



NEWSLETTER

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2003-2004 COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONTACT DETAILS

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NATIVE WOODLANDS DISCUSSION GROUP CONSTITUTION

Name: The organisation shall be the Native Woodlands Discussion Group

Aims and objectives: The purpose of the group is to encourage interest in native woodlands, their ecology and management.

Membership: Membership of the group will be:

- a. Individual
- b. Family (1.5 x full rate)
- c. Concessionary (0.5 x full rate)

Membership of the group will cease 18 months after the payment of an annual subscription. Committee will advise the Meetings Organiser for the year of the fee for attendance of non-members.

Officers and committee:

- a. The group elects a committee of not more than eight members. The committee shall co-opt or appoint such officers as are considered necessary. Officers will be eligible to vote at committee meetings.
- b. Committee members shall serve for three years, but shall be eligible for re-election.
- c. The chairperson shall be nominated by the committee and endorsed by the Annual General Meeting.
- d. All members are free to attend committee meetings.

Accounts:

- a. The financial year shall be the calendar year
- b. The committee will set the annual membership fee before the end of October.
- c. The treasurer will keep accounts and present a financial report by 15th March each year. The accounts shall be independently audited by a competent person before presentation.

Annual General Meeting: An AGM shall be held at such a date as is determined by the committee. Notification of that meeting shall appear in the newsletter at least one month prior to the AGM.

Business at the AGM shall be determined by a simple majority except changes to the constitution which shall require a two-thirds majority of those members present. Family membership entitles up to two votes if both are present.

The chairperson and the treasurer will each submit a report at the AGM.

Meetings: The committee shall organise or authorise any member to organise such meetings as considered desirable.

Publications: The committee shall approve such publications as are considered desirable, and which carry the group's endorsement.

NWDG OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives: The purpose of the Group is to encourage interest in native woods, their ecology and management, with a particular emphasis in Northern Britain.

Activities:

- * Organise at least one Field Meeting with related discussion each year.
- * Organise Workshops on subjects suggested by members (initially two per year).
- * Issue Newsletters (currently two per year) with an emphasis on members' contributions.
- * Maintain contact with like-minded organisations through the membership.

Membership: This is open to any interested individual (There is no corporate membership).

Subscription: According to the following categories -

Ordinary individual	£15.00 p.a.
Family	£21.50 p.a.
Concs./Unwaged	£ 7.50 p.a.

Subscriptions should be sent to the Membership Secretary (see inside front cover for contact details)

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Copy date for the **Spring 2004** newsletter is **15th March**. The newsletter will go out in April.

The following types of contributions are always welcome:

- Group or organisation reports
- Woodland reports/updates
- Articles about anything to do with woodlands
- Shorter items of news, e.g. new groups/initiatives/projects or personnel changes
- Letters to the editor
- Reviews of books or other publications relating to native woodlands.
- Illustrations - cartoons, logos, pen and ink drawings of trees and wildlife etc..

Contributions can be up to 1500 words long. They should ideally be word-processed in Word for Windows and sent by email or on floppy disk. Please include full contact details with any contribution. Contact the editor if you have something to contribute but are having difficulty meeting a deadline, or if you have an idea for an article you wish to discuss.

No Frills Please! Articles should be submitted in Arial 11-point font in 'normal' style (no headings text and body text), and should be left-justified with no division into columns, nor with hanging indents or text boxes. Use italics where necessary but please avoid underlining, 'clip-art' and automatic rather than manual paragraph numbering. Tables and diagrams, obviously, may be in different fonts or in boxes where necessary. Line drawings and clear photographs are welcome, but please be aware that photographs may not reproduce well. Please avoid using acronyms without writing out what they mean in full – they may be more than familiar to you, but a total mystery to the rest of us! Thanks very much.

The current editor is:

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EDITORIAL

Alison Averis

This is my first Newsletter as Editor, and I'm pleased to say it's a good fat one - what is often described by editors as a 'bumper issue'. Many thanks to everyone who contributed. And if you are one of the 140 or so members who didn't contribute - why not submit something for the Spring issue? It doesn't have to be a highly technical, learned piece about woodland ecology - we publish anything relating to native woodlands. We are especially keen to include pieces about woodland plants, animals, birds and insects - and about woodland art, folklore, crafts, community involvement and history. The deadline for copy is 15 March 2004. You'll also notice a few changes to the style of the newsletter. One of the things I am most keen to do is to improve the visual appeal of our publication. As a first step, I have enlisted my husband Ben as artist-in-residence and all of the line drawings in this issue are his.

Most of this issue is taken up with the reports from the 2003 field excursion, the Lower Plants workshops and other trips and visits. In the Articles we have a typically innovative piece from Peter Quelch and an interesting story about changing populations of woodland birds from Paul Daw, as well as a seasonal cookery article from me. Nick Marshall and Carol Crawford have produced fine reviews of two remarkable new books. You'll also see that we have enclosed fliers for two more books - Peter Wormell's *Pinewoods of the Black Mount*, and *Heritage Trees of Scotland* by Donald Rodger, Jon Stokes and James Ogilvie. *Pinewoods of the Black Mount* will be reviewed in the Spring issue of the newsletter. *Heritage Trees of Scotland* is a lovely little book, full of stunning photographs. It would make a marvellous Christmas present for anyone interested in trees or in Scottish history and culture. **Would any member like to volunteer to review it for the next issue of the Newsletter?** Your reward will be a **free copy** of the book, as well as the honour of having your words appear in this august publication. If you are interested, please get in touch and I'll send you the review copy.

As usual, enclosed with this issue is the subscription form for next year. Please send in your subscription as soon as you can or, better still, set up a standing order.

NATIVE WOODLANDS DISCUSSION GROUP NEWS

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Carol Crawford

The year's cycle of events is now at an end and we have begun planning for 2004.

2003 Annual Excursion.

Our main event of 2003 was the annual excursion, this year in June in Cumbria. Although numbers were lower than they have been on excursions this side of the border, it provided an opportunity for N England members to join in. The excursion went well, as you will see from the report later in the newsletter, and made a slight profit! Big thanks to Iris Glimmerveen of the East Cumbria Countryside Project for organising the event so well.

The a.g.m. was held on the last night of the excursion and the minutes are contained later in the newsletter.

Those who went to Cumbria are invited to send digital photographs of the excursion to Helen Shaw, our website co-ordinator.

Lower Plants Workshops

The 4th annual lichen and bryophytes workshops (run jointly with Argyll Green Woodworkers Association (AGWA)) took place in September and October. It is encouraging to see both

beginners and refreshers, who return every year, improving their ID skills and becoming fluent in plant Latin. This year the bryophyte workshop successfully ventured out of Argyll, to Glen Affric, which brought in more people than last year. Thanks are due to Gordon Gray Stephens (of AGWA) and Joe Hope of Forest Research for organising this year's workshops, and ever-helpful tutors and Lower Plants Section stalwarts Brian Coppins and Ben Averis. Reports of these workshops are also contained in this newsletter.

Study Tour to Abruzzo, Italy

September also saw our first overseas study tour which was another success. A full report of this will be in the spring 2004 newsletter. Big thanks to Richard Thompson of Forest Research and Lucio di Cosmo for all their efforts in organising and seeing through this event.

2004 Annual Excursion: 3rd - 6th June, Braemar

Next year will see a return to the pinewoods of the NE, which NWDG last visited in 1993. Steve Brown of the Forestry Commission is organising the event and is already starting to plan it – see the summary of what is in store further on in the newsletter. But meanwhile please get the dates in your diaries!

30th Birthday Event, 3rd June

As well as revisiting Deeside, 10 years on, we are also revisiting our pinewood roots. Our discussion group held its first public meeting in 1974, as the Native Pinewoods Discussion Group.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we will be holding a one-day indoor meeting to mark the occasion and it was decided at the a.g.m., that rather than hold it on a separate day earlier in the year, it should take place from mid-morning on the Thursday the excursion begins. A sub-group of myself, Jeanette Hall, Juliet Robinson and Alison Averis will shortly start to put together a programme for the day and all ideas are welcome. The last newsletter also mentioned a members' questionnaire to go out with this issue - we will now be putting this out in the January mailing. We are also thinking of a commemorative T-shirt and, in the evening, a venison BBQ and a drama production. Juliet Robinson hopes to run a workshop next April to write the play. See page 32 for more details.

All in all an exciting year ahead!

Other forthcoming events:

The British Lichen Society are holding a Lecture Session at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh on Saturday 10 January 2004. Several of our members are playing star roles - see page 31 for details.

Committee changes

The a.g.m. saw Steve Brown and Richard Thompson joining the committee.

More recently, Ben Averis has had to resign as co-ordinator of the Lower Plants Section (LPS), owing to work and family commitments. We thank Ben for getting LPS off the ground, nearly 3 years ago, for organising events and for servicing members. Fortunately Joe Hope, having cut his teeth on co-organising this year's bryophyte workshop, was ready to step into the breach and has been co-opted onto the committee. At the very least he will organise next year's lower plants workshops which means we can relieve Gordon Gray Stephens of this task, which he has done almost single-handed for the last couple of years. Thanks again to Gordon for all his help with the workshops.

The other good news is that Ben will stay on the committee as an ordinary member and will be concentrating on illustrating the newsletter.

See inside front cover for list of members and contact details of the 2003 - 2004 committee. Note that Juliet Robinson may be moving house but that her e-mail address will remain the same.

Lower Plants Publications

My second bryophyte booklet has been on hold all summer, due to volume of work. I am about to pick it up again and hope to publish before next year's field season begins.

At the a.g.m. there was a call for LPS to organise a similar publication on lichens. **Any volunteers?!**

2004 Subs

Yes, it's that time of year again – first call for annual subscriptions. Early birds help our bank account a great deal and those who opt for standing orders reduce burdens on membership secretary Jeanette Hall. See form with newsletter.

SEX 'N' DRUGS 'N' ROCK AND ROLL: LIFE & TIMES OF THE NWDG TREASURER.

Tim Hall

A little gentle arm-twisting by Carol earlier this year convinced me to take on the role of treasurer. I have enjoyed being a member of NWDG for a few years now and I thought it was about time I did my bit to contribute something other than just my annual subscription. Alison had everything very well organised, so my job has been made fairly easy...thanks Alison!

So where are we in terms of our finances? In a nutshell, we're fairly flush with just under £2000 in the bank, out of which we just have to pay for this newsletter and a few odds and sods (apologies for all the accountancy jargon in this piece). The Cumbrian excursion made a small surplus and so we are able to make a small contribution to East Cumbria Countryside Project for their phone and other expenses incurred by Iris.

We learnt a few lessons from the finances of the Italian trip: you'd think that in these days of computers and Euroland, transferring some money to an Italian bank to pay for the hotel would just be a matter of pressing a few buttons? Wrong! It would seem that Royal Bank of Scotland send a runner with a bag of gold coins, which takes a week and they want to charge us £30! Thanks to Jeanette Hall for agreeing to buying a load of travellers cheques at the last minute.

So where do the Sex 'n' drugs 'n' Rock and Roll come in? You'll have to wait until the next edition of the Treasurer's report...

