National Coppice Federation

Supporting the Coppice Industry

Summer 2026

Cleft Stick

News from the National Coppice Federation and the UK Coppice Industry



[Credit: Rachel Kellett]

NCFed's Annual Gathering & AGM

All the details about this year's event. The East Midlands Coppice Network are hosting and it sounds like it will be unmissable - p4

The Effect of Coppicing on Woodland Flying Insects

Masters student Steph Gulvin describes her study carried out in Northants - p10

Kinda Forest School, Rachel Kellett

Alternative provision for children and activities for dementia sufferers; read more about Rachel Kellett's work in a Suffolk coppice - p12

Martin Wise Interview

Beret-wearing Berkshire boy, Martin Wise, describes his roundabout route into the world of woodland and coppice - p14

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[credit: Kiri Roberts]

The National Coppice Federation
Uniting regional coppice groups

The National Coppice Federation (NCFed) was formed in 2013 with the aim of uniting already existing regional coppice groups under one banner. Since then more local groups have formed and become affiliated to the NCFed, growing our membership and reach considerably.

National Coppice Federation
Supporting the Coppice Industry

Aims
The NCFed has three key aims:

1. to promote coppicing as a form of woodland management that provides economic, ecological and culturally significant benefits;
2. to bring together regional coppice groups and provide a unified voice for the industry; and
3. to encourage and promote best practice

Editorial

I had a walk at what could be described as Bedfordshire's own Knepp Estate - Strawberry Hill Farm, for the first time last week. Smaller than Sussex's better known Knepp, this is 150 hectares of mostly ex-arable farmland, abandoned to Set-aside in the 1980s. The Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust purchased the farm recently and we visited for the first time on the evening of 29th May – just past peak bird song. The contrast between the wheat field edge we walked to reach it and the reserve itself was extraordinary. The first fields were pleasant but quiet, perhaps with the odd twitter from a hedge. As we approached a gap in a hedge we heard a cuckoo, then two cuckoos. Walking through the gap, there was a definite feeling of passing through the wardrobe – the change was startling. Immediately, all views were obscured by generous, impenetrable, green walls of hawthorn and bramble. Chiff chaff, greater whitethroat, willow warbler, blackcap, song thrush, blackbird, more cuckoos, wren… all sang in a wonderful tumult. Then one, two, three nightingales opened up - liquid, sonic enchantment. What a thrill; a spectacular reminder of what nature can do if left undisturbed for a few years.

I was struck by two conflicting feelings: my naturalist is awestruck but the land manager has to swallow the questions – "but how is this going to be managed in future and by whom. And who's paying?" Add a century without intervention and this will become woodland - high forest, and the scrub stage with this intense avian interest will have diminished. Of course the Wildlife Trust will have a plan; perhaps a massive team of incredibly dedicated and enthusiastic scrub bashing volunteers. And a herd of pigs.

I spend a fair amount of time each cutting season fighting bramble, blackthorn, hawthorn and dog rose in the coppice coupe, despite their value as habitat creators. I recognise these days that they will always be present however much I bash them. And a visit to Strawberry Hill reminds me that a fringe of infrequently cut thorny and prickly stuff will add massively to the biodiversity potential of the coppice. The beautiful, mysterious and impenetrable early and middle stages of a hazel coppice rotation must have a similar habitat value, even though it has no spikes. I never manage to cut all the scrubby stuff and nightingale envy provides the perfect excuse. I live in hope that some of those secretive singers might, one spring, stop off with us on their way to Strawberry Hill.



Be sure to check out Steph Gulson's piece on invertebrates in coppice on page 10. If we needed one, here's another reason to promote coppicing.

This edition features a good deal by and about volunteers and others who get involved, one way or another in woodland management including coppicing, which is all well and good. But if you are a more solitary coppice worker, beavering away to make a crust, or someone who works as part of a team, we would like to hear from you too. You will be doing lots of interesting, challenging and innovative things in the woods you work; why not write something about them for Cleft Stick?

Finally, this summer edition, as is only right, also features much about NCFed's Annual Gathering & AGM, which this year will be held in Nottinghamshire. I am reminded that the East Midlands Coppice Network first hosted ten years ago. That was my first experience of all things NCFed and after having attended every year since, I can't recommend the event enough. It always feels like an effort and a big outlay in time as well as money, but I come home full of ideas, renewed enthusiasm and most of all, a feeling of happiness (no really) at being a part of a great group of people.

Guy Lambourne,
Member of the East Anglian Coppice Network
and editor of Cleft Stick



[credit: Kirt Roberts]



Gathering Returns To Sherwood Forest

Sherwood Forest, famously linked to the legend of Robin Hood, once spanned a vast 100,000 acres across Nottinghamshire, accounting for roughly a fifth of the county. Today, the extent of this forest has shrunk significantly to a protected, surviving fragment of 1,000 acres, managed as the Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve.

This year's Weekend Gathering & AGM will be held in part of what was once the original Forest. Hosted by the East Midlands Coppice Network (EMCN) at Sherbrooke Scout Camp, from Thursday 1st to Sunday 4th October, this will be the second time EMCN have hosted the Gathering in the famous Sherwood Forest - the last being a decade ago at Hill Holt Wood on the Notts/Lincs border.

The venue

Located between the villages of Calverton and Oxton, Nottinghamshire, the very spacious site, used by scouts and Forest Schools, is a mixture of open grassland and woodland. There is plenty of camping space, an excellent range of buildings and facilities including a kitchen, toilets and yes, showers!


[credit: Sherbrooke Scout Camp]

Spacious site at Sherbrooke Scout Camp

There are also nine bunk rooms with 58 beds in total plus a beautiful outdoor amphitheatre style fire circle with log benches. We are also, this year, looking to provide a quiet space for those who might want to take some time out over the weekend.

Pre-Gathering courses

Arrive on the Thursday afternoon, chill out, chat, have an evening beer with your BBQ and then on Friday either partake in one of our popular pre-Gathering courses or, non-course participants will be free to network, enjoy the site or maybe visit some local attractions – we'll be close to historic Newstead Abbey and Nottingham city is nearby too. On Friday afternoon there will also be a "Coppicing Show and Tell" - an informal general chat/presentation about what coppice groups are up to and have been doing. This will all be down to you. In respect of the pre-Gathering courses, we are finalising the details but are hoping to run both half and full days to include, for example, tool sharpening, shingle making, framed woven hazel hurdle making, charcoal burning (with a mini-ring kiln) plus how to live off grid.


[credit: Steve Roberts]

Participants of last year's Gathering enjoy a catch-up around the fire pit



[credit: Guy Lambourne]

Leon and Dylan gain new skills on one of last year's pre-Gathering courses

More time for demonstrations, skill sharing and have-a-go sessions

Having listened to feedback from previous Gatherings, this year we are going to extend these morning sessions into Saturday afternoon, so that everyone has more time to watch, chat and ask questions. Demonstrators won't be tied to their stand all day - just put out some simple signage so folks know when you will or will not be on hand.

Calling all NCFed Coppice and Supporter Groups and other demonstrators

This year we want to encourage groups to have their own stand sharing what they do as a group. This could be as simple as a static display with information about your group, what you do, what you have planned, the skillsets of your membership, examples of products that your members or you as a collective produce. If any of your members want to demonstrate, that's better still.

We are also actively encouraging individuals coming to the Gathering (and who are members of an NCFed affiliated coppice or supporter group) to demonstrate, share skills, sell coppice products or just promote their own woody business.

Local Bodgers' camp site visit

On Saturday afternoon, there will be a site visit to the nearby woodland base of the Peak and Dukeries Bodgers; the local group of the Association of Pole Lathe Turners and Green Woodworkers. Less than ten minutes' drive, the site accommodates the bodgers' area, a roundhouse and forge amongst other structures. This site is shared with Kai (who will be providing the catering for us over the weekend) and Clare who manage their forest school here.

Craft Competition

The Coppice Craft Competition returns and we are delighted to report that the Association of Pole Lathe Turners and Green Woodworkers are generously sponsoring five cash prizes; NCFed are sponsoring four; Musgrove Willows (Somerset) are again sponsoring one; whilst Julie Taylor (member of West Midlands Coppice Group and wife of Mike Taylor, NCFed Director) is sponsoring two. So, there are plenty of chances to win!



[credit: Guy Lambourne]

Copice Craft Competition entries from last year's Gathering



Spar maker at work

[credit: Guy Lambourne]

Calling all spar makers

This year, instead of the pre-made bundle of spars, we're holding a live skills competition on Sunday morning. This will include a timed spar-making competition for which there will be three cash prizes totalling £150, generously sponsored by the National Society of Master Thatchers. We are discussing a couple of other possibilities, which may include billet cleaving or stake pointing, both exciting opportunities, yet to be finalised. Watch this space.

Sherwood Forest site visit

This is an optional visit to this National Nature Reserve on Sunday before you head home. The Forest has the largest collection of ancient and veteran oak trees in Europe and is noted for its wildlife, particularly invertebrates. The visit will be a circular walk of around 2.5 miles, taking in some of the Forest's most special trees and notable stories.

..and much more

Over the weekend there will a discussion group about an interesting and topical subject, plus of course our Sunday tool auction. Excellent homemade food is included in the ticket price:

Saturday - breakfast, lunch, evening meal
Sunday - breakfast and lunch.
Plenty of tea, coffee and biscuits will be available all weekend.

Breakfast, lunch and evening BBQ on Thursday and Friday are self-catering. There will be a live acoustic band on Saturday evening, but don't forget to bring musical instruments for a Saturday evening music jam around the campfire afterwards! Oh yes, of course there will also be excellent local beers at our Froe Up and Split Bar!



[credit: Steve Roberts]

Laughter all round at the 2025 Sunday tool auction

Ticket booking and more information

More information about tickets and everything mentioned above, will be available when ticket booking goes live in due course. As always, the weekend will be open, via prebooked tickets, to members of NCFed affiliated supporter and coppice groups as well as to non-members.

Keep up to date through the National Coppice Federation's website and Facebook.
We look forward to seeing you all there.

East Midlands Coppice Network Gathering sub-Committee


[credit: Guy Lambourne]

NCFed Peer Awards 2026

Once again, we are preparing to present two Peer Awards at the Gathering in October. The first is, as is a bit of a tradition, for a New Entrant to the World of Coppice. This is for someone with five years or less experience who has made significant progress.

Secondly, we want to acknowledge someone who has made a significant contribution to Coppice Training and Education. This is quite a wide specification but I'm sure there are people out there who we can all recognise as having had an impact in this area.

Send in nominations now

If you know of someone whom you think should be recognised in these categories, please get in touch with your Group Rep and get a nomination to me by the last weekend of August.

