes. Prize Giving will take place at our AGM on 10 June 2008. Photographs will be exhibited at Harestanes Countryside Centre during June 2008.

Further details and entry forms are available from the BFT offices, call 01835 830750 or email claire@bordersforesttrust.org, also online at www.bordersforesttrust.org

TIM HOLDEN ESTABLISHMENT CONTRACTOR

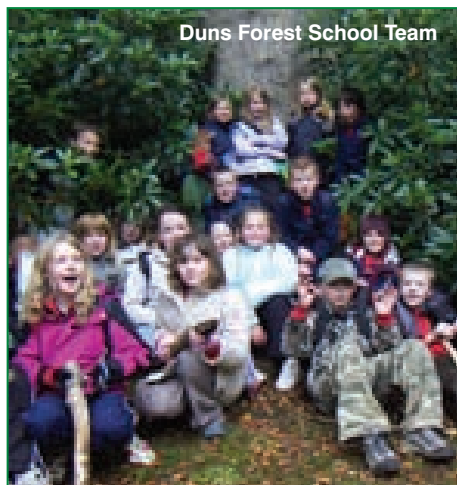
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Education News Flash

I'm currently having brilliant fun working with a P5/6 class from Duns Primary School on a Forest School Project. Although it's proving tricky weather-wise (why is it always blowing a gale on a Friday!) we have been making regular visits to Duns Castle Grounds to carry out explorations and ongoing investigations,



Duns Forest School Team

e.g. mud pies – measuring the erosion and noting weather conditions. We also participated in the RSPB's Big Bird Watch which included making messy bird mash for feeders in the school grounds. The pupils had a lovely time finger mixing the ingredients which consisted of lard, cheese, raisins, nuts and other birdie food treats... there were a few complaints about the smell, but they were all very impressed with how soft their hands were afterwards! We're also carrying out a winter investigation on mini-beasts.... Recording what we find, and where? ... Even in the worst wintry conditions we've had some amazing finds!

East Saltoun School from East Lothian came to Wooplaw Wood near Lauder for a Forest School session. Bob Fleet from the Community Woodland Group came along to give a guided tour and we all had great fun exploring the contents of owl pellets; coppicing some willow and making some small sculptural installations.

At the end of February a Forest School Project with Walkerburn Primary School began. The contents of this project programme looks set to be interesting and a little bit different, as we're hoping to create woodland activities to link with classroom topics such as WW2 and the 60's! The plan is to finish the project with a hippy fest in the woods. There should be some great photos for inclusion in the Autumn Newsletter!

Anna Craigen

Tweed Valley Forest Festival

In late October Borders Forest Trust were busy joining in the celebrations of the second Tweed Valley Forest Festival.

On the Friday night, BFT, Venlaw Community Woodland Group and young volunteers from a local youth group got together to put on a night-time spooky walk in Venlaw Woods. Over 30 members of the public, young and old, wore Halloween fancy dress and carried lanterns on a parade through the wood with scary surprises. A few screams (and laughs) were heard on their ascent, as ghoulish characters and a mad bloodied surgeon lurked behind trees and evil cackling could be heard from the dark. The group were safely led to an open area in the wood marked with controlled fire pits and Halloween adornments, where they were met by the superb local magician Max Marshall whose trickery and tales had the crowd enthralled. The night was voted a true success, although a couple of children commented that their parents were more scared than they were and that it could have been even scarier! BFT would like to thank all those that volunteered on the night.

Venlaw Spooky Walk



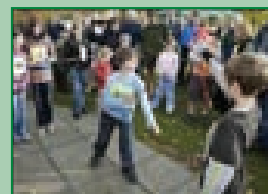
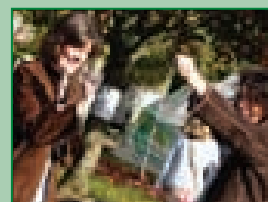
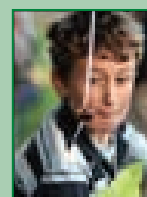
On the Saturday, BFT teamed up with Keith Robeson from the Scottish Borders Ranger Service for a busy day of bird and bat box building on the Green in Peebles. This activity was part of the Wood Market which attracted visitors interested in all things woody from the Borders and beyond. Armed with hammers, some 45 young people bashed away and constructed 35 nesting boxes for birds and 10 roosting boxes for bats. All managed without any sore fingers, well with the exception of one overly keen dad who thought he would demonstrate how to do it!

The highlight of the Festival this year was the first ever Scottish Conker Championship. Some 30 children, 7 youths and 20 adults met on the Green to battle it out for the title of the first ever Scottish Conker Champion. Several competing rings were set up to cope with the many rounds of the competition and these were judged under the keen scrutiny of BFT's Trustees Rosalind, Reuben and Fi – many thanks to them for helping out.

For the main competition conkers were provided for contestants pre-drilled and stringed. This avoided cheating and put all competitors on an even keel competing with skills alone. 2007 was a poor year for chestnut production so we had to rely on keen collectors from Peebles to gather and donate conkers for the competition. For those that wanted to enter with their own chestnuts, there was also a rogue category where competitors could enter with their prize conkers, treated or not. There were many entrants to this category which was won by youngster Max Bone with his prize chessie from France.

It was a lovely sunny day for the tournament and competitors and spectators all appeared to have a good time. Thanks to the Buccleuch Group, who sponsored the prizes for the competition which included beautiful conker trophies carved from elm burrs by local wood craftsman at Woodworks. None of the champions of the different categories dared have a game with their prize trophies. Following the success and fun of this competition BFT are keen to run the 2008 one so if you fancy your chances of becoming the next conker champ get the 26th October in the diary.

Nicola Hunt and Anna Craigen

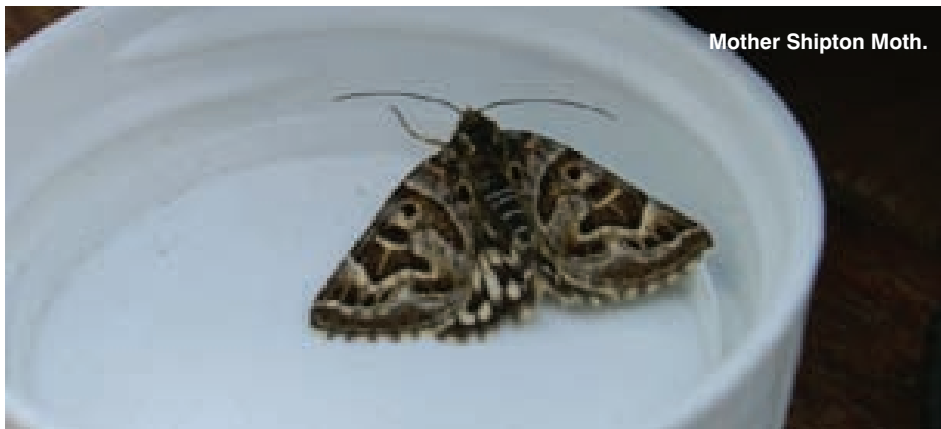


Moth Magic

It was about 30 years ago when I first became interested in those mysterious creatures dancing around the light bulb in our porch - moths. I soon managed to borrow a moth trap and quickly fell

Both of these moths are pictured here, the photographs taken last summer in Peeblesshire.

Moths are just as affected by habitat loss as butterflies, with numbers dropping by a third since 1968. They are an essential part of the food chain for birds, bats and



under the spell of these beautiful insects. Everyone is familiar with butterflies of which there are around 70 species in Britain and Ireland, but far fewer have become acquainted with the 2,500 species of moth. I believe that this is a bit of a shame and hope that this brief article will encourage readers to consider moths in a new light.

Adult moths lay numerous eggs that hatch into caterpillars, which eventually pupate and turn into adult moths. Some species live as adults for only a few days, while others live for many months and hibernate over the winter. Some live as caterpillars for 3 to 4 years. Most moths do fly at night and the vast majority are active only in the warmer months of the year. There are exceptions to this rule with species like the red and black cinnabar moth flying during the day while there are species of moth on the wing in every month of the year, even during mid-winter.

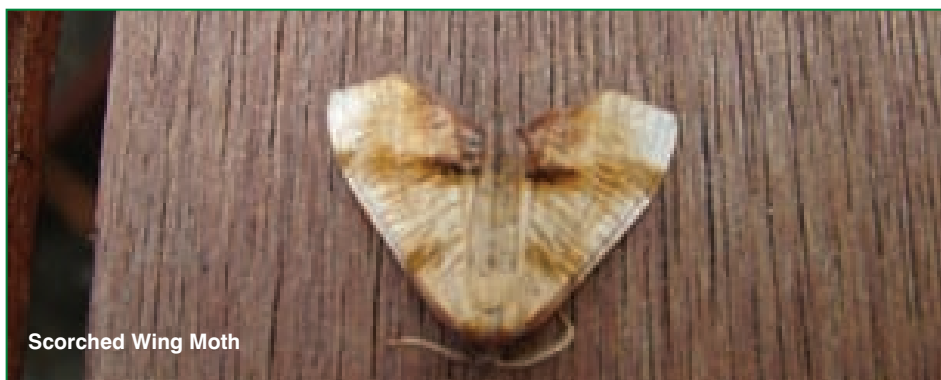
Moth names are a rich source of fascination in themselves; examples being the Mother Shipton so-named due to the reflection of the side-profile of a 16th century Yorkshire witch on each wing, to the Scorched Wing which looks exactly like a piece of singed birch bark.