2004 FIELD MEETING - DEESIDE

3-6 June 2004

Steve Brown

This is a *provisional* outline of the treats in store for members at the 2004 field meeting. It will be based at the village hall in Braemar. The final programme and the booking form will be mailed out in January.

Thursday 3rd June: Evening talk by Simon Blacket, factor of Invercauld estate, about the running of a Highland estate

Friday 4th June: Meet at Mar Lodge. Talk by the property manager or head forester about the aims and objectives of the estate and the effects of forestry policy. The two options for the day are:

(1) Excursion to the restructured pine plantations in Glen Coich on the way to the Dubh Ghleann. We will look at the effects of long-term deer control and discuss the policy of deer control with the estate forester. We will then walk on to an area of juniper, which is part of a scheme to regenerate pinewoods on Invercauld. If time and weather permit we may walk to the top of Beinn a' Bhuid for a view of the area.

(2) Excursion to Gleann Lui to look at the restructuring work in the pinewoods. We may visit Derry Lodge and the pinewoods there, and also Knock Wood which has a permanent deer fence. We will then go to Morrone Birkwood, which has been partially deer fenced, and follow this with a look at some small new regeneration schemes in the area and a possible walk out to the Colonel's Bed up the river Ey.

Evening NWDG debate yet to be decided but possible suggestion "Capercaillie: is there enough suitable habitat to sustain a viable long-term population - and can a population be sustained without having to wipe out the resident predators such as fox, goshawk and pine marten?"

Saturday 5th June: Only one excursion is planned at present. This will begin with a trip to the Crannach pinewood. We will meet the management committee and discuss past, present and future management. Then we will move on to the neighbouring new native pinewood and discuss local issues of land use, such as grouse moors versus new pinewoods. Next, we will go to Ballochbuie pinewood and discuss long-term management there. SNH staff will be on hand to lead the discussion. Finally, we will go to the new native pinewood at Creag Clunie and discuss with the head forester his deer management policy. We will walk along by the Lion's Face to look at recreation and access in the forest, and in the designed landscape that features the Lion's Face and the woods around Invercauld house.

Return to village hall for the AGM and a discussion of the 2005 & 2006 excursions. Highland ceilidh to finish.

Sunday 6th: Still working on this but the water mill which drives the sawmill at Birse is great fun and well worth a short visit on the way home.

LAUNCH OF 'PINWOODS OF THE BLACK MOUNT' BY PETER WORMELL John Fowler

The book *Pinewoods of the Black Mount*, by Peter Wormell - native woodlands enthusiast and former chief warden on Rum for the then Nature Conservancy - was launched at an enthusiastic gathering in the Corran Halls, Oban, on October 7. Peter spoke about his early interest in the survival of Scotland's old pinewoods and the progress made since then in their regeneration. The book is illustrated with wood engravings by Peter's nephew Christopher Wormell.

(This book will be reviewed in the next issue of the Newsletter – Ed).

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS IN 2003

JOINT MEETING WITH THE CONTINUOUS COVER FORESTRY GROUP ISLAY ESTATES, BRIDGEND, ISLAY, 25-26 APRIL 2003

Peter Quelch

Our first field meeting of the year was held on Islay estates, arriving late morning by ferry from Kennacraig near Tarbert. The scene was set first of all in a masterly welcoming speech from

Malcolm Younger, the estate factor*. The remainder of the morning continued with background information on the history of the woodlands and the estate itself from Dr Margaret Storrie. Several members bought a copy of her authoritative book on the history of Islay.

Prof Barry Gardiner of FC spoke about the effect of wind on trees. As Malcolm's paper points out, one of the remarkable facts about Islay and its woodlands is that tall stands of valuable broadleaves have been grown on low-lying previous farmland over 200 years or so. Yet nearby we saw bonsai-like windswept shelterbelts of the same tree species (mainly beech and sycamore) which bear the full force of the wind. Obviously the mutual sheltering effect of the woodlands is a major factor, hence the interest and attendance by a number of CCFG members, including several FC research people.

Finally Dr Malcolm Ogilvie gave a talk on the natural history of the woods of Islay, and the immense value these estate woodlands have for local wildlife. The trouble that these local expert people went to in helping run our tour was enormous and was gratefully accepted by our group who were well looked after for the two days. So thanks are due to the estate staff, to forestry consultant Dick Scruton, the Bridgend Hotel, and also Janette McKay who did sterling local work in organising minibuses, speakers, accommodation, meals etc.

Following the morning indoors we toured several woodland sites before embarking on a long walk back to the hotel from Esknish, passing Dail. First a semi-natural birch and hazel wood (Coile na Dalach) near the centre of the island, leading on towards the heart of the long-established European-style tall mixed broadleaves of the main policy woods. On the second day we saw more of that type of woodland close to the big house and hotel, and then moved on to Finlaggan; an historic site of national importance, being the old home of the Lords of the Isles. At that site the estate have a problematic young spruce plantation and discussions took place on its future, restructuring, harvesting, deer issues and so on.

So what did our group make of the technical issues that arose during these visits, of a width and complexity to which this short account cannot do justice? The issues that Malcolm raises in his paper are all too real. But in my view they are not technical ones, in that it is not so difficult to work out what *should be* the best practice in maintaining these woodlands. So much visionary work has been put in by previous generations of estate foresters to create these quite astounding stands, and recent work has been effective in many ways - for example in rhododendron control - and of course in selective felling which has created substantial income for the estate.

The problem lies in the costs of maintenance work needed to keep up continuous cover woods on this scale and to regenerate them. Income from thinnings is going to be minimal, as is net income from other conventional plantation forestry on the island. The native woods themselves are terrific habitat, but create no real income in this situation, apart from the sporting use to which all the woods are put. So what will pay for the upkeep of the impressive mix of old woodlands that we saw, considering the real and constant menace of rhododendron in particular? Discussions even ranged to possible deforestation of certain blocks for a period, alternating with cultivation, reseeding and then close grazing so that rhododendron could really be eliminated in one area over a period of decades! Drastic solutions for serious problems maybe?

The historic aspect of the woodlands is important, but heritage-related and access-related grants on their own are unlikely to be available for much of the work in the long term. SFGS grants are available for heritage woodlands but are they sufficient? So I suppose it is hard to see how these woods on Islay, remarkable though they are, can be maintained in a financially sustainable way in the future. In the meantime, what can the estate do except continue with inputs at the present level, and keep these examples of biocultural heritage going for future generations to make the main decisions? Unless the wind really does have the final say one day?!

(*Malcolm Younger's speech will be published in the Spring 2004 issue of the Newsletter - Ed.)

REPORT OF THE BRITISH LICHEN SOCIETY *GRAPHIDIUM* WORKSHOP— CONNEL BRIDGE, ARGYLL, 25th to 30th MAY 2003

Brian & Sandy Coppins

The British Lichen Society regularly runs field workshops to allow folk to brush up on their expertise for a particular taxonomic group or for lichens of a particular habitat. This time the subject was “The Smoothies;” that is, the myriad of crustose lichens, with dot-, dash- or script-like fruiting bodies, that occur together to form communities of the *Graphidium* on the smooth bark of trees. Getting to grips with the identification of these small species requires much time looking down a compound microscope, and for this purpose we benefited from the use of the teaching lab of Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory. The high number of 35 participants (including 7 NWDG members) meant that lab-time was on a time-share basis!

Sites visited included those already well-known for their biodiverse ‘Smoothy component’ such as the *crème de la crème*, Ballachuan Hazelwood on the island of Seil, and also Glen Nant and Glasdrum. However, the field trips were not all ‘guided tours’, and there was a strong pioneering element, with visits to little-known sites or to woods never before subjected to the scrutiny of a lichenologist’s hand lens. This paid dividends, with two new localities for the Scottish endemic *Graphis alboscripta*. One of these was on the island of Kerrera, where Howard Fox, while straying from smooth bark, found *Cladonia stereoclada* on mossy boulder scree - an addition to the UK list, though previously known from western Ireland. Other visits, all with at least some notable finds, included Airds Park, South Shian Wood, Loch Melfort Woods, woods on the east side of Seil Sound (north of Ardmaddy Castle and at Dun Fadaih), a boat trip to the north shore of Loch Etive, and a ferry over to the Ross of Mull (combined with a pilgrimage by the ‘churchyard’ enthusiasts to Iona Abbey). The ‘discovery’ of the week, however, was the wooded valley of Glen Stockdale, already considered as one of Scotland’s best oceanic bryophyte sites by Ben Averis. Here, the foraging party discovered *Pyrenula hibernica* (*‘Parmentaria chilensis’* - ‘Blackberries in custard’) in its third Scottish site, and *Lecanora cinereofusca* in its second Scottish site. A previously-known site for both these species is the famed Resipole Ravine in Sunart, and a fuller investigation of Glen Stockdale may well give it a similar status for lichens as for bryophytes.

The success of the meeting, with the enhancement of expertise and the recording of some 540 species, would not have been possible without a generous donation from SNH, provision of a minibus by RBG Edinburgh, and the preparatory work of selecting sites, getting permission of access and providing maps by Anna Griffith. Our thanks to all of these, as well as to the staff of the Falls of Lora Hotel for their hospitality during the week, culminating in an unforgettable, seven-course Scottish banquet.

WOODLAND LICHEN WORKSHOP - 11-13th September 2003

Brian Coppins

This year’s NWDG/AGWA workshop had a new venue, Lochgoilhead, where the ten of us were kindly offered a room for our indoor sessions and a minibus for the Friday excursion by the Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre. Unfortunately, Sandy Coppins couldn’t attend the workshop, but Brian was accompanied by fellow lichenologist Pawel Czarnota, from the Gorce National Park in southern Poland.

On Thursday evening Brian gave an illustrated ‘refresher’ course on woodland lichens, and discussions were continued in the Shore House Inn. Friday’s field trip was down the west side of Loch Goil to Cormonachan Wood (NS1996). This surviving east-facing oakwood, flanked by conifer plantations, has clearly suffered from a long history of ‘acid rain’, with no development of *Lobarion* communities on the oaks. However, the *Parmelietum laevigatae* communities offered plenty of ‘acid-loving’ lichens to deliberate over, and of special note were *Bacidia vernalis* and *Parmotrema arnoldii*. The *Lobarion* was not absent altogether, and *Lobaria scrobiculata*, *Pannaria conoplea* and three *Sticta* species were seen on the mature ash trees around the ruined settlement in the upper part of the wood. The acid conditions

favour the crustose genus *Micarea*, a specialism of Brian and Pawel. Of the 17 species seen, *M. subviridescens* was found for the first time in Scotland, and Pawel collected what seems to be a species new to science from an old larch stump. The day's tally was 131 species. A few hours were spent 'microscoping' at the Ardroy Centre before and after dinner, and lichen-chat continued in the bar, despite it being 'Karaoke Night'!

The weather forecast was not promising for Saturday, but the gods were with us, and we had an overcast but fine day at Hell's Glen SSSI, an oakwood of long-known lichenological interest in the valley of the River Goil (NN1905). As at Cormonachan, the *Parmelietum laevigatae* communities were again to the fore, but better developed and with additional species, such as *Heterodermia japonica* [*H. 'obscurata'*], *Hypotrachyna endochlora*, *H. taylorensis* and *Menegazzia terebrata*. The *Lobarion* was also more in evidence, especially on hazels and eared willows, and an unexpected find, on the latter, was *Leptogium brebissonii*, which is more characteristic of ash and hazelwoods closer to the coast. About 106 species were recorded, and the hardy souls who saw the day's visit to its conclusion were rewarded with a fresh brew from the 'A Team' [Anna Griffith and Andy Acton].