Martin Wise
NCFed Peer Awards Officer
Chilterns & Thames Valley CG

Obituary

Ken Galton

It is with sadness that Hampshire Coppice Group announce the passing of lifelong hazel hurdle and spar maker, Ken Galton. I write this short piece as Ken was known to many outside Hampshire due to his role as lead tutor on Linda Glynn's government funded Wessex Coppice Group in the 1980s (pre the formation of county coppice groups).

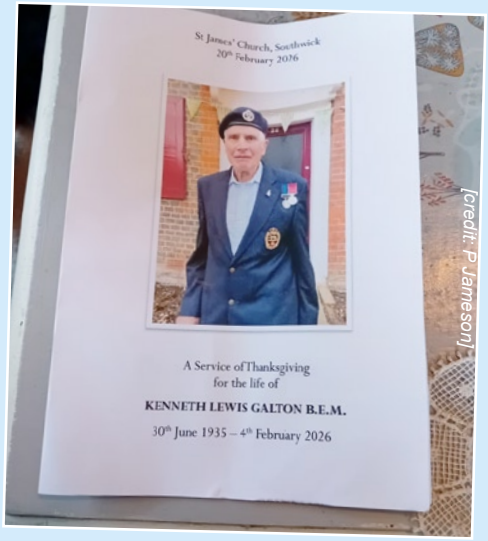
Ken regularly demonstrated the making of thatching spars at the Weald and Downland Museum in the 90s, and was the builder of a 40 foot high hazel wicker man for a year or three in the 2000s which was ceremoniously set alight at Butser Ancient Farm's Beltain Festival. Along with Ern Steel, Ken gave a hurdle masterclass when the NCFed Gathering was held in Wickham.

The funeral was a church full; extra seating being provided on a day of typical funeral weather. Ken arrived wearing a buff willow coffin which was end flanked by a narrow hurdle made by his last apprentice Michael Bennett which will be used as a grave marker until and probably beyond the gravestone being erected. If you are passing Boarhunt Churchyard, it will be an easy grave to find.

On a personal note, I'd like to say thank you Ken for your wisdom and guidance in improving my spar points and for being a good friend to the late Ern Steel; two kindred spirits, lifelong hurdle makers who found through the coppice groups (Hampshire and Dorset) that they were not the only ones to twist sticks for 70 plus years.

Rest in peace Ken, you will be remembered.

Peter Jameson



[credit: P Jameson]



Andy demonstrates the splitting of a hazel rod

[credit: Guy Lambourne]

Handing The Hazel Baton Over To You?!

I have had the privilege over the last twenty years or so to restore and maintain a whole twenty-acre nature reserve, pretty much as I saw fit, with the emphasis on making it productive and economically viable. It's been all consuming in the nicest possible way and I have succeeded in making a living and managing the coppice. Conservation has been intrinsic throughout. I was fortunate enough to find Hales during my prime years. It all fitted into place, with a lot of nudging from me.

My family commitments have increased and my strength and fitness decreased simultaneously, I'm 68 and I need to manage what I do more carefully and focus more on making, rather than coppicing.

So I want to find someone to pick up the baton, someone who can begin to take on the more physical aspects of the job. This person will need to have quite a few qualities. First and foremost is enthusiasm, then fitness, aptitude, creativity, diligence… in fact all those virtues in some measure. No small ask! Without doubt, proximity to the site - Hales Wood, Ashdon, Essex - is very necessary.

It's a few miles east of Saffron Waldon in a very attractive and rural part of North-west Essex.

It's well known that teaching and running courses, team building or experience days are where the money is and managing the online world especially social media is becoming essential, unless you are hitched to a lawyer or have private means! I couldn't have done what I have and pay a mortgage/rent. This position, if you like, would I think, be great for someone with some capital and kids flown.

Full tuition can be given where and if required at reasonable cost, (rustic furniture making is an easy goal). Goodwill and mailing list similarly supplied.

If you are seriously interested, please give me a call for an informal chat initially.

Andy Basham
Coppice Designs - Saffron Walden
07971 642243



The thousand year old Queen Elizabeth Oak

[Credit Richard Haggis]

Little Acorns From One Great Oak

The Queen Elizabeth Oak is a large sessile oak in Cowdray Park near Lodsworth, West Sussex, in the South Downs National Park. It has a girth of 12.5–12.8 metres and is about 800–1,000 years old. This means it began to grow in the 11th or 12th century AD (Wikipedia).

According to legend, Queen Elizabeth I took refuge beneath this tree waiting for a deer to be flushed her way on a hunt while staying at the Cowdray Estate. If this estimate of age is accurate, it would have been a memorably large and ancient tree, even in the late sixteenth century. Listed as one of our heritage trees, and according to Wikipedia, the third largest sessile oak in the UK, I decided to gather a few acorns during the mast year of 2025 to send out to friends in the hope of continuing its line. I also offered a supply to Petworth Park, on the adjacent Leconfield Estate (responsible for the excellent Egremont Russett apple tree), where I am a volunteer ranger. Happily they liked the idea, and so some acorns will now be planted close to the parent tree.

To spread seed slightly further afield, I posted acorns to friends around the south of England – in Suffolk, Kent and Hampshire, and I'm asking for the GPS coordinates and details of the planting so the locations of these descendants can be recorded. Further afield still, I believe Mark Shipperlee of Green Man Enterprises paid a visit and took some back to Northumbria with him.