mammals. It has been estimated that blue tit chicks alone feed on 35 billion caterpillars a year in Britain. Pesticide use and light pollution are also thought to be a contributing factor. Climate change also affects moth distribution and abundance with warming temperatures implicated in the only case of moth population decline that has been investigated in detail – the 90% decline of the Garden Tiger. Because moth species are so widespread across the country, found in such a variety of habitats and so sensitive to change, they act as very important indicators of the health of the environment in general.

I have recently been appointed as the Moth Recorder for Peeblesshire and would be delighted to receive records of moths in the Borders which will be shared with the national network of recorders. Finally a date for your diaries – National Moth Night is on Saturday 7th June 2008 – keep an eye out in the local press for events where you can find out more about the moths on your doorstep and see some of these beautiful creatures up close.

Reuben Singleton
BFT Trustee

reuben@dukehaugh.free-online.co.uk



Date for your Diary

BFT's annual **Open Day** will be held on **Sunday 10 August 2008** at Harestanes Countryside Centre from **12 noon till 4pm.**

Lots of fun for all the family – quiz, treasure hunt, walks, woodland crafts and more.

See you there!

Chris Baines to Speak at BFT AGM

The 2008 AGM promises to be a treat! We are very excited to be able to announce that Chris Baines, author, broadcaster and champion of trees and woodlands has agreed to talk at this year's event. Chris is extremely busy and so we are very honoured that he was able to fit us into his busy schedule.

The AGM will take place on **Tuesday 10th June 2008** at The Townhouse, Melrose at 7pm.

All welcome.



Borders Organic Gardeners

Borders Organic Gardeners is an association of gardeners throughout the Scottish Borders and North Northumberland who are keen to use and support organic methods. We run a number of public events throughout the region, including Potato Day and Apple Day.

In addition, members have a regular newsletter, workshops, garden visits, talks and social events. For just £5 a year, per household, you can get access to information, support, advice and the chance to exchange plants, seeds, ideas and experiences with other friendly and enthusiastic gardeners.

So, if you would like to grow food free of insecticides etc., garden in harmony with nature or know more about organic gardening, why not get in contact?

For more information, visit our website www.bordersorganicgardeners.org.uk or call 01750 76259

Ecosystems Services

Borders Forest Trust has recently launched a new programme of ecosystems services. What are ecosystems services? In plain speech ecosystems services can be defined as the benefits that people obtain from natural ecosystems such as food, water, soil, and less obviously, waste decomposition, biodiversity, flood regulation, biomass accumulation and of course that most topical of ecosystems services, carbon sequestration.

BFT have been offering carbon sequestration services for the last ten years, with carbon sales from a variety of our sites including Drygrange Community Woodland and Carrifran Wildwood to companies such as The Carbon Neutral Company. The money earned from selling carbon credits is effectively gap funding. Funding that we do not otherwise have and which ensures the establishment of our trees. In carbon speak this is called additionality. No additionality, no basis for a carbon project.

Over the last twelve months we have been working closely with a number of Scottish based companies to develop, refine and package our woodland based carbon sequestration offering. The Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) aspires to be at the forefront of green business practices and Reynaldo Guino-o and Sandy Pearson of EICC approached BFT in 2006 to see if we could work with them to develop a project to allow their conference clients the opportunity to offset the carbon emissions associated with their events held at EICC.

The EICC's Plan It Green project encourages clients organising a conference to feed data (numbers of people, where they travelled from, how much eating and drinking they will do) on a future event to be held at EICC into a carbon calculator which produces an estimate of the conference carbon emissions.

The calculator was constructed by 'econometrics' experts at the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management and is licensed to BFT to use specifically for this purpose. It is then up to the conference organisers to decide whether they wish to offset any of their unavoidable emissions. It should be stressed that every effort is made to educate conference goers and organisers to consider the least polluting form of transport and that the option of carbon offsetting should be made only after considering all other options. We do not want to encourage the use of carbon offsetting as a get out of jail free clause rather it is an option after considering the three Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Watch this space.