WOODLAND BRYOPHYTE WORKSHOP - 9-11 November 2003 - Bigging up the native pinewood mossy posse

Joe Hope

This autumn's bryophytes workshop was based in Cannich, Inverness-shire, with field visits to nearby Glen Affric National Nature Reserve. Whilst Argyll had provided excellent bryologising for all previous workshops, it was felt that a change of region would allow us to see a different range of species and maintain interest for the workshop 'regulars'. Glen Affric is home to one of the largest areas of native pinewood in Scotland and the vegetation shows distinct boreal affinities (a few oceanic species also creep in here and there). Despite the geographical shift, the workshop retained its stalwart tutor, Ben Averis, and we also had Carol Crawford along to help beginners get to grips with the commoner species. Our base was the Glen Affric Backpackers Hostel in Cannich, which provided budget accommodation and generously provided a room for evening meetings at no charge. Sixteen people attended in all.

On the first day we drove up the Glen to the end of the public road and walked a couple of hundred metres to a boggy glade surrounded by old pine and birch trees. After deftly sorting out the nine species of *Sphagnum* we examined mossy banks at the edge of the glade. These were carpeted with the pleurocarpous wefts typical of acid woodland (*Hylocomium splendens*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, etc.); peeking up, the upright stems of the 'sober man' liverwort, *Anastrepta orcadensis*, provided a distinct upland flavour. *Ptilium crista-castrensis*, a beautiful golden feather-like moss, was also abundant. Making our way back through waist-high heather, we all stopped to admire a rowan spectacularly bedecked in the uncommon moss *Antitrichia curtispindula* [see picture]. Just before leaving this site, an unremarkable-looking pine stump was found to harbour two notable species: *Anastrophyllum hallerianum* (a Nationally Scarce liverwort associated with old pinewoods) and *Dicranum leioneuron* (a Nationally Rare moss hitherto known from only two other 10 km squares in Scotland!).

The second day was spent in the eastern part of the Glen, starting at Dog Falls car park and working down through predominantly broadleaved woodland along the north bank of the river. Many of the previous day's species were re-encountered, including yet more abundantly *Antitrichia*-laden trees. Other interesting epiphytes such as *Cryphaea heteromalla*, *Frullania fragilifolia*, *Ulota drummondii* and *Zygodon rupestris* were also seen. At this end of the glen the woodland is locally rather base-rich, yielding species such as *Ctenidium molluscum* and *Neckera crispa*. The latter species' smaller lookalike, *N. pumila*, was a bonus on hazel. (Nice 'Lobarion' species were furtively noted by those who also dabble in lichens.)

The workshop seemed to be much enjoyed by all and a good deal of bryological knowledge was absorbed. In addition, we learned from the hipper members of the group that 'tree-hugging' is now passé and that nowadays we should be 'bigging up' the trees and giving the mosses 'respect'.

Thanks are due to Gordon Gray Stephens for keeping track of bookings and looking after much of the preliminary organization, Fort Augustus Forest District for permitting access to their fantastic woodland, Kath Gregory for providing our meeting room, and of course to Ben and Carol for their excellent tutorship!



*NWDG bryologists giving
the Antitrichia some respect.
Photo: Joe Hope*

REPORT OF THE 2003 FIELD MEETING

The annual excursion of 2003 was based in Penrith, in eastern Cumbria. Thirty to forty people attended at various stages. For once there was an absence of rain throughout and some glorious weather. Many thanks to Iris Glimmerveen for organising this very successful venture south of the Border. Penrith proved to be very different from the usual type of Highland village venue. In particular, there was a wide range of restaurants which enabled participants to sample Spanish and Italian cooking as well as British, Chinese and Indian. The weather was so hot that the windows had to be wide open for the ceilidh, and a hen party of ladies dressed as Mrs Mops joined in for a while.

Compared with previous excursions there were some new themes this year: engaging people through art and recognition of upland wood pasture. There were obvious cultural links with southern Scotland. On the Friday there were excursions to look at sculptures in Eden Vale, and to Glenamara Park and Hallinag wood on the shores of Ullswater. On the Saturday there was a trip to Geltsdale with its huge old veteran trees. A highlight was the visit to the forest theatre at Ashgill on the Sunday, where the perennial Peter Quelch and 2004 organiser Steve Brown entertained with flute and bagpipe music to close the excursion.

THURSDAY EVENING SESSION

Carol Crawford

East Cumbria Countryside Project - Phil Gray

The evening began with an introduction to the East Cumbria Countryside Project. This is a partnership of three local councils and the Countryside Commission. Their work includes advising on woodland, wildlife and landscape conservation and engaging people in the countryside.

On the woodland side they have a history of involvement in small woods (by far the commonest type in E Cumbria). They manage existing woods and plant new ones: half a million trees have been planted since 1985. Access to woodlands and the attractive surrounding countryside is encouraged with signposting and waymarking existing paths and green lanes, and creating new routes. Trails are interpreted through self-guide booklets or guided walks. Their latest way of connecting people with the landscape is by using art, for

example the Andy Goldsworthy sheepfolds – over 50 sheepfolds have been restored and sculptures installed - and the Eden Benchmarks: a sculpture trail.

Cumbria Woodlands – Edward Mills

Cumbria Woodlands succeeded Cumbria Broadleaves which has been co-ordinated by Edward Mills since the early 1990s. The talk focused on the Forest Futures Programme which was set up with £700,000 of funding from the Forestry Commission following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in 2001. The programme has 3 strands:

- 1) Creation of new woods
- 2) Managing existing woods
- 3) Supporting business developments

Projects must fit into the Cumbria Woodland Vision which was derived from a landscape character assessment which identified 12 character types. There is a plan for each type. There is a scoring system and an Awards Panel decides which applications get funding.

1. New woods (£300,000 available in total)

These are of three types:

- a) commercial and managed in line with UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS)
- b) New native woodland in line with UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)
- c) Multi-use woods less than 3 km from towns

There is also funding for woodlands in whole-farm conservation schemes. In Year 1 most funding went to new native woods – 179 ha were established.

2. Woodland improvement (£300,00 in total)

This provides up to 80% grant/£20,000 per wood. Funding is for enhancing BAP woodland types and ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), or for improving under-managed non-BAP woodlands. All woodland projects must also have access and interpretation. In Year 1 most grant money went towards education, covering 30-50% of costs. So far there have been few biodiversity projects, such as coppicing, because there is little active coppice left. Most coppices were abandoned after the war and many woods which were coppiced in the past are now neglected or under-planted with conifers.

3. Business development (£100,000 available)

This is to help woodland-related businesses to create jobs or develop economic activity. There is a business planning service which provides specialist advice towards the preparation of the required business plan. Year 1 grants went towards projects such as charcoal making (funding a kiln) and green woodworking training.

All in all the grants aim to encourage people to use woods better and to promote synergy with tourism, access, wildlife, landscape and making a living.

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) in Cumbria – Alan Shepley, Wood Education Project

Cumbria is at 100 x 60 miles the third largest English county. There are 20,000 semi-natural woodlands of which 15,600 are ancient. 62% are in the National Park. There are 5000 woodland owners, and 700 owners hold 35,000 ha of woodland. 50% of former woods have been lost since the 1920s, of which 37% have been planted with non-natives.

Coppice-with-standards was previously the main form of management. Now many of the woods are under-managed and grazed. The old coppice stools are mostly singled. There is an estimated 1000 acres of neglected coppice. The main woodland type is upland oak.

Upland mixed ashwoods, wet or waterside woods and juniper woods are also important types. There are also many fine old trees in fields and hedgerows.

The upland oak woodland is largely western oak-birch wood, often with good populations of lichens and bryophytes. The dominance of oak is a result of past management, as in Scotland. Stripes of ash and pockets of W7 and W4 occur within the woods, and the woods grade into open upland habitats. Only 10% of the woodland in the county is considered to be well-managed. Dormice are key species thought to thrive best in coppice – management for dormice can lead to other benefits. Old trees are required to maintain *Lobarion* populations.

Upland ashwoods are found on limestone and hold endemics such as the Lancaster whitebeam. They often adjoin limestone pavements. These were also formerly managed by coppicing. Wet woodlands include slope alder, willow, wet birch (W4) and mixtures and patches in oak and ash woods. Alder was formerly cut for clogs and charcoal.

Woods at much smaller sizes than the 2 to 5 ha cut-offs for the big grants also play an important part in the landscape. And it is important to look at a landscape level. Perhaps also there has been too much past focus on species rather than habitats.

Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and BAPs now often drive restoration and the National Trust is a major player. To sustain all interests a rolling programme of management is required across wooded landscapes. There is a need for better integration with agriculture – especially for finding sustainable grazing levels. And there is also a need for people to carry out coppicing.

Friday 13 June

DISCOVERING EDEN VALE

Richard Toleman

Roll up, roll up for the mystery tour

The magical mystery tour is coming to take you away, take you away

Is dying to take you away.

(Lennon & McCartney)

Out into the mellow, evocative but productive countryside of Eden Vale we visited little towns and villages with names which conjure up magical connotations. Melmersby, Temple Sowerby, Appleby, Warcop, Brough, Kirby Stephen and Mallerstang. Dick Capel, of the East Cumbria Countryside Project (ECCP), took us to visit two projects, Andy Goldsworthy's "Sheepfolds" and the "Eden Benchmarks". He inspired us with his enthusiasm and knowledge both of the projects and the Eden Valley.

Andy's work included the building or reconstruction of individual or groups of sheepfolds to which he had added sculptural features. At Melmersby we saw a wash fold with a carved "dub" stone in the beck (Rub-a-dub dub, three men in a tub?), while at Deadman's Gill high above Brough, Andy had restored the walls with thin sandstone and had incorporated water worn stones and slabs from the nearby beck. Some of his pinfolds had the surprise of stone cones. Pinfolds were used to "pin" or "pen" stray animals which could be redeemed by the owner on a small cash payment - pin money. In Warcop a small water meadow and woodland had been donated to the village. A cone pinfold had been restored in this meadow and the children had made a woven willow tunnel maze which we crawled through! The botanists spotted Marsh orchid, Ragged Robin and Marsh bedstraw by the riverine woods.

The River Eden rises high above Mallerstang Fell and, coming off the limestone, meanders through the red sandstone valley flowing into the sea beyond Carlisle. This was the thread which bound together 10 specially commissioned carved stone sculptures. At each location the artist was given creative freedom to capture the essence of the site, the river and the surrounding landscape. They discussed their proposals with local people so they could feel

they had participated in their sculpture. “ Red River” at Temple Sowerby expressed the contours of the landscape while the spheres were reminiscent of gigantic grains of sand. At Appleby the “Primrose Stone” looked like a boulder from behind. In front it became a seductive little sitting bowl which amplified the sounds and sights of the river. At Kirby Stephen the “Passage” reflected the river’s swift flow through a deep, water-worn gorge.