[Credit Richard Haggis]

Freshly collected acorns full of ancient genetics

Richard Haggis,
Surrey and Sussex Coppice Group

A Malaise trap, a tent-like structure used to capture flying insects, particularly flies and wasps

[Credit Steph Gulvin]

The effect of coppicing on woodland flying insects

The term biodiversity is increasingly used, particularly in relation to its importance for the ecosystems we depend on. Coppicing could be a method by which woodland biodiversity can be enhanced. The creation of woodland stands at different stages of regrowth creates a mosaic of habitats, conditions and resources which a diversity of wildlife can utilise (1).

While the value of coppicing for charismatic insects such as butterflies is well recognised, what of the impact on the insects we give less consideration to, those which are unseen?

I am a Masters student from Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge and this is the question I set out to explore for my dissertation in the summer of 2024, the aim being to investigate the potential of coppicing as a tool to enhance the diversity of flies, parasitoid wasps and beetles.



[Credit Steph Gulvin]

A parasitoid wasp from the family Diapriidae, also known as the shelf-faced wasp on account of the shape of the head when viewed from the side.

While many of us are familiar with house flies and related families, flies are hugely diverse with 7000 species in the UK (2), playing important roles across ecosystems including woodlands. Little known parasitoid wasps are key to regulating the populations of other insects, including pest species.

I undertook the study at Rawhaw Wood, Northamptonshire. Owned by Hugh Ross and Carolyn Church, the woodland is coppice with oak standards, on

a 10-year rotation. To enable comparisons across different stages of regrowth, I identified three woodland stands: a coupe at the 2nd year following cutting, one at the 8th year and a semi-natural minimal management stand not part of the coppice rotation. I set up insect traps within each stand and collected the contents weekly over 6 weeks. I then identified and counted the insects.



A parasitoid wasp from the family Ichneumonidae. Although often overlooked, parasitoid wasps play an important role controlling insect populations.

The results of the study showed some interesting trends. Of the 2500 insects collected, flies were the most numerous constituting 64% of the total, then parasitoid wasps at 30% and beetles formed the remaining 6%.

The highest diversity of insects was in the 2nd year coupe. Flies and beetles were present in the greatest numbers and the coupe supported the most diverse range of fly and beetle families. One of the attractions was likely the wide variety of flowers that spring up in recently cut coppice; many flies and beetles depend on nectar and pollen as energy sources. The open sunny conditions in recently cut coppice probably played a role as well, with insects basking in sunshine to warm up pre-flight.

In contrast, the greatest abundance and most diverse range of parasitoid wasps was in the semi-natural woodland stand. Many parasitoid wasps are highly specialised and prefer woodland stands which are undisturbed. Not part of the coppice rotation, the more stable conditions of the semi-natural woodland stand may have drawn in a greater diversity of parasitoid wasps.

Deadwood presence and oak standards also positively influenced the diversity of the insects studied.

The study highlighted the role of coppice-with-standards woodlands for the diversity of flies, parasitoid wasps and beetles. Not only did recently cut coppice have a positive impact, but keeping a minimal management stand within coppiced woodlands could also help boost insect diversity.



A trap used during the trials at Rawhaw Wood

My grateful thanks go to Hugh Ross and Carolyn Church of Rawhaw Wood for kindly supporting the research being carried out on their land.

Steph Gulvin
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About Steph

Steph Gulvin took up studying as a mature student doing a BSc, then Masters in Applied Wildlife Conservation. Passionate about both woodlands and insect conservation, Steph drew these subjects together in her student research projects by studying the use of woodland management to enhance insect diversity. These projects emphasised to her the importance of insects, particularly those less well-known such as parasitoid wasps, in woodland ecosystems. Steph is hoping build on this research by studying for a PhD.

References:

1. *Weiss, M., Kozel, P., Zapletal, M., Hauck, D., Prochazka, J., Benes, J., Cizek, L. and Sebek, P. (2021) 'The effect of coppicing on insect biodiversity. Small-scale mosaics of successional stages drive community turnover,' Forest Ecology and Management, 483, article number 118774. Available here*
2. *Dipterists' Forum (2026) About Flies. Available here*

[Credit Steph Gulvin]



Activities at Kaliwoods can be immersive

[credit: Rachel Kellett]

Forest School In Kaliwoods

In January this year Kinda Forest School came to Kaliwoods five days a week, a change from the two days a week that had been the norm for the last few years. It has been a joy. Every day, facilitators and children arrive in the wood, some days up to twelve children and twenty facilitators. These are called Alternative Provision children, children who do not fit into the conventional model of school.

As I walk the dogs or stack wood or count dead trees, or whatever, I witness extraordinary transformations of children in the woods. One, B aged eight, with a brain tumour, had been kept on a lead as a child as he was hyperactive and ran everywhere. Here in the wood and the field, he can run. 'Rachel, Rachel what's the work today', he cries across the land. And he works hard. He planted all of the replacement trees in one of the alleys.

On Thursdays, Elders come to the woods, some with dementia, some without dementia (sometimes difficult to tell the difference). Last year we became scientists to witness the wondrous green explosion of the land which had been planted with 6,000 trees the previous winter. This year we will be collecting seeds and propagating new plants.

What a glorious use of a wood, to be so useful, to be full of laughter and chatter every day. No problems with deer munching coppice here - it is far too active.

