

The Green Shed



Autumn 2006 Issue 18

News from Borders Forest Trust

OPENING OF THE ETRICK MARSHES PROJECT

To celebrate the completion of the Ettrick Community Wildlife Project, BFT and the Ettrick Marshes Steering group held a grand opening on the 28 April 2006.

An orienteering competition was held as part of the opening with 25 pupils from Ettrick, Yarrow and Kirkhope Primary Schools taking part to try out their navigation skills. For 2 hours the pupils mapped their way around the native woodland and along the edge of the floodplain searching for the orienteering controls.



Cutting the Willow plait to launch the Ettrick Marshes Project

Then, to replenish their fuel supplies, lunch was enjoyed on the banks of the Ettrick at the Honey Cottage Caravan Site. Before heading back to school a prize ceremony was held with Sarah Howden from the winning group cutting the willow cord to officially launch the project.

Over 30 local people and supporters of the Ettrick Marshes project turned up for the launch and the tasty lunch that was provided in the sunny car park. A guided walk then led guests through the Ettrick Floodplain to view the improvements.

The Ettrick Community Wildlife Project saw the installation of colour coded way markers and finger posts, improved access, training for local Marsh Guides, installation of 2 bird hides, new interpretation and the creation of an orienteering course.

Many thanks to Lindsay Knox of the Roxburgh Reivers Orienteering Group and members of the Ettrick Marshes Steering Group for helping to organise the event and make it such a success. Our appreciation also goes to the project funders, Making Tracks, the Heritage Lottery Fund, SNH, MFST and the Brown Forbes Memorial Fund.

Nicola Hunt

**New BFT Calendars
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Wood Pasture Seminar

The Wood Pasture project is now drawing to a close with 2,000 trees securely planted in tree boxes and 82ha of wood pasture created and conserved. To highlight the success of this project and the importance of the wood pasture habitat, a well attended seminar was held at the County Hotel in Selkirk in September.

The achievements of this project were put into a Scottish context at the seminar. We heard about the Fleet Valley Trees in Fields project, The West Highland Woodland Grazing Project, and from Kate Holl of SNH, an account of her recent publication which looked at Wood Pasture as an ancient land use system and how traditional management can fulfil some of the HAP (Habitat Action Plan) requirements. The Trust welcomed the opportunity from John Elliot and Andy Tharme of the Scottish Borders Council, to use the seminar as a platform to launch the Scottish Borders Native Woodland HAP, The Wood Pasture and Parkland HAP, the Upland Cleuch and Scrub Woodland HAP and the Conifer Woodland HAP. These useful documents are available from the Council through Andy Tharme on 01835 824000 or on line at www.scotborders.gov.uk

In the afternoon a tour around the Ettrick, Yarrow and Upper Tweed valleys enabled participants to see at first hand how Wood Pasture HAP targets were being met by BFT, and how the landscape is being changed for the better. Peter Quelch, a former FC Native Woodland adviser and long term champion of Wood Pasture was able to take some satisfaction from what he saw, including ancient ash trees protected and areas of wood pasture extended. This is what he has been advising for over 15 years.

Hugh Chalmers



Tree Boxes at Tweedwood

Training Activities

The hot dry summer has encouraged lots of volunteers to get out into the woods and make the most of the fine weather while carrying out useful woodland activities and developing new skills.

The young people of the Prince's Trust spent a week helping at Venlaw Community Woodland at Peebles to create a formal path called Grace's Walk. The team of eleven volunteers constructed new areas of path as well as opening up sections which had become overgrown for nearly ten years. The path was named after Mrs Grace Davidson, the previous owner of the woodland who regularly walked the informal paths and has happy memories of her time there. The path, which was officially opened on the 30 September by Grace herself, is a short circular route branching off the main drive, and also leads to other areas in the woodland.

At Heronhill Community Woodland in Hawick, volunteers spent a hot day collecting seeds from the locally rare plant Northern Hawkbeard *Crepis mollis*. The seeds were collected at the request of the Royal Botanical Gardens of Edinburgh who are growing

them as part of their rare plant seed bank.