To end the day we stopped at a chocolate factory, which also sold great ice creams and hot chocolate, although a particular highlight at lunch time was a stop at Summerfield Books in Brough where a certain member of the Group saw her bryophyte book on the shelves for sale!

We may not have seen and discussed much woodland ecology but we had a magical tour through the Eden Valley seeing art in the countryside. It so inspired us that at the later AGM the membership felt in future the NWDG should include in its remit other elements of woodland such as art, storytelling, folklore, crafts, community involvement and history.

More information can be obtained on these projects from www.sheepfolds.org and from ECCP - tel. 01228 561 601; e-mail: dickc@eccp.org.uk

GLENAMARA PARK

Meg Pollock



Glenamara Park. Photo: Ben Averis (March 2003)

On Friday the 13th of June (not unlucky for NWDG members!) Judith Derbyshire, Edward Mills and Emma Austin led us around Glenamara Park, 69 ha of parkland with veteran trees, a site recently bought by The National Trust. The area is enclosed by an impressive high stone wall, indicating that the site was historically used as a deer park. More recent grazing management involved both sheep and cattle, and in the last decade sheep alone have grazed the site; presently it is ungrazed. The site has a history which extends at least as far back as the Bronze Age, and numerous charcoal pitsteads (raised platforms where charcoal was produced) indicate that in the past, the woodland had uses beyond grazing. The veteran trees

are numerous, extending across the valley sides, with good pasture, flushes and bracken patches between. Many of the veteran trees are huge: the girth of the first tree we stopped beside, an oak, was measured at 113 cm! Most trees have a similar form; a strong stem topped with multiple crowns, and a thick, swollen base. This form is thought to have come about by each year's epicormic basal shoots being browsed off. If these shoots are not removed, they are likely to grow up, shading out and replacing the original stem. Grazing animals are therefore necessary to maintain the form of veteran trees.

The National Trust's aim is to retain the parkland appearance of the property. As most of the trees are veterans and there are very few seedlings present in the vegetation, tree regeneration is desirable. Rather than planting trees, the Trust plan to achieve regeneration by using low levels of cattle grazing (with sheep absent) in Spring, Summer and Autumn, leaving the area ungrazed in winter. They hope that 18 cattle (15 Livestock Units) will generate sufficient plodging (what a great term!) to allow seedling establishment, whilst limiting tree browsing to levels low enough to allow seedlings to become saplings and saplings to become mature trees. Mineral licks and hay will be used to draw the animals to areas targeted for plodging. The grazing will be rented to the adjacent tenant farmer, whose stock should be resistant to local tick-borne diseases. The farmer will be able to claim a grant for managed habitat from DEFRA, making the activity attractive to him.

There was some debate about whether stock should be left in the park all year round, since greater plodging would occur in winter; however if snow fell, young trees would be at greater risk from browsing. Greater plodging would occur if animals were managed to create a 1:1 sex ratio (as currently practised in the Netherlands) since males would wrestle with each other. However, since this is a relatively small site with frequent visits by the public, this was deemed inappropriate.

Most of the veteran trees will outlive individual members of the NWDG; there is plenty of time for The National Trust to adapt the management, if necessary, to achieve their aims over the coming decades.

In the past, all management decisions were based purely on economics. Today, the economics of land management are controlled by government grants and subsidies; conservationists have to decide what types of landscape and habitats are desired, and tailor management accordingly.

Joined-up thinking is required by the various funding bodies involved to achieve carefully grazed woodlands at sites not managed by conservation bodies. At present, grazing is supported by DEFRA (or SEERAD in Scotland) and woodlands are supported by FC, but grazed woodlands fail to attract any financial help. Those who influence policy makers please take note!

We finished off an excellent morning with a lovely ice cream in Patterdale – thanks to Judith!

HALLINHAG WOOD, ULLSWATER

Scott McG. Wilson

After a pleasant lunchtime sail across Ullswater from Glenridding Pier to Howtown, we were ready for our second visit of the day to the Hallinhag Wood SSSI.

We were met off the boat at Howtown Pier by Ian Clemmett, the Lake District National Park Ranger for the area and Alison McAleer of English Nature. During a walk of a mile or so along the south Ullswater footpath, we were told about the many thousands of walkers who pass through this area each season.

Hallinhag is an oak-dominated woodland of some 15 ha on the steep southern volcanic slopes of Ullswater which is managed by the National Park under a long-term lease from the Dalemmain Estate. It is a SSSI site and forms a part of the larger Ullswater Oakwoods candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), which also includes Glencoyne and Low

Woods near Patterdale. These woods represent some of the best examples of the acid Atlantic oakwoods type with *Ilex* and *Blechnum*.



The boat trip to Hallinagh Wood. Photo: Scott McG Wilson

Having reached the woodland, it was explained that this site is regarded as being in “favourable condition” in cSAC-speak. This was of much interest to the group, as this coveted accolade is rarely awarded to upland woodlands in the UK due to lack of natural regeneration and a veteran tree/ dead wood component. The process of multi-point survey leading to the condition assessment was described.

The history of the site is almost certainly that of a Victorian oak plantation with relict features from the preceding natural woodland. Sessile oak is dominant in the canopy with a single age class and some unusually fine stems from a forestry perspective. There are also patches of ash, elm and alder stand types following localised ecological site types. Grazing has been excluded from the wood for some years now by fencing and tree regeneration is abundant in parts, dominated by ash, rowan, holly and birch. Although some oak seedlings occur, these are not yet being recruited to the sapling stage in any numbers, doubtless due to the heavy canopy shade.

As we ambled along the footpath at the base of the wood, we debated the possible threat posed by several large mature amenity specimens of beech and sycamore along the lake shore. Some effort has been made to cut out regenerating sycamore, and levels of seedling recruitment of both species are still reassuringly modest. Removal of the mature trees might cause public concern as these form significant landscape features – arguably being “veteran trees”.

We then had a more fundamental discussion as to whether the lack of secure advance regeneration of oak undermined the “favourable” status assessment awarded. The cSAC has been designated for conservation of Atlantic oak woodland, but the main species represented at present in the advance regeneration are birch, ash and rowan. Most were in agreement that succession should be “allowed” and that the next-but-one rotation might well return to oak.

Some of the party felt that there was no reason why oak timber should not be harvested from this site as part of a sustainable silvicultural regime. This may have been prompted mainly by the sight of some fine oak “sticks”, but patch felling might also increase the chances for

successful oak regeneration in future. Such economic small-scale timber operations would also contribute to the sustainable rural economy of Cumbria. Timber would have to be extracted by floating it across Ullswater which would provide added interest for the tourists!

We finished up our visit with a brief look at Beckside Farm, Sandwick – owned by the National Park Authority but leased out for sympathetic agricultural management. We discussed the pros and cons of allowing diversification projects that might attract more visitors and cars to this delightful spot.

FRIDAY EVENING SESSION: A TALK ON WILLOW GROWING AND BASKET MAKING BY PHIL BRADLEY

Joe Hope

You really would have to stretch your definitions a bit to call Phil Bradley's willow beds 'native woodlands'; nevertheless, his talk was an inspiring illustration of how a living may be made from small-scale rural industry and made 'sustainable' without reliance on grant-aid.

Phil started by explaining how he was persuaded to start growing his own willow by witnessing the commercial producers' use of preventative pesticide spraying. Luckily, Phil took no notice of the pessimists who claimed that willows wouldn't grow properly 'in the North' (i.e. Cumbria) and he now grows enough material to completely support his own basket making with the excess being sold or used in basketry workshops.

Production is centred on four main species: osier (*Salix viminalis*), almond willow (*S. triandra*), purple willow (*S. purpurea*) and European violet willow (*S. daphnoides*), but smaller quantities of crack willow (*S. fragilis*) and white willow (*S. alba*) are also grown. [Stace considers all of these species native to Britain with the exception of *S. daphnoides*; however the New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora considers only *S. purpurea* to be truly native.] About 38 varieties of these species are grown, some of these being French or Polish varieties little seen in Britain.

The willow beds are arranged in rows 18 inches apart with stools spaced at 6 inches. Each stool may bear as many as 10 shoots. (By my reckoning, this works out at over one million stems per hectare!) The stools are cut annually in the winter and in one season's growth the shoots may reach 7 or 8 feet in height. Willows fare badly in competition with grasses, so Phil uses a physical mulch (geotextile matting) rather than apply herbicides as the commercial growers do. With no pesticide usage, insects do cause losses but Phil hopes these are minimized by intimate mixing of different species and varieties. Rabbits are also capable of causing damage but they are discouraged by a boundary planting of purple willow, which has a particularly tannic bark.

Phil produces baskets for domestic use in a great diversity of shapes and sizes but also creates large sculptures of living willow for private gardens, schools and public spaces. A few baskets had been brought along for display and they were much admired, clearly bearing testimony to Phil's craftsmanship.

Post-talk discussion centred around hazel (*Corylus avellana*), which Phil uses in limited quantities for pot stands or stakes in larger baskets. Phil requires hazel rods that are very straight and of between 3-5 years' growth. Apparently, such material is very difficult to find so Phil sources his material from the Forest of Dean even though he would rather use local material. He told how shoots taken from completely cut stools tend to be too wavy and so he takes what he calls 'sun shoots' which grow amongst older stems. Peter Quelch noted that this harvesting method is similar to the methods that he envisages having been traditional in hazel woods in western Scotland. (Many such hazel woods bear lichens of the *Graphidion scriptae* alliance, which are unlikely to survive intensive coppicing.) It may be that woodland workers of the past used subtle variations of the coppicing system that we are unaware of today. The challenge must therefore be to develop coppicing techniques that are able to provide specific products, opportunities for rural employment and biodiversity.

Saturday 14 June

GELTSDALE SSSI (BINNEY BANKS) & 150 ha PLANTING SCHEME Juliet Robinson and Ruth Anderson

The Morning - Geltsdale SSSI

The sciency bit

We spent a lovely day at Geltsdale with Iris Glimmerveen and Simon Strainer (SNH). This SSSI was notified for its upland moorland and bird habitats. Recently, the woodlands with hundreds of veteran trees were recognised as one of the last sizeable examples of upland wood pasture in England. They contain a wealth of lichens and bryophytes.

Iris kicked off events by displaying her sexy poster (her own description, and rightly so) of how Geltsdale could look. It showed how a wealth of species of flora and fauna could enhance this area of woodland. Iris gave us an interesting run-down of the history of the site and management that has taken place.

Simon (SNH) explained that the Forestry Commission did not want stock to graze any of the woodland and the group discussed the issue picked up the previous day of how beneficial grazing can be for retaining veteran trees. Bravely, Richard Thompson suggested that this could be an excellent trial for no fence planting. Idea to be further discussed

As we set off on our woodland tour, Iris suggested we should look out for:

- Spasmodic grazing
- Veteran trees
- Phoenix trees
- Medieval walls and cairns

and try to work out what some of those mean



The toury bit

Not far did we need to stagger before we hit upon a marvellous old veteran ash. Peter Quelch became characteristically excited (because of the veteran tree of course!) and we spent some time discussing various issues. Peter and Iris discussed the need to replicate historic landscapes and to do this the use of grazing animals is vital. Many of us agreed that controlled grazing would be appropriate and Carol Crawford suggested using Roy Dennis's model of stocking densities for upland woodland.