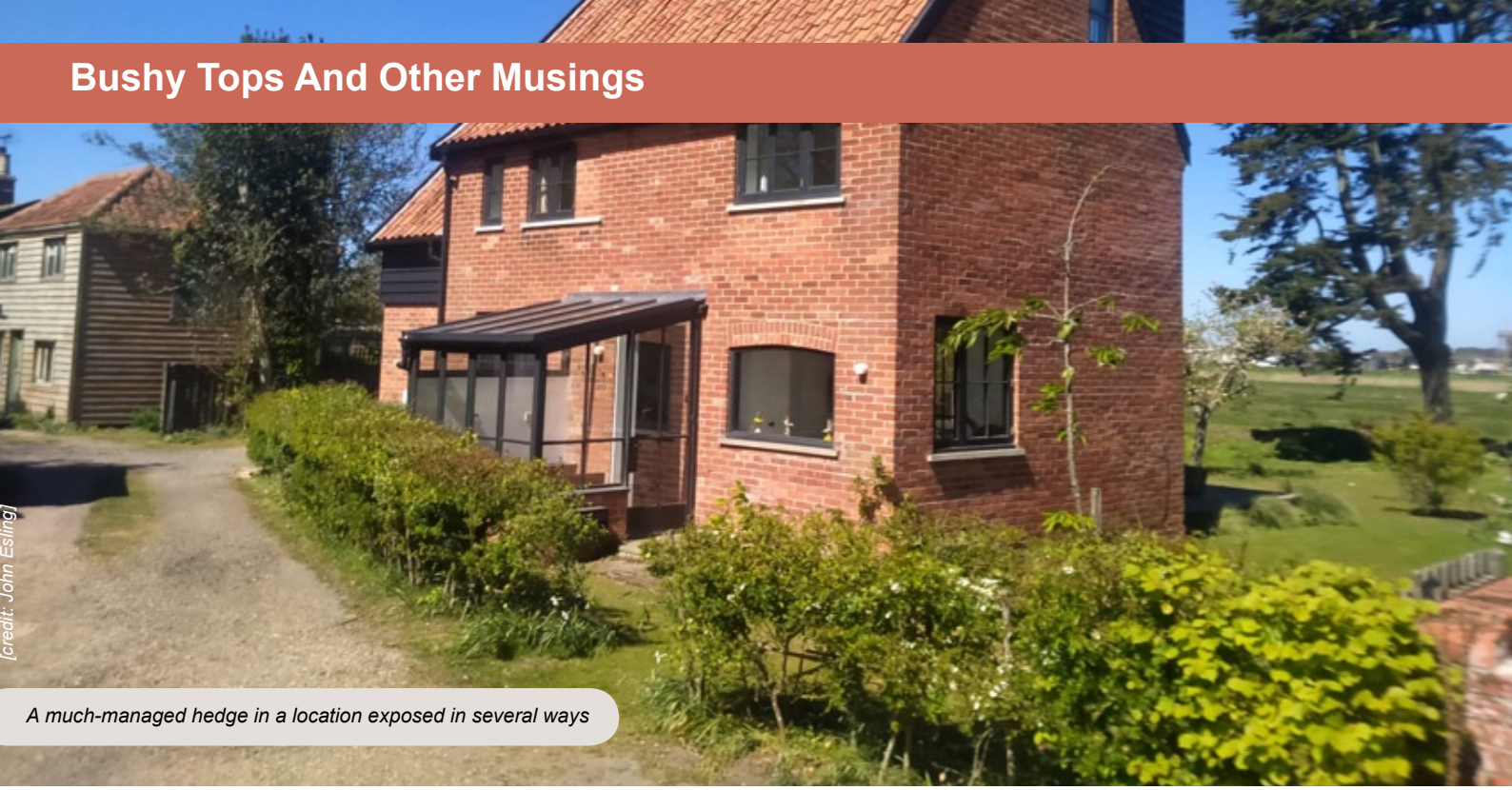


[credit: Rachel Kellett]

Checking newly planted trees

Rachel Kellett
Secretary of the East Anglian Coppice Network

Bushy Tops And Other Musings



[credit: John Esling]

A much-managed hedge in a location exposed in several ways

This week I revisited a couple of hedges I've worked on in the past. Musing on the comparisons has been enlightening.

Firstly, a short (c. 25m), unshaded hedge I planted in 2016 in a coastal location adjacent to a salt marsh. It's a rich mix of species - sea buckthorn, guelder rose, rose, spindle and blackthorn, with a spine of hawthorn. The planting was framed with regularly spaced, coppiced hazel stakes bound together with 2 rows of willow binding. The structure's sole practical function was to define the hedge line for the benefit of traffic, namely tradesmen's vans, dustcarts and SUVs. It also provided a temporary, psychological boundary for the owners.

The hedge was partially replanted and repaired in 2019 at the behest of a dissatisfied London solicitor owner. Imagine the scenes! It had been damaged by an interaction with a dustcart and a north wind straight off the salt marsh. The latter was funnelling between second homes and had killed much of one end. If you faced east it would be "coming out of left field". Metaphorically speaking I felt that this statement applied whichever direction you faced. I repaired it with over-engineering as the guiding principal. Hawthorn, wild plum and hazel were planted. I also sneakily laid a few bigger hawthorns from the original planting. Subsequently the hedge seems to have been faced hard and topped at c. 1.5 metres. It remains species rich and coherent, if a bit cold bottomed.

The second hedge was an existing 200 metre section of overstood and interestingly managed, mixed native species. There was some moderate and quite dense shading from standard trees and a notable feature was a number of elm trees, standing dead. Remnants of the "baroque" method of management were cut out and it was laid, staked and partially bound in 2024.

Today it is splendid. It has only been clipped internally and low down as ground space is at a premium. Above six feet it is, and will continue to be, bushy.