Willie McGhee

Habitat Restoration

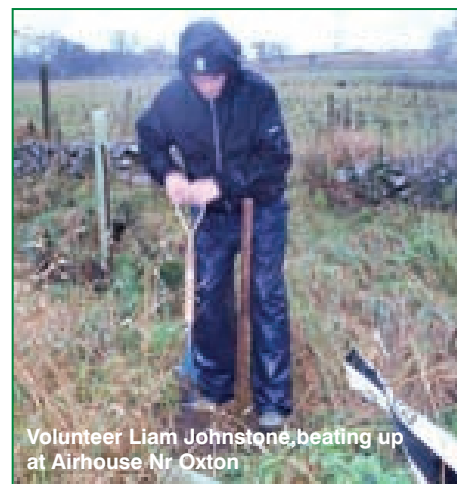
The trees on our existing woodland habitat sites are finally reaching establishment phase after several years of care and maintenance by way of weeding, beating up (replacing dead trees) and providing additional protection from browsers with plastic tubes. The summer surveys did identify some further work to keep me and my team of volunteers busy over the winter period. Some 7000 additional trees are being planted this season, including 500 dwarf birch trees on the higher ground at Fernyaleuch, Craigmilly, Linghope and Broadgairhill.



On several of the sites where natural regeneration has been encouraged over the last five to eight years we have at last had some success which has enabled us to draw down some regeneration grant from Forestry Commission Scotland. We have discovered that natural regeneration is a slow process especially when the seed source from existing trees is limited due to the lack of mature trees in the regeneration areas. Despite our best attempts to encourage new trees by screefing the soil to remove the ground vegetation and scattering seeds directly on the ground we have realised that planting is most efficient and quickest way to establish new woodlands so we will mostly be sticking to tree planting in the future.

A recurring problem on our woodland habitat sites is browsing by deer and despite increasing tree tube protection

on the more vulnerable species of tree, damage is still occurring and our Woodland Officers have taken on the task of deer control. To make this easier in the Dryhope area, the building of a deer hide/shelter at the bottom of



Gorbons cleuch was deemed essential to protect the 50,000 or so trees planted in the area. Constructed by volunteers over a few months, the hide now allows us to see over Dryhope and the bottom section of Gorbons cleuch, and a large area of Ferny cleuch. In addition it also gives shelter for volunteers to have lunch when the weather takes a turn for the worse while working in the area. The timber used came from the restructuring of Eshiels Community Woodland near Peebles. The larch and spruce was processed by the Woodschool wood-miser at Monteviot Nurseries last year, cut to size, then taken up on site by quad bike. Volunteers from Borders College and The Prince's Trust from Galashiels dug out the foundations and started construction in some pretty poor weather - a cold icy wind and sleet. To help blend the hide into the landscape, the turf removed from the foundations has been used to cover the roof and in time the timber should weather to make it less obtrusive. Once the trees grow to a height where deer no longer present a risk the hide will be removed and the new woodlands will be able to flourish.

George Moffat

Summer Woodland Exhibition at Harestanes

Borders Forest Trust and Reforesting Scotland are joining forces again to hold an exhibition at Harestanes Countryside Centre near Jedburgh from 31 May – 29 June 2008.

Entitled "Restoring a Woodland Culture" the exhibition will explore how we can learn to use woodlands in new and innovative ways and reap the benefits of their products.

Come along and find out how a woodland culture is being rekindled in Scotland through our work.

Associated with the exhibition will be a series of talks, all taking place at 2pm at Harestanes:

31 May – Reforesting Scotland, Donald McPhillimy

14 June – Carrifran Wildwood, Hugh Chalmers

21 June – Woodschool Tour, Eoin Cox

28 June – Tree Lore and Identification, Reforesting Scotland and BFT

News from the Community Woodlands

The autumn and winter months have seen a lot of activity from community woodland groups across the Borders.



At Eshiels Community Woodland, the replanting of the felled conifer woodland was carried by the enthusiastic First Tweeddale Scouts group from Peebles and the local community in December. An impressive 600 native trees were planted by the troop of 11 scouts and 3 leaders in the morning and 7 members from the local area turned out in the afternoon and planted some 300 trees. The area of conifers had been felled to make way for the access to the new recycling facility and although saddened to see these trees felled it did give the opportunity to replant with native tree species of greater wildlife value.