Whenever grazing is ever discussed, a need for practicalities for the tenant farmer should be raised. Simon (SNH) flagged up this issue and we discussed the reality of grazing a small number of beasts and the need to move according to season.

The chilled-out chicks bit

With all of these issues boggling around our heads, we went onwards and upwards. Iris showed us an area of saplings in tubes planted in 1998. These were planted to help join two

wooded areas together and a mixture of species was used. This area has large grassy glades which are important for black grouse. Peter Quelch told us it was one of the best sites for black grouse in England, so we applauded the thought of more chilled out chicks It just shows that retaining an open component of these sorts of woodland pays dividends!



Black grouse

The coppice clash bit

We ended the tour in an area of 'coppiced' hazel. We discussed the possible history of the area, how important the lichen interest is, and whether the coppice stems should be harvested. Joe Hope suggested that where the lichen interest is high, might it not be better to harvest coppice elsewhere? In contrast, Martin Clark felt very strongly that the area should be recoppiced and that many craftsmen need material for thatching, amongst other things. The debate went on about which element is more important, or perhaps a compromise might be met until the midges and the thought of a swim drove us on

The lunchy bit

Due to the hot sun overhead, some of us cooled off in traditional NWDG fashion (*not for nothing is the group nicknamed the Naked Woodlands Discussion Group - Ed.*) before we took refuge under a nice veteran tree beside the burn to eat a well-earned lunch. We then set off to Iris's planting scheme which, fortunately, was relatively close by.

The afternoon – 150 ha planting scheme

Iris explained her vision of this proposed planting scheme. Again, a sexy poster was produced and it showed us how the area might look in the future. By now, the sun had seriously got to the reporter's heads so detail is a bit scant

This area of 150 ha attracted money from the Forest Futures Scheme (post Foot and Mouth), and this with normal WGS should allow the scheme to happen. The idea is to plant the hillside and 10 years later to reintroduce cattle. A debate broke out discussing the use of tree tubes, when to re-introduce grazing or if at all, and the economics of the scheme.

The day ended on a pleasant, warm and sticky note and we all descended to the mini-buses to get home and spruced up (pun unintended) for the Cumbrian ceilidh ahead.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14 June 2003

Ruth Anderson

Carol Crawford welcomed everybody to the meeting, which was intended to report on the year gone by, and seek feedback and approval on plans for the year ahead.

Minutes of previous AGM

These were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting (proposed Ruth Anderson, seconded Jeanette Hall).

Chair's Report (Carol Crawford)

Committee changes: During 2002-03 Andrew Sheridan and Helen Gray stood down; Jeanette Hall and Ruth Anderson joined.

Website: Meg's original work on the website had been further developed by Helen Shaw. The group thanked both for their efforts.

Book award: The group congratulated Carol on the short-listing of her book "*Bryophytes of Native Woods*" for the Natural World Book Award 2002.

Newsletter: The autumn issue had been late in coming out (January 2003), but under an improved format. Nick Marshall would be working with Richard Thomson to put back-copies onto a CD, to be available 2004. The group extended its hearty thanks to Nick for his editorship over 4 years. Alison Averis had now taken on that role and was looking forward to a rich and varied input from members!

Treasurer's Report (Alison Averis, presented by Iris Glimmerveen)

In 2002 the NWDG made a profit of £1025.25, largely as a result of increasing the subscription rate, pursuing lapsed members and recruiting new ones. The summer field meeting and the two Lower Plants workshops also made a small profit. This meant that the Group was able to make a loan to Carol Crawford to fund the third edition of her booklet. The Group was keen to fund relevant work by other NWDG members - anyone with an idea for a small project should get in touch with any Committee member. The accounts had been audited by Alison Mitchell of Scottish Native Woods, and a full report and statement of accounts had appeared in the Spring newsletter. The Annual Accounts 2002-03 were therefore approved by the meeting (proposed Jeanette Hall, seconded Richard Thomson).

It was agreed that the level of honoraria for self-employed members of the Committee was to be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

Action: Committee

Membership Report (Jeanette Hall)

Membership now stood at 160, which included some newcomers. A meeting of Jeanette Hall, Helen Gray, Helen Shaw and Alison Averis had agreed a target membership of 250 would be desirable; new members were being sought through FC and SNH area offices. Some people had joined through the website. More members were now paying by standing order. The new membership card either displayed year of membership paid (ie 01, 02 etc), or standing order (SO).

The group offered its thanks for work on membership issues and developing the membership card.

Workshops (Juliet Robinson)

Last year's two workshops on bryophytes and lichens (organised by Gordon Gray Stephens) had been successful, broken even, and brought some new members. They were to be repeated this year, organised by Gordon with Joe Hope.

Juliet proposed ideas for some new workshops, which might be held spring, summer and autumn 2004, as follows:

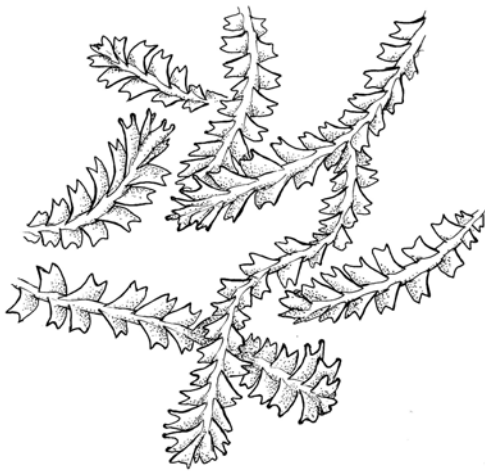
- Singing, storytelling, drama
- Photography, art
- Edibles
- Writing
- Dance
- Children
- History/traditions

Other suggestions would be welcomed. These would be developed and further thinking would go out in the autumn newsletter.

Action: JR

Lower Plants Section report (Ben Averis, presented by Carol Crawford)

The Lower Plants Section had had two field outings during the year:



Crinan Wood, Argyll on 6 October 2002: A small but keen group of four people explored this mixed deciduous woodland on a small hill, and found some uncommon western bryophytes and also many lichens and both species of filmy fern.

Linn Dean, Lothians on 19 January 2003: 9 people came to this steep-sided stream valley where the mixture of woodland and other habitats resembles a bit of the Highlands in the Southern Uplands. It is one of the best bryophyte sites in SE Scotland. The visit was fortunate to have David Long (one of the UK's top bryologists) and Brian Coppins (top lichenologist) in attendance. We found lots of species including some western bryophytes rare so far east.

Committee

Committee membership 2003-04 was agreed as follows (proposed Iris Glimmerveen, seconded Peter Quelch):

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| • Carol Crawford | Chair |
| • Tim Hall | Treasurer |
| • Alison Averis | Newsletter Editor |
| • Jeanette Hall | Membership Secretary |
| • Helen Shaw | Website |
| • Ruth Anderson | Minutes Secretary |
| • Juliet Robinson | Workshops |
| • Ben Averis | Lower Plants |
| • Steve Brown | (excursion 2004) |
| • Meg Pollock | (ordinary member) |
| • Richard Thomson | (ordinary member) |
| • Nick Marshall | (ordinary member) |

Future events

Italy: The 7-night trip to the Abruzzo in September was nearly full, deadline for applications (to Richard Thompson) imminent.

2004 Excursion: Would be to Deeside (last Deeside trip being 1994); organised by Steve Brown.

30th Anniversary: It was proposed to add an indoor event onto the beginning of the field excursion, by starting at say 11am on the Thursday. This could review original ideas and outcomes/progress/ successes of the group. It was agreed to invite some of the group's early and founding members to the meeting. Given the perennial role of deer in native woodlands, a venison barbecue might be appropriate. The meeting also discussed the idea of a commemorative T-shirt ("NWDG - Still sexy at 30"?) – Joe Hope could perhaps help with getting these printed.

Carol, Ruth, Juliet and Jeanette would explore ideas for this event, to be circulated in the autumn newsletter.

Action: CC, RA, JR, JH (event)

JoeH (T-shirt)

2005 Excursion: Steve Robertson and Pauline Jewett (East Ayrshire Woodlands) volunteered to organise an excursion to Arran.

Ideas for other years were Dumfries and Galloway, and Skye and Lochalsh.

Any Other Business

Website: Any photographs from the excursions (as jpegs) to Helen Shaw.

Action: All

International visits: Peter Quelch floated the idea of looking at native woodlands abroad whilst cross-country skiing, horse-riding, etc.

Study Tour Ireland 2005: Might be possible with sufficient interest.

Lichens booklet: Peter Quelch proposed the idea of the Lower Plants Section producing (or co-producing) a simple booklet on lichens of native woodlands.

Sunday 15 June

ASHGILL, THREAPLAND

Rachel Avery

We set off in our own transport on a beautifully sunny morning for our last visit of the trip – to Ashgill, a 3 ha woodland on a former limestone quarry. There we met Martin Clark who introduced us to the site and to the work of Clark MacTavish.

Clark MacTavish have run training projects throughout Europe with young people from West Cumbria and elsewhere in the UK, working with young people from other European countries to learn traditional woodland crafts and building techniques.

Another of their projects is finding markets for small diameter, low grade roundwood harvested sustainably from native woodlands. We saw a variety of products being examined as part of the EURIS (Europeans Using Roundwood Innovatively and Sustainably) project. These included brushwood faggots for the village bakery, greenwood pokers for aluminium smelting, mushroom cultivation and hurdles for trapping sand to reduce coastal erosion. We discussed the possibility of using such hurdles or dead hedging to provide shelter for tree

planting on upland sites. The upright sails could be freshly cut native willow species that would then hopefully strike and provide a more long-term wind-break. There would also be an option of using the dead material woven through the sails to create the hedge as a seed source for re-establishing woodland in the surrounding area.

A woodland theatre has been created on the site, and this was christened by a brilliant performance by Steve Brown on pipes and Peter Quelch on flute and drum. The rest of us relaxed in the dappled shade, drinking beer and eating Cumberland sausage straight from the barbecue with a group of local kids – what more could anyone want from a Sunday afternoon? The theatre is envisioned as a community resource to be used by local dramatics groups and musicians. There are plans afoot to create a pool between the stage and the audience which would no doubt further enhance the wonderful acoustics of this natural amphitheatre.

Clark MacTavish have brought over the idea from Eastern Europe of using a distillate of Sitka Spruce foliage as a plant growth stimulant and grazing repellent. This is currently only in trial stages, but raises a question about whether at some point in the future plantations may be managed more for their foliage than their timber!

As we walked around the path through the woods, designed and created by a group of young people from across Europe, Martin talked of further projects in the pipeline that will attract more people, and money, to this woodland. The site visit was very inspiring, to me at least, as it illustrated how so much can be done with such a small piece of woodland (only 1ha of the 3 is actually used – the rest is set-aside for the sole use of an otter!). Ashgill woodland is a fantastic old quarry, where so much has been done already, and it looks as if Martin Clark and others will be working hard to develop its potential to the fullest.

ARTICLES

NATIVE WOODLAND BOTHIES

Peter Quelch

At the Islay meeting in April the idea of a club bothy came to me when we were visiting the beautifully situated Coile na Dalach native woodland in the centre of the island. It is remote, with no vehicle track right to it, and secure in that few people would ever know a building was there! The opportunity arose because of the small stand of tall conifers, with some really nice timber but which is also inaccessible and therefore unlikely to be harvested by the estate. The logs are ideal for building into a cabin, and for sawing with a lightweight on-site and low cost saw, such as the logosol mill. A modest, low facility log cabin with bunks for 8 or so could be built and be available at low nightly rental for club members and friends as a base for nature study, writing, painting, music, or just relaxation in a peaceful place. I mean earth loo, no electric, gas lamps, log stove, ideally a water supply but not essential (ie carry in what you use – no frost problems). We would probably not own the site but base the project on a long lease or permission.

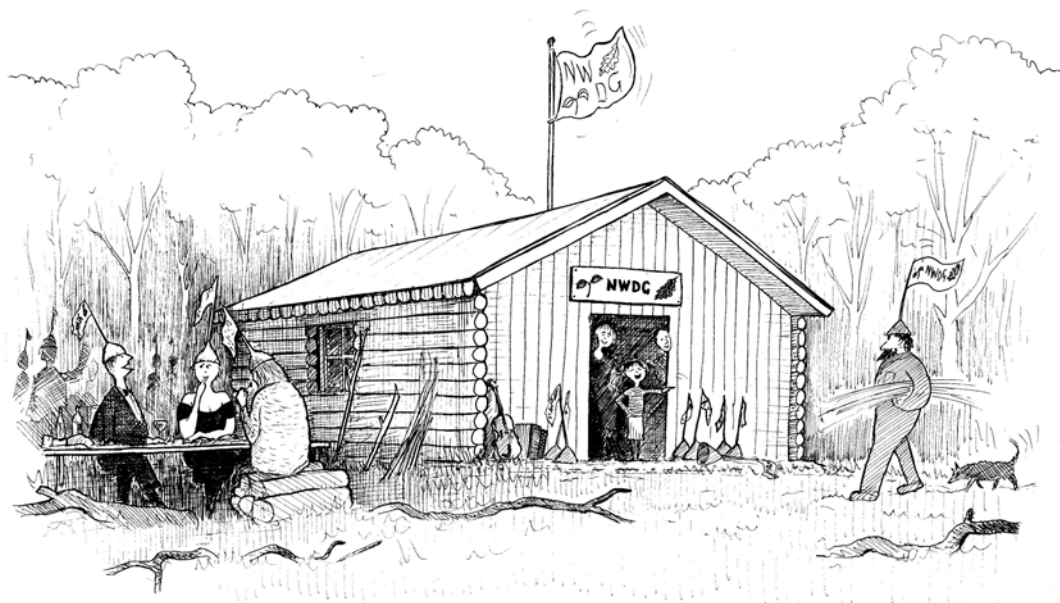
Lots of people were keen on the idea then, and in later meetings we discussed the idea, especially when we also saw the facilities Martin Clark had built up in Aspatia. Of course there could be other better sites, easier of access perhaps, but the problems of vandalism and mis-use of open bothies are real, and a secure place seems more sensible. Islay estates staff gave an encouraging response at the time, though we have not pursued the idea since, mainly through lack of time by myself and others. A working group would be needed which organised work parties, even a proper log building course. There may be opportunities for outside finance and exchange visits with for example Finnish students – who may love to come to Islay or other parts of the highlands, and are already skilled at log building?

The mind turns then to other buildings, other places? Some community woodland groups or individuals already have a bothy or bunkhouse, and it may be possible to organise some sort of mutual exchange, indeed a directory of such places round the country. AGWA for example have a stone building already renovated, and needing little work to turn it into a bunkroom,

with superior loo and a kitchen and a meeting room etc all on the site at Barnluasgan, Knapdale.

Finally there is the international dimension, and that is admittedly more ambitious, but several people in our group who visited Abruzzo in Italy were most impressed and could actually envisage how a base in Lucio's village could work well for us – as long as Ryanair do cheap flights to Pescara! – but it's not so far from Rome either!

Any comments, ideas, and offers of help to Peter please.



ARGYLL WOODLAND BIRD SURVEY

Paul Daw

There have been worrying signs that some bird species of British woodlands are in decline. Several such species have been proposed for the 'red list' of the forthcoming revision of *Birds of Conservation Concern* including Capercaillie, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher and Marsh and Willow Tit. Fifteen further species have been proposed for the new 'amber list'.

However, little is known of the factors affecting these populations as there has not been a great deal of relevant research or survey effort in recent years. To fill this gap and to get a more precise fix on where these species stand today in terms of distribution and population a survey is being carried out jointly by the British Trust for Ornithology and the RSPB during 2003 and 2004. A total of 350 or so, mostly broad-leaved woods in England, Scotland and Wales first surveyed in the mid 1980s or earlier will be revisited. At least 100 of these sites will be past Common Bird Census (CBC) plots (surveyed from 1964 onwards) and the remaining 250 will be woods originally surveyed for the RSPB between 1982 and 1986. The CBC plots will be surveyed using territory mapping in both 2003 and 2004 while 20% of the RSPB sites will be surveyed (using point counts) in both years and the remaining sites for a single year.

A small amount of habitat data is available for CBC plots but fairly detailed vegetation surveys were carried out for most of the RSPB woods. For the present survey the aim is to obtain detailed habitat data for all the sites surveyed. The relationship between the woods themselves and the surrounding landscape will also be assessed.

Possible suspects in relation to any reduction in woodland bird numbers include both squirrels and deer and the impact of both is being assessed at each site by recording drey counts and the frequency of deer tracks.

The surveying is being carried out mainly by contract workers, of whom (during the 2003 season) I was one. My sites were all in Argyll and chiefly comprised predominantly birch and oak woods, many of them on steeply sloping terrain. It is too early to draw conclusions from the fieldwork and in any case this will require complex computer analysis. However, here are a few entirely subjective comments.

Before any fieldwork was carried out access permission had to be obtained from landowners and contact made with farmers, keepers etc. I was very struck by the fact that, almost without exception, those approached were co-operative, helpful and interested. Nearly everyone wanted to see a copy of the survey results and many had useful information and advice to give. With the possible exception of a keeper who wanted to know if he could obtain a licence to shoot Buzzards (!) (but who was otherwise very helpful) they all seemed to care about the welfare of the birds on their land. Attitudes to other forms of wildlife were more mixed with foxes, mink and, more surprisingly, pine martens high on the list of named villains.

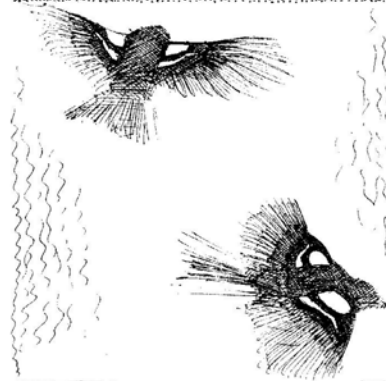
There was obvious evidence in several woods of heavy grazing pressure, mainly by sheep and cattle. Despite widespread control measures, Roe and/or Red Deer were also present in the many woods although it was hard to be sure how much damage they were doing. One or two Red Squirrels were seen but Grey Squirrels were entirely absent from all the sites visited, so these animals are clearly not a significant factor in Argyll.



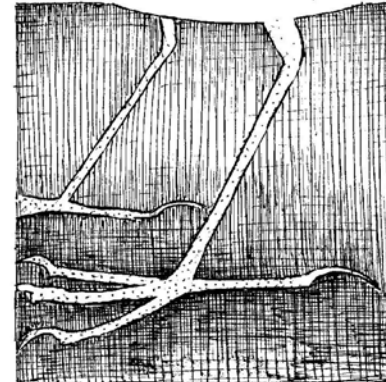
Blue Tit



Redstart



Chaffinch



Tree Pipit

Initial results from the woods visited so far do seem to indicate an overall drop in bird numbers. Coal and Great Tits in particular were recorded at much lower densities in many woods than in 1985 (when the previous survey was carried out). However, curiously, in the majority of woods Blue Tit numbers were actually higher. Tree Pipits and Redstarts were mainly holding their own but were declining in some woods. Robins were also holding their own in most woods and increasing in a few. Chaffinches and Willow Warblers are two of the most numerous species in Argyll woodlands and in there was little overall change in numbers

at most sites. Wood Warbler and Treecreeper numbers also seemed to be little changed in most woods. Two species, Wren and Song Thrush, appeared to have increased noticeably since the earlier surveys. In the case of the Wren this may be due to a recent run of mild winters rather than any changes in habitat. As far as species were concerned, Pied Flycatchers had almost entirely disappeared but Garden Warblers and Blackcaps were present in woods where they were previously unrecorded. So, overall a mixed picture at this stage.

Weather can be an important factor in recording birds especially as most of the observations in woods relate to sound (songs and calls) rather than sight. In 1985 the field workers in Argyll were fortunate enough to experience fine dry weather for most of the survey period. After a fine dry early spring in 2003 things went down hill in May and June with significantly more wet and windy weather than in 1985. This must have had an effect on the counts although I am told that cunning mathematical formulae are used to compensate for this as well as for variations in observer effort/expertise.

It will be interesting to see what differences there are in the woods that are surveyed for a second time next year and even more fascinating to see what emerges from the completed survey. There results will also be used to assess the effectiveness of existing methods of monitoring woodland bird species (Breeding Bird Survey etc.) and what additional approaches may be needed in the future.

NB. The views expressed here are entirely personal and in no way represent those of the participating sponsors of the Woodland Bird Survey.

WOODLAND COOKERY

Alison Averis

Venison pie

A few weeks ago I was delighted to hear from a reader who had cooked and enjoyed my venison recipe from the winter 2002 issue – thanks, Paul. He also asked if I could do another. Here is an idea for using up the remains of that fine joint of venison. You'll need a 7-ounce pack of puff pastry, about 8 ounces of cold cooked venison, a thick slice of bread, a small onion, one large or two small cloves of garlic, a teaspoonful of fresh thyme leaves, salt and black pepper, redcurrant jelly and a beaten egg.

Cut the meat into rough cubes, break the bread into pieces, peel and roughly chop the onion and garlic. Put them all into a food processor and zap to the consistency of sausage meat. Or put everything through a mincing machine. Add the herbs, salt and pepper and whizz again (or stir together) with enough beaten egg to stick the mixture into a coherent paste. Roll the pastry out into a rectangle to fit onto an oiled baking sheet. Spread the venison mixture down the middle of the rectangle, leaving enough pastry either side to fold over and join together, and enough of a margin at top and bottom for sealing the pastry there. Spread a thin layer of redcurrant jelly over the meat. Dampen the edges of the pastry. Fold the sides over and make a firm join down the centre, and pinch the top and bottom edges together well, to make a neat, rectangular parcel. Use the remaining beaten egg to glaze the pastry. Prick holes with a fork along either side of the central seam. Bake in a hot oven (190°C; 375°F; Gas mark 5) for about 25 minutes, until it is sizzling and golden brown.

Wild mushroom sauce

Most wild mushrooms these days seem to end up in a risotto: the default vegetarian dish in any number of trendy restaurants. Now, this may be a terribly unfashionable thing to say in these foodie times, but I don't actually like risotto. Risotto rice reminds me of frogspawn, and the whole sloppy, pappy mixture is deeply unappetising. A friend of mine is a keen collector and consumer of wild woodland fungi and he reckons the best cooking method is to fry them in garlic butter. As well as the usual suspects - chanterelles and ceps - he enthuses over hen-of-the-woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) and wood blewits (*Lepista nuda*). Unfortunately, many

parts of the country are having poor crops of fungi this autumn because of the hot, dry summer. However, the recipe which follows is suitable for cultivated species such as shiitake and oyster mushrooms as well as the ubiquitous white and chestnut button mushrooms.

For four people you need about a pound of mixed mushrooms, whether gathered from the woods, the fields or the supermarket; a tablespoon each of butter and flour, two fat cloves of garlic, half to three quarters of a pint of milk, three or four sprigs of fresh thyme, salt and black pepper. Wipe the fungi and cut the larger ones into bite-sized bits. Peel the garlic and either crush to a paste or chop finely. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the garlic and, when the butter is sizzling, the fungi. Put the more robust ones in first and let them start to soften before adding the more delicate species. Then sprinkle in the flour. Stir with a wooden spoon until it absorbs into the fungi, then stir in the milk a little at a time until you have a creamy, unctuous sauce. The amount of milk you need will vary according to how much juice comes out of the mushrooms – the sauce should be thick rather than thin and watery. Put in the thyme, season with salt and pepper and simmer slowly for about 10 minutes to cook the flour.

This is brilliant on pasta – specially spaghetti – and is also good with plain boiled rice (basmati or any other long-grained type). A sprinkling of cheese as you serve it is good, too. You can use shaved Parmesan if you subscribe to that school of cookery, but a handful of grated Cheddar is equally good.

NEWS FROM OTHER WOODLAND ORGANISATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT FROM SCOTTISH NATIVE WOODS

Graeme Morison

Following the restructuring of the organisation in 2001/02, Scottish Native Woods (SNW) entered the 2002/03 year by re-affirming that its role met a continuing need for an organisation dedicated to providing advice on native woodland management to landowners, managers and tenants. SNW's staff have continued to provide an advisory service throughout its geographical area (from Sutherland to the Central Lowlands) by the employment of 5 area-based managers. The total staff complement remained at 8 throughout the year and is as follows:

Director: Graeme Morison

Fundraising Manager: Alan Drever

Administration & Finance Manager: Alison Mitchell

Special Projects Manager: John Parrott (Highland, excluding Lochaber)

West Highland Area: Gordon Gray Stephens (Argyll & Bute and Lochaber).

North East Area: Carol Robertson (Aberdeenshire, Banffshire and Moray).

Highland Perthshire Area: Paul Schofield (Upland areas of Perth & Kinross, Stirlingshire and Angus).

Central Lowlands Area: Simon Lockwood (Lowland Perth & Kinross and Stirlingshire, and also Fife, Clackmannan and Falkirk).

This was a year when the Forestry Commission's (FC) old Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) was being wound down and the successor Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme was being developed under a lengthy programme of consultations. It might therefore be thought that fewer landowners would be interested in entering contracts under the old scheme. However, the Area Managers continued to give frequent advice on woodland management and WGS applications. SNW continues to work closely with several government organisations, notably the FC and Scottish Natural Heritage. We are also significantly involved in helping to implement the UK Biodiversity Action Plan at local community level.

In the largest Charitable Trust grant ever received by SNW, our Fundraising Manager post and associated promotional costs are supported through a 3 year commitment from the Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation. This enables all funds raised to be used entirely to implement SNW's primary objectives. In recognition of the fact that grant funding objectives change over

time, SNW needs to further diversify its funding sources and one means of achieving this is to introduce charges for some of our work. After so many years of offering a completely free service, this is a major change in policy and discussions on how to implement this were reaching a conclusion at the end of the financial year.

The Special Projects Manager was awarded a short-term contract by Scottish Natural Heritage to assess the status and trends in riparian woodland management work throughout Scotland, and this resulted in a significant contribution to his operating costs. A second contract, to provide advice and local support for the development of a possible EU LIFE Nature application by other parties for the management of important salmon rivers, provided additional earned income. The success of these two contracts has led SNW to consider taking on other contract work (if circumstances and individual work loads permit) as a means of increasing such income.

Despite FC winding down its Woodland Grant Scheme in preparation for the launch of the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme, SNW has maintained significant impetus on native woodland restoration via its advisory services. 22 WGS applications were submitted, and 17 contracts actually signed by the owners. 13 new woods were brought into management, involving 462 hectares (1,140 acres). Our North East Manager was involved in bringing several of these woods into management including the largest wood during the year, the 315 hectare (778 acre) Meall Alvie Scots pine woodland, near Braemar. Management of this wood is an important contribution to the EU Capercaillie LIFE Nature Project.

SNW works with many owners, tenants and managers, and has now stimulated the management of 140 woods involving 5,377 hectares (13,286 acres). The organisation remains committed to looking after most of these woods, to ensure their restoration.

In the North East, an area newsletter was produced for distribution at local shows and events and display panels were used at a number of events ranging from Aberdeenshire Indicative Forestry Strategy meetings, to general public "Treefest" events at Haddo Country Park and Craibstone near Aberdeen. In the West Highlands, the Area Manager was the principal organiser of *a highly successful annual Field Meeting of the Scotland-wide Native Woodland Discussion Group (my italics - Ed)*.

An increasingly wide range of community groups is beginning to seek guidance on woodland management. Advice was given to several groups in the West Highlands, and also in the Central Lowlands, where, for different reasons, local communities are becoming increasingly interested in the woodlands in their local environment. In the latter area, relatively high local populations are concerned about neglect in urban woodlands and keen to see a revival of public access. In the former, rural communities are increasingly interested in managing woodlands to produce timber products for local use and in management to enhance wildlife. At one wood in each area, SNW was involved in planning and implementing a significant project for public access improvement, with funding from the Scottish Executive Aggregate Tax. At the end of the year, in view of the demand, SNW decided to increase its involvement in community woodland developments.

SNW is keen to encourage the use of native timbers in a variety of ways, from craft work to house construction. Although this role has diminished following the ending of our Product Development Project in December 2001, our Area Managers in the West Highlands, Central Lowlands and Highland Perthshire have all been keen to continue this work, when opportunities arise. Many enquiries have been responded to, resulting in several projects being supplied with timber from woods managed by SNW. These include: oak timber and birch poles for two cruck-frame house constructions; oak for path materials, outdoor furniture, window frames, and oak and hazel for repairing a replica Iron-Age Crannog in Loch Tay.

(The SNW Annual Report is too long to publish here in full and has been abridged. Anyone wishing to see the full report should contact Graeme Morison - Ed.)

AND FROM THE FORESTRY COMMISSION: YOUR FORESTS NEED YOU

The Scottish Executive wants to get the people of Scotland more closely involved in the care and management of their woods and forests.

Its Forestry For People Panel has been advising the Forestry Commission Scotland - which serves as the Executive's forestry department - for three years, and Ministers have given it a two-year extension to continue its work. Several members are stepping down at the end of the initial three-year term, and applications to fill the vacancies are being sought.

Encouraging suitably qualified people to apply, Forestry Minister Allan Wilson said: "Our Forestry For People Panel has done an excellent job in its first three years' existence. It has been invaluable in helping us to develop ways of ensuring that communities gain the maximum possible benefits from local woods and forests, to stimulate greater community involvement in forest planning and management, and to develop and share best practice in the encouragement and management of community involvement. Scotland's woods and forests have much to offer the people of Scotland in addition to sustainable timber supplies, and the key to maximising their potential benefits is to encourage communities to get more closely involved, especially those communities close to woods and forests. In recognition of the importance of the Panel's work in this regard, we have been pleased to extend its life for another two years, and I would commend this opportunity to public-spirited people with relevant skills and experience. I would also like to thank and pay tribute to those members who are stepping down for their three years' selfless contribution of their time and skills to this very important task."

The Commission is particularly looking for people with skills and experience in crofter forestry, the public sector, legal work, community planning, practice-based social forestry research, and private-sector ownership. Preference will also be given to residents of the north-west Highlands, Argyll, south-west Scotland and Grampian. Members of the Panel serve on a voluntary basis and are reimbursed for travel expenses. Meetings are held quarterly and the work programme is progressed by sub-groups.

Further information and application forms are available from John Risby, Forestry Commission Scotland, Woodlands, Fodderty Way, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV15 9XB; telephone 01349 862144; fax: 01349 866624; Email: john.risby@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. Further information is also available from the Commission's website, www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland.

(A chance to join several NWDG members in this very worthwhile work - Ed.)

BOOK REVIEWS and NEW TITLES

People and Woods in Scotland - A History. Ed. by TC Smout. ISBN: 0 7486 1701 9. Paperback £14.99. Edinburgh University Press 2003

Nick Marshall

Every so often, a book comes along that distils the discoveries, developments and conclusions of the past few years, and this is one. It seems that the pace of work in piecing together the way people lived from the end of the ice-age up to the 20th century has been accelerating, with recent findings radically altering our perceptions of the history of ordinary people and the environment.

Chris Smout has brought together a set of learned authors to produce a detailed but readable overview of the way in which the relationship between people and forests (and trees) has developed over the past 10,000 years.

The chapters are laid out more or less chronologically - Prehistory to 1000BC by Richard Tipping, the Iron Age by Ian Armit and Ian Ralston, the Mediaeval period by Anne Crone and Fiona Watson, the 1600s to 1800s by Mairi Stewart and the 20th Century by David Foot. Then there are extra chapters, on the plant hunters introducing new trees by Syd House and Christopher Dingwell; the ecological impact of man by Rick Worrell and Neil Mackenzie; and the future by Sandy Mather.

What comes through, time and again, is the absolute dependence of people upon trees and forests, for food, fuel, shelter, tools and many other uses and products. People have been using and altering Scotland's forests almost since their re-establishment after the retreat of the ice-caps, so that it can conclusively be said that we have no untouched "wildwood" anywhere in Scotland. The destruction of forests started very early, and even by Roman times great swathes of the country had been effectively deforested, through the amount of recolonisation of bare ground and the cycling between open ground and forest makes the picture much less clear. And the amount of wood used is astounding – some details of the construction of brochs (which we see now as primarily stone towers) illuminate the importance of wood including large baulks of timber, even in iron-age Scotland. Destruction of forests (caused, as we know, by combinations of burning, clearing for agriculture and grazing by livestock) and the loss of the timber and non-timber resources they provided, often led to serious problems.

An interesting point is the importance of driftwood for construction timber, especially in the western and northern isles. Huge volumes of timber were washed up on Scottish shores from the once-vast forests of eastern North America.

This book gives us some leads in planning new native woodlands and managing existing ones. It suggests that attempting to re-create some form of "wildwood" unaffected by human interference is somewhat pointless. Native woodlands are resilient to a certain amount of human interference including harvesting of timber and non-timber products.

Because archaeological and historical evidence is sometimes incomplete or contradictory, this book raises as many questions as it answers. To what extent were woodlands actually managed in order to produce the different things people needed from them? Was the apparent recolonisation of open ground due to abandonment or to a type of slash-and-burn then forest fallow agricultural cycle? We can look to the results of future research and discussion, presented in a similarly authoritative and readable form, to further develop our understanding of the history of Scotland's woods, environment and people.

Landscapes and Lives: the Scottish Forest Through the Ages by John Fowler. ISBN: 1 84195 326 1. Hardback £16.99, Paperback imminent. Canongate Books 2002.

Carol Crawford

It's a pleasure to review a book by an NWDG member, particularly a book as ambitious as this. No single author has attempted a book on "The Scottish Forest Through the Ages" since Professor Mark Anderson published his two-volume History of Scottish Forestry in 1967. John Fowler's book not only covers forestry but also relationships between trees/woods and the wider landscape, wildlife and people; hence the main title: Landscapes and Lives. He covers them well and even hearkens back to some of Anderson's lessons.

The book is so well-written (as you would expect from a former Arts Editor of The Herald) that as early as the first chapter I found myself thinking that forestry is too important a subject to be left to foresters, scientists and historians to write about. Our writing often comes out on the dry side or too dense with facts. Whereas John is first and foremost a writer, who can entertain and captivate as well as inform. He has compiled information in an accessible way and interspersions of his own diary - impressions of forested landscapes and their managers/champions – add lyrical adventure. The journey of 'an enamoured novice', 10

years ago; to Mastermind level.

Illustrations (photos, maps, pictures) on most pages add to the readability of the book. These are black and white and usually small; the occasional larger pictures work best.

Even the chapter titles are different. Chapter 1: In The Beginning Was The Wood, is about retreating glaciers/advancing forest, then retreating forest/advancing human colonisation. Chapter 2: The Medieval Greenwood, has war heroes and wolves. Ch 3: When The Tree Falls, covers medieval timber use, from the everyday to the huge quantities absorbed by ships like the Great Michael ("she waistit all the woods of Fife"). Ch 4 marks the start of recovery - early planting lairds and their designed wildernesses and vistas. The author ruminates that later examples "present the vision of well-mannered countryside still preferred today" while "the ordered formalities" of earlier schemes are "uncongenial to our style".

The historical pace slows as the book progresses. Ch 5: How Green Was My Bloomery, covers 18th century oak coppicing for charcoal production to smelt iron in Argyll. We are reminded that now-reserved woods such as Glen Nant were once so industrially managed. Ch 6 covers 18th and 19th century exploitation of pine forests and the organisation of huge "floats" on the Spey and other rivers to get timber to port. The next four chapters continue with the planting lairds. Ch 7 The March of Larch and its promotion for ship-building (too close to the advent of iron ships). Ch 8: MacCulloch's Ride. John MacCulloch published the first description of the forested hillsides between Dunkeld and Blair Atholl; the overall impression of endless mixed woodlands still applies to that bit of the A9 today. Ch 9: Very Robin Hoodish; Walter Scott's thoughts of a view on Blair Adam Estate, near Loch Leven, owned by the famous architects' family. Scott was similarly adorning Abbotsford and in his writings John Fowler considers him "the laureate of tree planters". Native trees also feature in Scott's poems and prose. Scott was one of the first to condemn "black patch" plantings on Border hills, rather than blending them into the landscape like natural woodlands. Ch 10 charts the arrival of exotics and overseas adventures of plant collectors (e.g. Archibald Menzies pocketing Monkey Puzzle nuts served as a dessert). Ch 11 continues with vast planting schemes and more organised forestry to redress failures and continued fellings. Ch 12: The Arborists Outing: is a jolly summary of the 1894 excursion of the Royal Scottish Arborists Society

Halfway through, the eve of the 20th century and increasingly familiar times and themes: the deprivations of two world wars, the founding of the Forestry Commission, replanting with conifers and by the 1960s Sitka spruce monocultures. Human interest improves this story: the first forestry training, colonial forestry, continental opinions; the part played by Prisoners of War, Canadian loggers and female forest workers during the wars; idealistic establishment of forest holdings and forest villages. Chapter 17: The End Of Geometry marks the start of environmental influences in forest design and in Chapter 18: On The Trail of Ancient Pines; the beginnings of pinewood conservation (at last!). The final chapters include visits to some great reserves (Ben Eighe, Abernethy, Creag Meagaidh, Mar Lodge); to semi-natural woods and plantations in search of wildlife, to new native woodland at Carrifran in Dumfriesshire. The final chapter muses on new directions for future forests in terms of scale, pattern, species (including reintroductions). As throughout the book he lets the people he meets provide the vision.

Of course there are many tales not told, many players not mentioned and though it would be interesting to hear John's often wry or humorous take on them, it would make this book overlong. In any case this book makes us aware of our own involvement in a longer ongoing saga.

John Fowler has done a great service to all who care about trees and forests. This is an important book and one which could bring the forest back to the forefront of the Scottish consciousness. Meanwhile it would make an excellent Christmas present for woodland-minded friends and family!

Recent publications from the British Lichen Society

Brian Coppins

The first three small books are all essential references for anyone getting 'serious with lichens' or handling lichen data with regard to conservation importance and site assessment. The fourth, a guide to *Usnea*, helps unravel the complexities of these conspicuous but notoriously 'difficult' beard lichens.

For non-BLS members, these publications are available from Summerfield Books (017683 41577; www.summerfieldbooks.com). Prices may vary a little from those given below.

COPPINS, B J 2002. *Checklist of Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland*. London: British Lichen Society. Pp 95. ISBN 0 9540418 2 8. Soft-covers, A4 format. Price: £9; £7 to BLS members.

A new checklist published as part of the preparations towards a new edition of the British 'Flora'. A total of 1830 species and subordinate taxa are listed in alphabetical order, together with synonymy to link with the previous (1994) checklist and with some other recent European checklists. The BLS recording code number is provided for each accepted name. Five appendices list: species thought to be extinct within the British Isles, doubtful or erroneously recorded taxa, species added to the list since the publication of the 'Flora' in 1992, five new combinations, and suggested BLS code numbers to cope with some critical complexes. There have been many important name changes in recent years - including the 'splitting' of *Parmelia* - and this book will help you figure out what's been going on.

COPPINS, A M & COPPINS, B J 2002. *Indices of Ecological Continuity for woodland epiphytic lichen habitats in the British Isles*. London: British Lichen Society. Pp 36. ISBN 0 9540418 4 4. Soft covers, A4 format. Price: £5; £3 + 50p postage to BLS members.

A compilation of all the Indices that were mostly originally devised by Francis Rose. Includes detailed sections on, for example, how to use the Indices, the value of their consistent use, and their short-comings. The 'Native Pinewood Index' is published for the first time, and includes a detailed introduction. If you want to know what is meant by 'EUOIEC', 'ESIEC', 'NIEC', 'NPIEC', 'WSIEC' and 'Bonus species' you need this book.

WOODS, R G & COPPINS, B J 2003. *A Conservation Evaluation of British Lichens*. London: British Lichen Society. Pp 59. ISBN 0 9540418 5 2. Soft covers, A4 format. Price: £6; £3.50 + 50p postage to BLS members.

An evaluation of all lichens, and a few lichenicolous fungi, reported from England, Wales and the Isle of Man. A total of 1850 taxa are considered. Evaluations are presented in a table, giving: current and previous (where changed) Red List status, rarity status, endemic status, presence on Biodiversity Action Plan Lists, presence on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, and 'International Responsibility' status. Notes are presented for selected taxa, especially for those whose Red List status has changed (including additions and deletions from the 'main' Red list.

JAMES, P W 2003. *Aide Mémoire: Usnea*. London: British Lichen Society. Pp 32. ISBN 0 9540418 3 6. Soft covers, A5 format. Price: £5.90; £3 90 to BLS members.

An invaluable guide to this troublesome genus.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

THE BRITISH LICHEN SOCIETY DOUGAL SWINSCOW LECTURE

Lichen Vegetation of the Scottish Highlands.

Dr Alan Fryday

7.30 p.m. Friday, 9th January, 2004 in the Lecture Theatre of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

Scotland has not only some of the finest scenery in Britain, but is of international importance for the wealth and diversity of its lichen flora. **Dr Alan Fryday** (now of Michigan State University, USA) spent many years exploring and studying the montane lichen floras of Scotland. Far from being bleak, bare crags, he found that there was a wealth of diversity, with well over 700 lichen taxa recorded from Scottish mountains (compared to 121 vascular plants). Fryday considers that the mountains of the Western Highlands of Scotland support a lichen vegetation that is apparently unique in Europe, and probably in the world. Ben Lawers NNR, for example, he considers to be "arguably, the most important lichen site in the British Isles; it is without question, the most important montane site" (Fryday, 1999). Over 20 lichen species are known in the British Isles only from the Ben Lawers NNR, and several also appear to be British endemics. Other Scottish mountain ranges also will be considered.



Reference

Fryday, A.M. (1999) *Location of rare lichens on the Ben Lawers NNR, Perthshire*. Unpublished report for Scottish Natural Heritage.

If you would like to attend this lecture, please notify **Carol Gibb** at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (e-mail: c.gibb@rbge.org.uk or phone 0131 248 2957).

On the **Saturday afternoon (10th January)** at the Lecture Theatre, RBGE, the British Lichen Society are holding a further Lecture Session, to which you are cordially invited. Topics range under the heading **Lichenology in Scotland - past, present and future**. Talks will include:

The History of Lichenology in Scotland - Dr Brian Coppins;
Lichens of Western Scottish Hazelwoods - Sandy Coppins;
Lichens of rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) in Scotland - Andy Acton & Anna Griffith;
***Bryoria furcellata* and landscape modelling in Glen Affric** - Dr Joe Hope;
Lichens of Whitelee Bogs boulder field, South Lanark - John Douglass;
Lichens of Scottish aspen woods - Dr Chris Ellis.

NWDG DRAMA WORKSHOP AND PRODUCTION

"STILL SEXY AT 30!!"



Are you interested??? If so, read on

Why?

2004 is the 30th birthday of the Native Woodland Discussion Group can you believe it!!!!!! We want to truly celebrate this so we have come up with the idea of a drama workshop to produce a **play/sketch for the first evening of the annual field visit in June**. We want to get members involved, so ***if this interests you, contact Juliet***. We will advertise more details in the next mailing in January. We intend this workshop to produce the bones of the play, a cast, plans for a rehearsal and then the final product in June!!

When?	Late March/April 2004. 1 or 2 day workshop (to be confirmed)	<i>When would suit you? Week or weekend best for you?</i>
Where?	Aberfeldy : Other venue ideas????	Possible meeting room Lots of accommodation Nearby woodlands to explore <i>Where do you think would be good?</i>
Contain?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group brainstorm – ideas, themes etc 2. Group workshops – start writing, perhaps a scene per group 3. Woodland visit – to inspire, stretch legs, get discussions going 4. Pints in pub – to inspire, exercise other limbs etc 5. Write play/sketch(s) 	
Contact?	Juliet Robinson Workshop organiser Tel: 01479 831014 Email: julietrobinson@postmaster.co.uk	<i>Let me know if you are interested!!!!</i>

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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