

BHMAT NEWSLETTER

Coppice Apprenticeships – Training for Coppice Woodland Futures
No 14. June 2010

Charity No. 1096755



Sam and Mike fly the flag for BHMAT at Cuerden Valley Park Woodland festival in May

BHMAT Apprentices: news, welcome and updates!

Since the last newsletter two apprentices have graduated, Helen Elvin and Rupert Hoskinson, congratulations to them. One new apprentice Sam Robinson will start his apprenticeship with Ian Taylor of Lakeland Coppice Products in July. Ian held work trials with two prospective candidates with a very tough decision between Sam and Lorna Singleton. We hope to find funding for Lorna as well. Meanwhile Mike Carswell and Peter Wood are now well into their final year and no doubt the pressure is mounting as they are facing life with no

bursary! Mike has reduced the number of days he works with Rebecca so that he has more time to develop his business in Manchester. Sam Ansell is in year two and taking more responsibility in Rebecca's business as well as being Secretary to the Coppice Association, which is a demanding job and one he is taking very seriously. Tessa Rhodes has postponed completing year one due to ill health. We wish her a good recovery and that she will soon be well enough to resume her work in the apprenticeship.

Summer BBQ and General meeting
Sunday 4th July
Haybridge Nature Reserve, Bouth
To coincide with the earth burn
From 3pm, food at 5pm
Bring something to share!
RSVP please

Contact: Bill Hogarth MBE Memorial Apprenticeship Trust
93, Silverdale Rd. Yealand Redmayne,
Carnforth, Lancs LA5 9TD
Tel: 01524 781375
Email: info@coppiceapprentice.org.uk
Website: www.coppiceapprentice.org.uk

National apprentice gathering

20th & 21st May by Sam Ansell

This years Coppice Apprenticeship gathering was kindly hosted by Dave Jackson of Wildwood Coppice Crafts, at his craft workshop near Malvern. Mike Carswell and myself joined fellow apprentices Jenna Higgins (who works with Dave), Peter Murray (based at the Sustainability Centre), Ruth Goodfellow (who has recently graduated from an apprenticeship with Brian Williams), and Patrick (who is Brian's apprentice-to-be). Fran Fowkes from the Small Woods Association was also there.

The schedule was both busy and relaxed, if that's possible, with plenty to do but all at an enjoyable pace. We started off with a bit of spoon carving, and then had a discussion at lunch about insurance for apprentices - with Fran agreeing to look into a bespoke policy to cover the somewhat unique work set-up. Then followed a site visit to one of the best coppices in the area - nine acres of in-rotation hazel which has been worked for several decades. Myself and Mike were wandering around fairly impressed to see such well stocked coupes, whilst the Gloucestershire contingent were definitely underwhelmed - showing clearly the regional variation in quality of coppice.

The next morning we went to visit another wood, this one being more of a restoration project and thus more familiar territory for us northern apprentices. This was a really interesting wood - full of wonderful flora, including the parasitic toothwort, and several ancient woodland indicator species. Plenty of interesting archaeology as well - limekilns, quarries, and an ancient tramway that had provided a local bishop with a direct supply of beer! We had a short workshop on splitting techniques for firewood, and then returned to base for a discussion on hurdle twisting techniques, followed by tool sharpening.

The two-days were really a fantastic learning opportunity for us all, sponsors and apprentices alike. The spirit of openness and sharing of information was impressive, with questions and answers and more questions being thrown about throughout the two days. It was also really reassuring to know that others are facing the same issues and challenges across the country, and that we are not alone in our desire to seek solutions. Oh yeah - I think we might also have cooked food and drank cider and had one or two non-coppice related conversations as well!



Preparing larch poles for a pole barn course at Rebecca's yard



The joints all done on the ground the poles are lifted into place with expert accuracy by Sam Hanafin.

Below: The finished frame still awaiting a roof. But with a tarp, providing shelter from the sun on the willow course.



Willow basket course with Phil Bradley

27th &28th April by Kath Morgan

In May a group of us gathered for a willow basket course with Phil Bradley at Rebecca's yard, including Sam (2nd year apprentice), Mike (3rd year apprentice), Emma (Sam's partner) and Hayley Barrett (some may remember her from Woodland Pioneers last year and 2008). Rupert also joined us (he was nearing the end of his radiotherapy treatment at Preston so the course allowed him a bit of welcome time in the woods).