Venlaw Community Woodland group have continued to busy themselves in the wood with the completion of their Awards for All grant funded work. Through the hard work of Drew Fraser and several other local volunteers a new interpretive sign has been installed at the entrance of the site and the final bench



has been put in along the path. The Tree Trail identifying trees throughout the woodland was completed and a Tree Trail leaflet was produced to accompany its use. Well done to group member Fiona Henshall for the research and design of the Tree Trail leaflet which is now available at the Tourist Information Centre in Peebles.

Sadly some bird and bat boxes installed in the woods were damaged by vandalism but the local Tweeddale Scouts group has again helped out in

the construction of replacements which will be installed in the woodlands before the coming nesting season.

The Melrose Scout Group have also been busy working with the Trust this planting season at Darnick Community Woodland. Having acquired hedge plants from the Woodland Trust as part of their centenary celebrations the group was keen to find somewhere local to



plant. Brenda from the DCW offered an area at Darnick Community Woodland and in February, 10 scouts and 6 leaders ventured out to plant the hedge plants along a 100m stretch of land on the boundary of the wood.

At Gordon Community Woodland the main task has been to alleviate sections of waterlogged path, a particular problem after the wet summer of 2007. Thanks to the community service teams who installed new boardwalk over the particularly marshy areas to solve the problem. To further improve access, the group are currently developing an "all abilities" path to link the Maxmill car park to the cabin. Planning and fundraising for this project is next on the list for the active group.

Nicola Hunt

Orchard Development Group

The Orchard Development Group has now produced an informative leaflet on old Borders Orchards and the work of the group locally. This leaflet has been mailed out to members and is available from the Trust directly. If you have a small orchard yourself and want to learn about how to get the most out of it, or if you are interested in getting involved in a community orchard near you then this is your opportunity.

The Orchard Development Group is all about community involvement. You can learn about managing an orchard through the seasons. There will be a chance to try out pruning techniques, learn about harvesting and the products you can make from your orchard. And you can also learn all about bees and developing an apiary as well!

The Orchard Development Group now meets on the first Sunday of every month at Crailing Orchard on the Kelso to Jedburgh road (A697). The orchard is on the left at the layby just after the village of Crailing if you are travelling towards Jedburgh. All welcome, 11am - 3pm and bring a picnic lunch.

Graeme Murray

GREAT NEWS FOR COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

In January, the Forestry Commission Scotland Forestry Development Programme awarded BFT a grant of £45,000 over the next 3 years to support the development of community woodlands and associated training in the Borders. This funding will be matched with the grant from the Gannochy Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage to fund the Community Woodland Development and Training Officer. We hope to have the new post filled by the end of the spring and the opening of the new Scottish Rural Development Programme.

Scottish Borders Woodland Partnership – The use of sustainable wood fuel to answer the burning question!

Climate change is the biggest threat facing the planet. The potential for significant detrimental changes in the world's climate is now well documented and generally accepted. The need to reduce global Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions is now the driving factor in changing how we live in modern times.

The reliance on relatively cheap fossil fuels to meet our energy requirements in recent years has increased our CO₂ emissions to the atmosphere. These fuels provide the energy need of a modern society and little thought has been paid to their sustainability and the resultant climatic consequences. Now we are faced with a changing and possibly damaging climate and the threat of reduced availability due to declining reserves, increased production costs and uncertain supply.

The burning of clean wood does not contribute to climate change, so long as it is from a sustainable source. The CO₂ released in the burning process is balanced by the CO₂ intake during the tree's lifetime and in order to continue the cycle it is then replanted after felling. There is a very small release of CO₂ to the atmosphere during the collection, processing and delivery of wood fuel, which is very low when compared with fossil fuels.

Benefits can also be secured with the production of wood fuel from forestry and woodland in the form of improved rural employment prospects as sustainable opportunities are created in direct and associated industries.

Scottish Government targets for the reduction of CO₂ emissions are as follows:

- 18% electricity generation by sustainable methods by 2010 (already achieved)
- 60% aspirational target by 2020

To achieve this latter target a greater use of hydro generated power and wind turbines may be expected. The emerging technologies of biomass in the form of combined heat and power (CHP) and increases in electricity generating capacity with the commissioning of the new biomass power station near Lockerbie will also contribute to meeting the target.

With heating in all its forms currently using about 50% of energy, there is an opportunity to adopt wood fuel as a sustainable alternative which can be competitive on cost, more easily and reliably obtained and help to reduce harmful emissions.