Conclusions

1. Over clipping is a symptom of toxic micromanagement and much else

2. Leaving a loose external face and a bushy top is an excellent way of maximising useable space and hedge vigour. I am also experimenting with a variation of a bushy top technique, called Daisugi in Japan, in coppicing hazel. This involves "skylaying" at above six feet, propping the pleacher on posts or nearby trees and allowing poles to regenerate above a height where they can be browsed by deer.



[credit: John Esling]

Work in progress – a shady hedge with information for passers-by

3. I feel that bushy tops are a way to manage big hedges around small space and coppice woodland in a context without apex predators to control the deer population. Reintroduce wolves!

John Esling
(@hedgery9)

Martin Wise

Of Chilterns and Thames Valley Coppice Group

You may know Martin as the man in the beret at the Federation's Annual Gathering. At least that's how I often think of him. An ex-rock n roll roadie and proprietor of a wholefood shop, he is also a founder member of the Chilterns and Thames Valley Coppice Group, a part-time coppicer, hurdle maker and appreciator of all things woodland as well as being a professional gardener and of course an accomplished wearer of the beret. After chatting to him at the Gathering, my wife, Jane suggested a conversation with Martin might be interesting. And so it has proved.



[Credit: Lucy Morrell]

Martin with some of his hurdles



Martin with wholefood shop colleagues in 1970s fashion

[credit: Tim Norman (dec'd)]

Cleft Stick: Where do you live and work?
Martin Wise: In South Oxfordshire's Goring Gap, at the very bottom of the Chiltern Hills. It's a few miles from both Reading and Wallingford. I've lived in the same beautiful, National Trust cottage for the last fifty years. The cottage is in a wood that's also owned by the National Trust and I've been lucky enough to have watched the woodland's cycle of life and death over all those years. We can see five counties from the cottage and used to be able to see Windsor Castle.

CS: Did they move the castle?
MW: No, it's those trees; they keep growing!

CS: Are you a local boy?
MW: oh yes, I was brought up close to Reading.

CS: Tell me a bit more about the wood you live in?
MW: It's about five acres of overstood hazel coppice that was planted in the1880s apparently filling in a rectangle of land that at the time, lay between ancient woodlands. It's still surrounded on three sides by those older woods. A few years ago I was most surprised to find a dormouse amongst a tarp in my trailer and realised there was a population living in the wood. I got myself a Natural England licence to handle them and put up lots of boxes. They were doing very well until we experienced 'The Beast From the East' (a storm in early 2018 which brought a cold wave to Great Britain and Ireland, Wikipedia). Since then we haven't seen any signs of dormice in the wood. It's not productive coppice but I do cut bean poles and pea sticks for a few people locally who ask me for them.

CS: How did you come to coppicing?
MW: Well I should say I don't do much cutting these days but in the past I did have ambitions to be a hurdle maker; I got caught up with the romance of coppice work and hurdle making. I left college, well dropped out, and in those days, there were jobs to be had and places to live could be found for not much money. I worked at a brewery's sports ground with my dad for a while and later got a job in their wines and spirits department. At one point I went on a tour of Germany as a roadie with a guitarist called Mike Cooper, then toured the country with a mate, selling cheesecloth shirts. In 1975 I set up a wholefood shop in Reading with a friend, until in1982 we sold the business, expecting it to bring in enough money to enable us all to start farming in the West Country. It didn't and I was left with no job, no income and two children to support. So I started gardening for a living. At the same time, I wrote a letter to the Rural Development Council (or something similar), asking how I might go about making hurdles. They very kindly wrote back suggesting I contact Charlie Westbrook at the Herriard Estate, near Alton in Hampshire and Ernie Steel at Chase Wood near Sixpenny Handley in Dorset. I went to see both Charlie and Ernie and found them to be charming and welcoming. Charlie was at the time a man in his seventies, a fourth generation hurdle maker, no longer cutting hazel but still making hurdles. Passing on information and skills is so important. I learned a great deal from Charlie and Ernie and hopefully I've done a little to keep that chain alive. In fact a few years ago, when the National Hedge laying Championships took place near Wallingford, a middle aged man approached

me and told me I'd changed his life! He had taken part in a hedge laying course I ran quite a few years before and as a result, he'd quit his job and taken up hedge laying. I haven't made a wattle hurdle for a few years; arthritic hands mean I can no longer twist a rod. I find Voltarol and Ibuprofen help with the pain, but I just don't have the strength I once did. I never did fulfil my dream to call myself a hurdle maker.

CS: Do you regret that?
MW: No not really. I've managed to fit together my passion for being in the woods with family and a proper job. We still cook on a wood fired Rayburn in the cottage so I need to keep the firewood coming in and I've had access to some sweet chestnut locally and cut them to harvest poles for numerous gate hurdles.

CS: So you do have a proper job?
MW: Of course! I started gardening when I needed to feed the family in 1982 and I'm still doing it. We developed into a landscaping business, working for yuppies when there was plenty of money about before the crash, but then took whatever work was going in private gardens. I've worked for a couple of large private estate gardens for over thirty years. It's enjoyable and I like the close relationships I've developed with clients over the years.


[credit: Martin Wise]

The National Trust cottage in which Martin has lived for 50 years

CS: And how did you come to be involved with the CTVCG?
MW: I went to a very early NCFed meeting somewhere near Malvern and met the likes of Brian Williamson, Alan Waters and Dave Jackson. I went home from there fired up and somehow tracked down some local people who agreed to join the group. We have twenty plus members to start with.