The first day we learnt how to make the base for a round English basket. This involved learning how to do the 'God's eye' (the centre of the base) then a pairing weave around the spokes. It may not sound a lot, and it proved easier than I first thought, but I was still surprised at how sore my fingers (and particularly my left thumb) became. Quite an art holding the rest of the work in place and persuading my spokes to stay even and my weave to stay tight and strong.



Kath Morgan's finished basket

On the second day we learnt how to stake up (using that ingenious tool the basket weaver's hammer) and weave the sides using a mixture of weaving moves with the willow called 'randing' and 'waling'. Then we learnt how to do the rod border and finally the handles. Voila! we all ended up with a basket to be proud of.

Rebecca's yard is a perfect place for courses and one of my very favourite spots – tucked away from the road, sheltered and surrounded by trees, next to Gaitbarrows nature reserve and the limestone



pavement that make Silverdale such a beautiful place. I'm glad to say that the weather was very kind to us too – although it threatened to rain once or twice, it managed to stay dry and warm. (This is becoming a bit like an advertisement feature for my refurbished yard! Ed)

Phil did warn us that once we had completed the course and had an understanding of how much work goes into a willow basket, we would never look at another basket in the same way. How very true: now I can't pass a basket without picking it up and having a close look at how it has been made. So far I haven't seen many that come up to the same standard as Phil Bradley baskets. An enormous thank you to Phil, a fabulous tutor – for his knowledge, generosity in sharing his expertise - and definitely for his patience! Overall, the course was thoroughly enjoyable – I look forward to the next one and recommend it to anyone with an interest in willow basket making.

Kath adds:

For those of you who know Rupert, you will be pleased to hear that he has finished his treatment and is now with family and friends, taking time to recover and re-energise. He's recently been staying with Sam and was able to join us at the Holker Show (3rd-5th June) when Rebecca, Sam, Mike and myself were doing the Coppice Association North West (CANW) stall. Really good to see him looking and feeling so much better and brighter – keep going that direction Rupert and you'll soon be back in those woods!



Rupert adzing on pole barn course

BHMAT Committee**Chair**

Rebecca Oaks
93, Silverdale Rd,
Yealand Redmayne
Carnforth, LA5 9TD
01524 781375

Secretary

Amanda Bingley
93, Silverdale Rd,
Yealand Redmayne
Carnforth, LA5 9TD
01524 781375

Treasurer

Jane Hamilton
16 Silver Howe Close
Kendal
LA9 7NW

Trustees

Maurice Pyle
107 Queens Rd,
Whitley Bay
Tyne and Wear, NE26 3AT
0191 2524064

Edward Acland
Sprint Mill, Burneside
Kendal, Cumbria, LA8 9AQ
01539 725168

Charlie Miles
Stoneraise Farm
Westward,
Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 8LY
016973 43894

James Mitchell
1, Windermere Road
Kendal
LA9 4QT
07817412685

Twiggy
209, Chorley Rd
Blackrod
Bolton BL6 5LJ
07734353202

Tony Morgan
Crag View, Dixon's field
Crag Bank,
Carnforth
LA5 9JN

Administrator
Kath Morgan
As Tony above
07867792698

Co-opted members

Brian Crawley
Woodland Ways, Stable Cottage
Lightburn Rd.,
Ulverston
Cumbria, LA12 7ND
01229 583467

Edward Mills
Cumbria Woodlands
Lower Mill House,
Staveley Mill Yard
Staveley, Kendal, LA8 9LS
01539 822140

Bill Hogarth MBE Memorial Apprenticeship Trust

Presents the ninth

Woodland Pioneers

Introduction to Coppicing Week

To be held at Staveley in Cartmel
Courtesy of the Sir John Fisher Foundation



Owen Jones - Riven oak panels

Advanced courses with
Maurice Pyle - pole lathe

Treen with Twiggy - Making
small wood products

James Mitchell –stick chairs

Ian Taylor - Green wood stool
making

Earth burn with Brian Crawley
Plus an open day on Friday
with various workshops

Coppicing skills with Rebecca
Oaks

Willow, hurdles, brooms, mal-
lets, tool care

**To be held at Staveley in Cartmel
courtesy of the
Sir John Fisher Foundation**

13th - 17th Sept 2010

Cost £150 - £220

Participants will be invited to apply for our
3 year apprenticeship in Coppicing

www.coppiceapprentice.org.uk

Supported by:

Cumbria Woodlands,
Arnside & Silverdale AONB SDF,
Friends of the Lake District,
The Headley Trust, Small Woods Association,
and Sir John Fisher Foundation, RDPE –Cumbria
Fells and Dales LAG, Dulverton Trust, Ernest Cook
Trust,



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas