

BHMAT NEWSLETTER

Coppice Apprenticeships – Training for Coppice Woodland Futures

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Woodland Pioneers 2009 - It did not rain!

A full house and fine weather made for a buzzing Pioneers this year with 46 students, 6 tutors, 2 chefs, 1 support/dogs body, equalled 1 fabulous week. See inside for a full report by 1st year apprentice Sam Ansell.

Good news on the funding front

Funding generously awarded this year from the Arnside/Silverdale AONB SDF, The Ernest Cook Trust, Dulverton Trust, Naturesave, The Headley Trust. Thank you all!

*Seasons Greetings to
you all! May all your
winter work be
happy and
productive!*

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Woodland Pioneers 2009

Sam Ansell

Despite the fact that we are all gnarly and well-weathered woodfolk, it has to be said that a week of fair weather, sunshine, and no rain was well appreciated at this year's woodland pioneers! It also meant that Mike and I escaped the Sunday evening 'tarp raising' duties!



Owen's group - can't believe it's not raining!

In the various dappled groves and dingles of Chapel House wood, were found a variety of industrious groups, all working hard to produce some impressive piles of wood shavings. Brian Crawley was demonstrating the 'Brilliance of Birch' (not so brilliant if your coming back from the campfire in the dark to find a silver birch felled across your route home!); James Mitchell was spoon carving; Owen Jones was making cleft gate hurdles with his group; and Edward Acland and Twiggy were helping the Pioneers to explore the musical applications of wood.

In addition to these one day courses, Ian Taylor and his group were continuing the cleft oak



Twiggy and Edward – double the expertise



Kath Morgan carving, Tony (website) admiring

fence, and hanging the fantastic gates that were finished over the previous year, and Maurice Pyle was helping folk get to grips with some of the finer points of pole-lathe turning. Geoff Whitley and his group of seasoned Pioneers were carving some spectacular signs.

The evening schedule was, as always, both entertaining and educational. Edward Mills provided a fascinating walk around the woods, and then on the Tuesday we received end of apprenticeship presentations from Helen Elvin and Rupert Hoskinson, showing how varied the BHMAT experience can be, and showing off some of their excellent products. Rupert also gave an account of his other 3 year apprenticeship in stand-up comedy! Edward Acland stormed through a presentation on "Gaurdening" (or gardening with a "U"!).



Priscilla's first gypsy flower

Quiz night on Wednesday was hosted by a new, and very capable quiz-master – Phil Horsley our multitalented chef, AKA "Phil you up at dinner

time” - although despite all our hopes the first prize was not his pink and white striped jacket.



Phil and Rosie Horsley taking a well earned break from cooking - with Olly and Twiggy.

The Thursday night celebrations kicked off with a show of the musical instruments that were made with Edward Acland, and we anticipate the release of the album in 2010. Several musicians came to join in, including Bill Lloyd and Brian Crawley’s daughter Diane, and much dancing and merriment was had by all. (Except Mike, who disappeared at an unreasonably early hour, apparently exhausted by playing “air-organ” solos with a little too much gusto).



Mike Carswell teaching how to do the twist in hazel hurdle making



Walter Lloyd rope making

A whole array of talented and crafty folk were on site on Friday to provide taster workshops, in anything from willow weaving to rope-making and knot-work. The Friday also provided keen pioneers with a chance to find out more about the BHMAT apprenticeship.

Woodland Pioneer weeks are clearly a unique and valuable experience. With all 48 places booked, and 15 people completing the Ascentis (OCNW) certificate (first step to the apprenticeship), it is clear that the message is out there; that the enthusiasm and energy for coppicing and related crafts is strong and getting stronger. BHMAT has its finger firmly on the pulse!



Party night!

BHMAT Committee

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Apprentice Update

Helen Elvin is about to complete her apprenticeship with Martin Clark and is ready to pursue her own business in NW Cumbria. She has bought her own wood this year which will make a great base for a workshop.

Rupert Hoskinson is about to complete his apprenticeship at Holker Hall. He has been sponsored by Tony Saunders and they are looking into offering training for the Field Studies Council and also for pupils at Witherslack School. He has bought a small kiln and will continue to work the woods at Holker.

Both Rupert and Helen gave their 3rd year presentations at Woodland Pioneers in September this year – they were both excellent advertisements for the apprenticeship and were informative, entertaining and had on show some beautiful products – well done to both of them!

Andy Parkes has withdrawn from the apprenticeship. He completed his first year and so gained a first year certificate from OCNW.

Mike Carswell, sponsored by Rebecca Oaks, is in his second year. He remains committed to his home base in Manchester and has made some very useful contacts there with urban woodland parks, with the intention of establishing himself with a firewood/charcoal/coppice business once he completes his apprenticeship. He gave a very interesting talk on Urban Coppicing to CANW recently.

Peter Wood is in his second year and is apprenticed to BHMAT Trustee Maurice Pyle, based in the North East. He is already working independently much of the time and is building a solid base for his business.

Tessa Rhodes is sponsored by Ruth Thompson and works all around the NE. She started off self funding but following new funding we were able to offer her the BHMAT bursary, so now she is receiving the same support as other apprentices.

Sam Ansell is in his first year and is apprenticed to Rebecca Oaks. Keen and enthusiastic, he is considering taking on the contract to coppice Moss and Height Spring which is owned by the Woodland Trust and situated in the Rusland Valley.

*Supported by:
Cumbria Woodlands,
Arnside & Silverdale AONB SDF,
Friends of the Lake District,
The Headley Trust, Small Woods Association,
Naturesave Trust, Dulverton Trust, Ernest
Cook Trust and Sir John Fisher Foundation*



Stop Press

There have been some changes on the committee. Following Geoff Whitley's resignation Twiggy and Tony Morgan have agreed to be Trustees.