CS: And now?
MW: Still twenty - we're trying to extract subs of £15 from members at the moment, which can be difficult. Then we must pay NCFed!

CS: We have the same problems in East Anglian, just finding time to ask people for their subs let alone chasing them for payment. So what of the future; where do you see yourself in a few years' time?

MW: I'm very lucky to have a secure tenancy with the National Trust for my home so have no plans to move.

CS: How about the future of coppicing?
MW: I'm very much in it for the biodiversity benefits for a wood. In addition to biodiversity, coppicing does bring other benefits to a wood, particularly for rural employment and landscape. I've been involved in some discussions with managers of large estates where shooting is the main interest. They still believe unmanaged hazel coppice has value enough to attract cutters and are resistant to the view that those cutters would, in reality, need paying for the restoration phase.


[credit: Effie Jessop]

Martin with kettle and laid hedge

CS: Do you think there really is a future for coppice as rural employment? It must be even more expensive to live around here than where I do in Bedfordshire!
MW: There seems to be a strong demand for products at the moment, particularly for stakes and binders for hedge laying and material for continuous weave fencing. So there's money to be made but it would be very difficult to make enough to live here, even in rented accommodation. I've become very interested in the developments at the Hardwick Estate, which is a large, privately owned estate, very near here that is in the process of becoming a community owned charity. Many of your readers will know NCFed's ex-chair, Dave Jackson. He has a workshop on the estate and is involved in that process. Being a member of our local parish council, I've seen the planning process as it affects things. On one part of the estate, it's inspirational to see how small businesses can be set up in a sustainable and sharing way. There are even accommodation pods there, linked to the businesses, which already have planning permission. So there is hope!

CS: And what about the beret, has that been part of the Martin Wise look for decades?
MW: No I bought it quite recently, in the early 1990s (recently being a relative term – Ed), but it's worn out sadly. So I've just ordered a new one.

CS: It's been a pleasure talking to you Martin, thank you.

A Coppice Winter With Volunteers

Like most of you, I have been coppicing all winter. But, for me and the rest of our gang it's a bit different. It's not our day job, we are volunteers, coppicing an ancient woodland site in south-west Cambridgeshire. The ancient ash-hazel boulder clay woods of the area are quite fragmented in an arable landscape, some private, some Wildlife Trust owned. Ours is a Wildlife Trust-owned SSSI, with oxlips, bluebells and other ancient woodland flora. We work an eight-year cycle of around 0.15 hectares per season, and produce and sell as much product as we can. I thought it might be interesting to document the year.

For us, coppicing is Saturdays. Most of our volunteers come out of Cambridge city or surrounding villages, and it's not the solitary activity of many woodland workers. This is social. The start of the season is always, for me, a bit tense. Despite the fabulous autumn colours of early October, the arrangement of the plots means the access edge from the main public cross-ride is a wall of bramble and blackthorn with a bit of coppice. We have to keep this open whilst we work. But, by November, I always feel we



[credit: Louise Bacon]

One of Louise's volunteers gets stuck into some very tasty looking hazel

are well under way, with swathes of hazel poles ready for processing. Mid winter brings a burning day, a small bonfire of the thorny rubbish and bramble which we have no capacity to turn into something saleable, and the catharsis of having lots of open ground to prep and bundle. And there's always a share-lunch. Then it's fingers-crossed that the woodland rides stay dry enough for extraction. Some years we DO get a mudbath, but the last two have been worryingly dry.

Where do our volunteers come from and how do we manage this arrangement?

Well, the Wildlife Trust have various volunteer wardens with work parties advertised through their website, so some folk find us that way. Some have simply joined us on this twenty year journey via friends, the Cambridge Conservation Volunteers or just by wandering through the wood and asking to join in.



A badger-tube, used to maintain their access to the coup whilst keeping muntjac out

We are lucky to have access to a small collection of tools (The WT would supply what we want if needed). Some of our trusted volunteers bring their own, which makes it easier when new folk turn up. We don't expect anyone to have skills or knowledge at first; taking time in teaching and letting folk find the task that suits them is our way, be it cutting hazel, making product, loppering bramble or simply moving prepared bundles.

The increase in muntjac has added an end-of-cutting task to our annual rota - moving Heras fencing panels. Around three years of growth is fenced in from muntjac, which necessitates the moving of panels from other coupes on an annual basis. But the benefits to the coppice growth and flowers still outweigh the increased growth of bramble and the hassle of carrying panels around. Just sometimes, a badger decides that under the fence is where it needs to go. Luckily, we can call on Trust staff to put in a badger-tube. This prevents muntjac from following but maintains badger routes. April product-making is another stressful time - as blackbirds and robins choose nest sites we hope that's not in one of our product piles - and defining volunteer work routes through the plot to minimise trampling of flowers. This is usually our peak visitor period, as the wood is permissively open to the public. There's more footfall then, people flock to admire that first intense flush of green and the wonderful spring flowers. This all feeds the body and soul of woodland workers and dog-walkers alike, but with us inside a fence it does feel a bit like being in the zoo!

Volunteer coppicing is a great way to get more folk engaged with this part of our cultural heritage – we have biologists, engineers, handy-men, proof-readers, programmers, retired people, students and social scientists. Locals bring their kids (yes, we take all ages and TRUST them. Usually the ten year old is a real asset to coppicing) and essentially anyone wanting regular hard work and a sense of connectedness to the landscape and traditional crafts. Each year the Trust gets money from product sales, and we can spend spring and summer resting on our laurels till October swings by again.