The Summer Training Programme was popular and saw four courses being held over the summer months. A new volunteer has now received chainsaw training, members of the Crailing Orchard group have learned how to prune apple trees and 5 volunteers have learned about the art of Drystane Dyking. A course was also held by Mike Foy, the Tree Officer for East Lothian Council. He talked about the in's and out's of Tree Preservation Orders, supplying a wealth of information for Borders Tree Wardens to take away with them.

Earlier in the year, Kelso Community Woodland Group held a series of initial planting days in the creation of Swanna Community Woodland. Cuttings were taken from willows found on the island and then planted by schools, volunteers and Kelso Scout group. The planting will be completed this winter by the local community with funding being provided by the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme and SEPA.

Lee Hollings

Forest Schools and Education Events

As Education Officer things generally slow down during the school holidays, however things have been exceptionally busy this summer and it's been great.

FOREST SCHOOLS

Before the summer holidays I was busy with the first Forest School pilot scheme in the Borders. During April and May I spent every Friday over 6 weeks with the exceptional pupils of Newcastleton Primary School. Throughout this project the pupils participated in activities ranging from woodland forages; tool use and gathering materials; shelter building; nature detective work and environmental games. This all culminated in a Grand Finale session with toasted marshmallows; a celebration of the completion of a newly built shelter in their school grounds and woodland stories from John Hamilton (Celtic Stories).

The main principle of the Forest Schools project is to look a little further than a basic woodland visit and focuses on the specific needs of individual children by setting tasks that embrace their learning style and encourages further personal development. The feedback from the Newcastleton Primary School teachers and pupils has been brilliant. Staff were shocked that the usual underachievers within the school pupil population did the most expressive and impressive Forest School Diary entries. The best bit of feedback in my opinion was when I received copies of the childrens' diaries and noted they quoted me word for word in many instances - a truly rewarding teaching experience. Forest Schools Projects are now being

requested by many schools and I am currently enjoying the early stages of a new FS project at Sprouston Primary School.



EVENTS

Nicola and I held a couple of very successful events during the Summer holidays, including 'Wet and Wild at Ettrick Marshes' – with pond and river dipping activities and a variety of games and 'Fun in the Woods' at Glenkinnon Burn Woodland – which involved art & craft activities, mini-beast hunts and more games.



THE WOODLAND ROADSHOW

The Forest Education Initiative (FEI) Woodland Roadshow went on tour again during September 2006. This year we visited eight primary schools in Berwickshire and four primary schools in Galashiels. Staff from BFT, Scottish Borders Rangers Service, Greg MacFarlane (Forestry Commission Scotland), Erica Niven (SBC Paths and Access Officer) as well as a local falconer and a local craft worker offered a huge variety of activities ranging from: woodland animals and school grounds studies; dome construction and handling birds of prey.

Despite the fact that the Woodland Roadshow Project has been exceptionally popular over recent years, this may very well be the last time the project will be delivered in this format. Next year FEI partnership organisations plan to refresh and modify the project and offer new educational opportunities for future years.

Anna Craigen



Activities on the Woodland Roadshow

FAREWELL TO THE MILLENNIUM FOREST FOR SCOTLAND

Bridging the Gap Youth Sculpture Project

The Millennium Forest for Scotland Initiative (MFSI) provided the vital initial funding from the mid 1990s to enable BFT to get started and helped to support many of its early projects. With lottery money from the Millennium Commission, 80 capital projects involving some 400 woodland sites have been supported throughout Scotland, as a result of which 10,000 ha of new native woodland have been established by planting or natural regeneration and a further 13,000 ha brought into conservation management. The various Borders projects form a not insignificant part of the whole.



To mark the completion of the initiative and as a valuable exercise in its own right, MFSI commissioned an independent report to review the outcomes of the initiative. This was carried out by Richard Tipper and Alex Smith of ECCM and some of their conclusions about the initiative and lessons learnt are summarised below:

- 1. Improved stewardship of native woodland:** over large areas of Scotland, both through influencing established national organisations and through the creation and strengthening of new community based organisations
- 2. More effective project management:** despite a significant amount of pain for some organisations, the MFSI experience led to a significant improvement in the management and administrative skills of many local organisations
- 3. Greater value of native woodlands:** greater appreciation of the value of Scotland's native woodlands as a resource for cultural and leisure activities and as a source of products
- 4. Greater consensus on the vision for native woodlands:** the practical experience on MFSI projects has contributed to a greater consensus among organisations involved in forestry and woodland management
- 5. Delivering socially successful woodland projects takes extra time and effort:** as well as extra cost but the benefits achieved make this worthwhile
- 6. Local champions are vital.** Most of the successful projects worked because of key individuals who acted as champions for their local initiatives, dedicating their time and skills.

John Hunt

Borders Forest Trust are very grateful to the MFSI, which enabled the Trust to develop such a variety of native woodland restoration and community woodland initiatives that have truly helped us to become... rooted in the community.

Project funding was received in December 2005 from the Funding Network and the SBC Arts Fund with the project finally getting off the ground in July with the Ish'uze Youth Group from Peebles..... and it went brilliantly well!

Over 20 members of the youth group joined myself and local Community Artist Andrew Boyle for a week long project at Eshiels Community Woodland. The project was broken down into a series of daily tasks which involved: safe tool use; shelter-building; woodland management tasks and sculpture design and construction. Members of the group really developed over the course of the week, many discovering skills they didn't know they had. The most pleasing aspect of the project was the fact that participants displayed such huge enthusiasm throughout the week. There were daily picnics, BBQs and a huge amount of hilarity.

The Project ended with a Trash Music workshop and Open Evening in August. The youth group invited their friends and families to Eshiels for a series of performances and prize giving. Over 70 people turned up on the night to experience the music workshops and wander through the woods looking at the sculptures.

The project was voted a huge success by all involved and I am now looking for further funding to enable a rolling programme of similar projects throughout the Borders.

Anna Craigen

Teaching the Teachers

In addition to helping schools carry out environmental improvement projects, the Green Grounds initiative also supports teacher training. Encouraging teachers to take classes outside for lessons is essential to enable schools to make the most of their outdoor green spaces.

To promote the use of the recently produced 'Using your Local' education pack, 2 twilight sessions were held in April at Galashiels and Duns. Dave Warburton ran these sessions for nearly 20 teachers keen to find out more about how they can use

local trees and woodlands for curriculum studies.

In May, BFT worked with Grounds for Learning, the national school grounds charity, to hold an Outdoor Classroom training session for teachers. 20 teachers from primary school across the Borders turned out to find out how they could make the most of their schools grounds. The day long course covered a range of topics including a variety of activities that can be conducted in any school ground, ideas of what improvements can be made, useful contacts and funding sources and a trip to the local Howdenburn

Primary School which received a green grounds grant in 2004 to see what improvements have been carried out there.

Borders Forest Trust also provided a short presentation at the Eco-Schools twilight training session in September on how the Green Grounds initiative can contribute to the School Grounds and Biodiversity components of the Eco School Programme. It is heartening to see so many Eco Schools now forming in the Borders helping the younger generation to appreciate and respect our environment.

Nicola Hunt

Woodland Restoration

When the Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy was launched in mid December 2005, along with a huge financial incentive to plant native trees (£2,000 per hectare of 'Locational Premium') on top of the existing Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme, Borders Forest Trust was the first to apply for funding. The rules were quite strict, and required the applicant to plant close to existing native woodlands or beside streams, thus helping the creation of links between woodlands and expanding existing areas of native trees.

This was a great opportunity for BFT but not without its challenges. Due to the great enthusiasm for the incentive all the available cash was allocated by March 2006, at which point the whole FCS Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme came to an abrupt end. BFT did manage to secure agreements with landowners over 140ha of land on eleven

different farms. Some of these plantings are already complete, with others scheduled for 2007-2008. This funding has given us a great boost in achieving native woodland expansion following all the relevant guidance from the Scottish Forestry Strategy and The Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy and contributes towards the Native Woodland HAP target.

Some of you will ask who got the £280,000 extra cash from the Locational Premium. The majority goes to the landowner, as obviously we could not do anything without them, but a fair percentage will go towards making sure the woodlands become established, countering the threats from, rabbits, hare, deer, weeds, flood, fire and drought.

Hugh Chalmers



Tree Planting at Dryhope

Wildwood

The fine weather over the summer enabled the trees at Carrifran to put on a fair bit of growth, with some remarkable ash trees putting out an amazing 4 feet of growth! A number of species have also started setting seed. We already had birch, willow and rowan seed, and suckering aspen and blackthorn, and now we can add to the list alder, bird cherry, blackthorn and our first hazel nuts. The question is, when will we have our first acorns?

During a Spring snowfall, we managed to locate the site of a Blackcock lek. This is where the males get together for a ritual display, complete with bubbling calls and much showing off of their superbly contrasting black and white rump feathers. We first spotted hundreds of footprints in the snow, and later managed to count 5 males. Later in the season, at least 3 chicks were seen flying behind an adult female, so obviously all that displaying worked out! We also counted 14 Dark Green Fritillary butterflies on the wing in July.

We now have only 21 hectares (33,600 trees) to plant as part of the first phase of planting. This should be complete by Christmas 2006. We will then be replacing dead trees over the next few years, and then

expand higher into Firth Hope at over 600m, where we will plant juniper and downy willow to restore 'montane scrub' in a small but inspiring high valley below White Coomb.

We are now looking for enthusiastic hill-walking tree planters, who will be able to help us with this truly pioneering plan to restore 'dwarf mountain woodland', a natural habitat which has very nearly disappeared in Scotland, but which at one time would have clothed most of the upper parts of the Southern Uplands. Fire and grazing mean that only a few juniper and downy willows remain as seed sources, and we have been busy over the last few years in growing plants on from these remnants. We now want to plant around 5000 plants per year, with volunteer effort being a major part. If you would like to join other volunteers in this demanding but rewarding adventure, please get in touch

Stan Tanner
and John Savory
at the waterfall



H u g h

HABITAT NETWORKS

Our Forest Habitat Network is comprised of the riparian woodland and ancient woodland project sites. This network covers an area exceeding 1,200ha at twenty five locations across the Borders and it has been a challenge this summer to visit all these sites and survey the area to assess tree survival.

The wet spring and dry hot spells this summer provided favourable conditions for tree growth which combined with rigorous herbivore control and weeding, has enabled the sites to become closer to reaching establishment phase when they are tall enough to not rely on human assistance anymore. Fire was a great risk during the summer due to the long spells of hot dry weather and dry vegetation which left these sites very vulnerable. Thankfully, however, fire was not a problem and surprisingly enough despite the drought the majority of the trees grew well.

Preparations are now underway for this planting season to replace losses and provide extra protection where it is required.

The summer surveying and monitoring carried out with volunteers identified the numbers of trees that need replaced during this planting season and also gave an indication of the level and type of browsing suffered by trees, whether it is caused by voles, deer, rabbit or caterpillars. With there being no shortage of mouths feeding on the young trees, additional protection of tubes and stakes will be put on the trees most at risk to protect them from all bar the caterpillars. The challenge now for this season is to visit all these sites again and carry out necessary establishment activities come rain, hail or shine, but hopefully mostly shine!

George Moffat



George with volunteers Darren and Brian Moir
tree surveying at Glengaber

Woodschool News

Summer 2006 has been a summer of visitors. Woodschool has been a stop off point for Tasmanians, Norwegians, Swedes, First Nation Canadians, Czechs, Germans, Iberians and Russians amongst others. We must be doing something right! By digesting all the feedback from our visitors we are able to build up a picture of just how important our work is. It's not just about making furniture after all.

The workshop has seen some new participants over the summer with two committed new guys, Neil Norris and Ken Henesy being put through "deep immersion". Both have gone through stackyard, timber processing and chair production. Old hands Grant, Darren and Tom came back into the workshop and gave free time for one-to-one tuition on special techniques. We have also had Kerstin, Sarah and Barney with us over the summer. Barney and Sarah will stay on with us and get more involved in the chair production with Stu. During all this time we have never had so many applications and enquiries for bench space and work placements. There's a gap in the market out there . . . someone !

Famous Grouse has been a fantastic supporter of Woodschool and the makers. Apart from the big new bar refit that has been undertaken at Glen Turret, the FG team have decided to back a bench space for a year to develop small product from redundant

oak casks. These products are being prototyped and market tested through The Famous Grouse Experience.

Stu and the team have made a brilliant effort as we confirm orders towards Christmas and beyond. The Teviot chair is being well received at the various shows and events that we have attended or that Belen and Derek have organised in buyDesign, so the marketing, sales, event organisation, logistics and distribution departments are doing their stuff. We have had a couple of changes on the Woodschool Board as well. Thanks for all the hard work and interesting discussions to Bill Goodburn and welcome on board to Neil Campbell.

Eoin Cox



Ken in the Woodschool workshop

Woodschool, an inside story...

Following a feasibility study carried out by BFT to investigate the idea of a community based woodworking facility for Morvern Community Woodlands, myself and three other members from Morvern made a visit to Woodschool. As soon as I arrived I knew this was the place to be to learn the skills required to successfully run a small workshop/skills centre and I am now 5 months into a 6 month Skills Placement at Woodschool. I have been totally impressed with the professionalism and commitment of all involved and very fortunate to work alongside some extremely skilled and dedicated people who have been willing to share their hard learned knowledge and expertise with me. My time in the workshop has been very valuable and the varied work has given me experience in dealing with private, commercial, and corporate clients, as well as working alongside a great bunch of like-minded people.

Living at Woodschool has also been made easier for me by the friendly faces at the "local" in Ancrum. Its great to feel welcomed by a community in the short time I have been here and reassuring to know help is at hand if needed. There is no doubt in my mind the work being done by all at BFT and Woodschool is second to none and I'm proud to have had this opportunity to get to know and work along side you all. My placement is nearly at an end but I hope to be here for a while longer. You have a a great thing going on here and if I only manage to take back a little of what I've seen and learned, Morvern will be a better place for it.

Ken Henesy

Borders Orchard Project

The Gazetteer of Scotland, published in 1806 wrote that Jedburgh was noted for its orchards. 'Jethart pears, Jethart pears' was shouted in the streets of London in the early 1800's and they were even well known in Europe. Sadly, with the increase in large commercial fruit production over the last century, small village and town orchards have been lost or neglected. These orchards often contained rare local varieties of fruit and wildlife niches which were once very important to communities.

There has been increasing interest from local people in orchards recently, so much so that Crailing Community Orchard was born in 2005. This prompted a funding application to The Big Lottery's "Breathing Spaces" Fund in July 2006 and we are delighted that this has been successful. The Borders Orchard Project goal, amongst others, is to identify lost orchards within the borders and help to restore them whilst maintaining old features and wildlife areas.

The launch of the project was held at Crailing Orchard on Apple Day, 21st October 2006, with celebrations

including apple bobbing, story telling, juice making and a BBQ.

If you would like to get involved with the project or know of an old orchard near you then please contact Lee Hollings at The Green Shed.

Lee Hollings

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

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Staff

Director: Willie McGhee
Projects Officer: Nicola Hunt
Site Manager: Hugh Chalmers
Woodland Officer: George Moffat
*Community Liaison and
Education Officer:* Anna Craigen
*Community Development and Training
Officer:* Lee Hollings
*Finance and Administration
Officer:* Sandra Smith-Maxwell
*Marketing and Communications
Officer:* Claire Doig
Woodschool Director: Eoin Cox

Tel: 01835 830750

Fax: 01835 830760

**www.bordersforesttrust.org
enquiries@bordersforesttrust.org**

Newsletter designed and produced by Claire Doig

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