The viability of a heating installation is dependent on the whole-life cost of the system. Prices can vary according to the fuel selected and delivery costs can influence the final energy cost for the end user in remote locations. Continuity of supply may also be an important consideration.

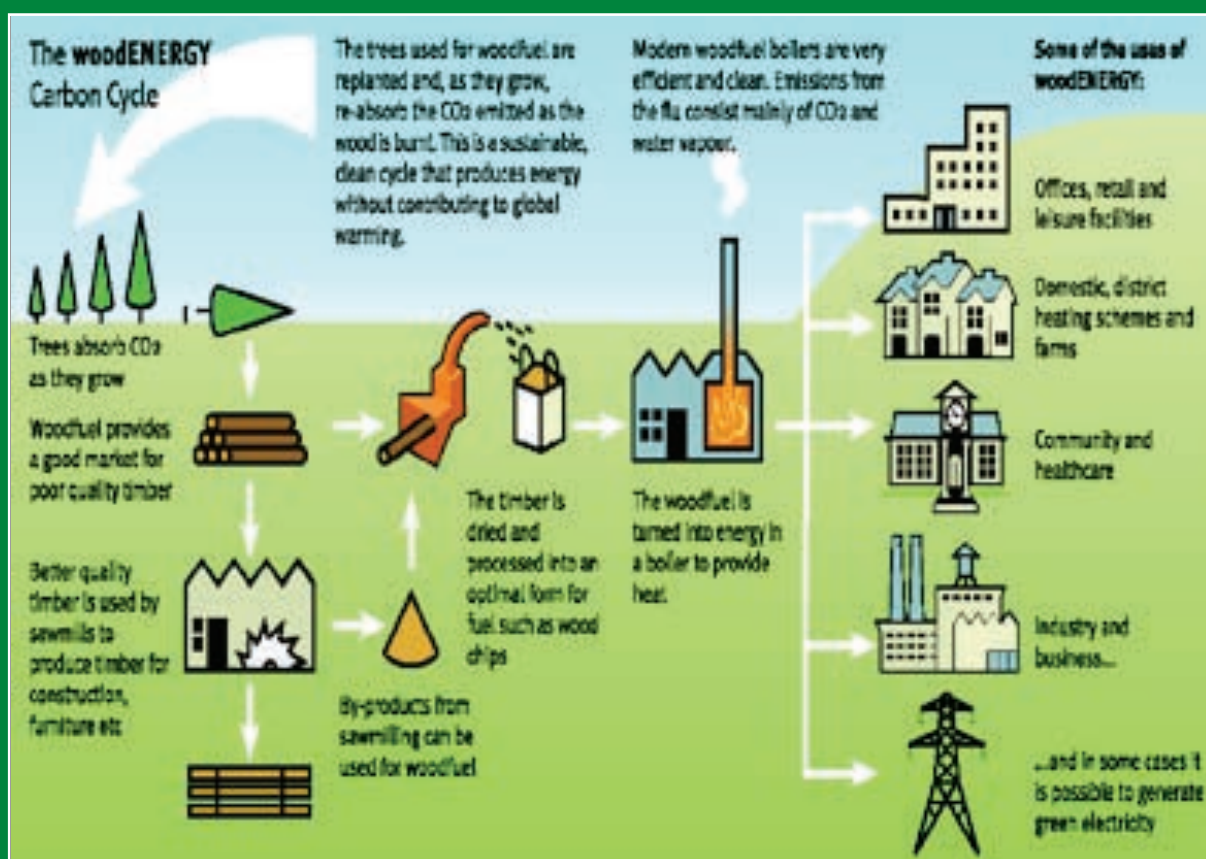
Biomass offers a remarkable opportunity to remove the reliance on fossil fuels for the production of energy needs. The use of wood fuel burning installations can provide a viable option for the provision of heat and electricity on a local basis for community schemes, private individuals and small businesses.

Find out more by visiting:
www.usewoodfuel.co.uk

David Rogers
Forestry Commission Scotland

Editors Note:

Thanks to David for this very informative article. BFT are a member of the Scottish Borders Woodland Partnership and are strong advocates of the benefits of woodfuel – as visitors to the BFT offices throughout the winter will know!

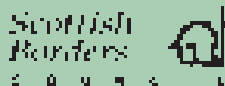


The Kids have the Last Word!

Time to share more of the kids work. This time it is by Robbie Gordon of St Ronan's Primary School, aged 9 years.



The Borders Forest Trust ...rooted in the community



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