Louise Bacon
Chair of the East Anglian Coppice Network



Hazel poles at ride-side, ready for sale



Inside Martin's very well-appointed charcoal maker's hut

[credit: Min Burdett]

The Charcoal-Maker's Symphony

At night, alone in the peaceful woods, the charcoal-maker was resting in his home-made shepherd's hut (a fusion of a pre-war trailer and a corrugated iron chicken shed). The ring kiln was going well and he could catch a few winks before the next inspection.

He was woken by a gentle rumble in the distance. Perhaps a drought-busting thunderstorm was on its way. The rumbles came closer, then the first plink of rain was heard on the hut's roof. Then another, and another. He heard a ping as the rain hit the camp fire's metal cover. And now he could hear a different plink from the shed next door.

The rumbles came closer and then a loud bang. The plinks of rain turned into a continuous, hammering roar on his roof. Flash, bang, crash went the thunderstorm. And again. And again. The charcoal-maker could feel the last one shake his hut. It must be overhead.

Gradually the storm receded. No more bangs now. Just rumbles.

A blackbird could not delay its dawn song any longer. Between the gentle rumbles its call rang out. A wren joined in. The warblers and song thrushes entered the competition to welcome the May morning. The pheasant added its discordant croak. Any remaining rumbles were soon lost in the joyous medley.

The rain had stopped. The charcoal-maker poked his head out of the hut to see if the kiln had finished its work. A memorable burn!

Min Burdett (as told by Martin Shenton)
Both members of the Rockingham Forest Group



Ashley with hired help at Horton CP

[credit: Ashley Martin]

A New Project - Coppicing at Horton Country Park, Epsom

Back in November 2025 Nick Owen, previously of Horton Country Park (HCP), contacted the Sussex and Surrey Coppice Group (SSCG) to see if anybody would take on the majority of the coppicing from the park volunteers, releasing them to do other tasks around the site. With a bit of haggling I offered to do this as it was relatively close to me compared to the rest of the SSCG crowd. Unfortunately, it wasn't until mid-January that I got the final go-ahead to start and with a lot of commitments already in the January diary, this didn't leave a great deal of time to make an impact. The bluebells were already starting to sprout so we chose a coupe in which trampling could be minimised.

Access at HCP is very good and apart from the rather marshy bits this spring, the flat ground and mixed woodland were quite easily workable. The coupe turned out to be primarily a mixture of hazel and lime coppice



Ashley's partner helps get the job under control

[credit: Ashley Martin]

with oak standards and an understory of hawthorn, dogwood, spindle and patches of bramble.

A mate came in with me for a couple of days to blitz the key coppice stools and create piles of material for me to process after February when I would be on my tod. He went off with a pile of material and was well pleased. Then over a variety of full and half days, at not too frenetic a pace, my partner and I brought the job under control. Everything was processed, bundled, moved, perimeter cut and fencing sorted. Some business links have been made with a couple of allotment societies, plus a few individual customers, but nobody is going to make a fortune here!

There is still much to do, but in the time available this is satisfactory progress.

[credit: Ashley Martin]

Great use of the NCFed/Small Woods/Forestry Commission coppice sign

Next autumn, the aim is to finish the work in Sherwood Glade and start a coupe in Four Acre Wood. This will hopefully involve groups from the scouts, the Mole Valley Runners and the Friends of HCP. Ultimately, one of the key plans behind all this was to get more people involved in outdoor activities in general and coppicing/traditional woodland practices in particular. We will see!

Ashley Martin
SSCG and NcFed Director – Group Support



Fake wound, fake arterial bleeding, real tension - treating a saw gash mock up

[credit: Louise Bacon]

First Aid for woodlanders

At our regional AGM in February, we decided to spend surplus funds (beer sales at the Gathering) on subsidising some training for members. First Aid was popular, so we agreed to find a provider and covered part of the course cost for each member who wanted to train, which turned out to be nine of us. The dull, boring office-type first aid really isn't that relevant to a life in the woods with sharp things, engines and tree-shaped hazards. In my day-job (albeit at a desk), we use a company to train our first aiders (many of whom do work in remote outdoor locations), based in Suffolk, called DAC Education. DAC offer first aid training for a wide range of work and leisure situations including farm, construction, outdoors and schools. We got in touch and sent a cohort on one of their spring courses in Suffolk. The feedback was truly excellent. Further west, there were four of us that still needed training, so we teamed up with the Cambridge Conservation Volunteers and organised a course of our own.



[credit: Louise Bacon]

Hello, can you hear me?!

It's a full-on eight hours, in a shed or outdoors, with Dave Coyle, or one of his other instructors, all of whom have current and real-time experience with ambulance support work, lowland or mountain rescue, etc. It's not about endlessly trying to get your bandage neat. It's fake blood, stopping a 'real' bleeding wound that's pumping away (modern first aid devices are fantastic), and of course, resuscitation and using a defibrillator. It's never boring - tangents were often travelled down, but after eight hours we all felt confident to cope with any mishap in the woods. Our group was a mix of folk who had never done this before and those who had done many courses in many different styles, but that really seemed to help with group knowledge.

Who knew you could register a phone to text 999 because someday actually phoning could be tricky? Do you know how What3Words works, where the nearest defibrillator to your worksite is, how to take vinyl gloves off without getting blood or other substances on yourself, that breaking ribs during CPR is pretty normal or how tight a tourniquet needs to be? All part of a day's training which left us all better, more rounded, injury-aware woodlanders.

If your group need a first-aid retrain, we strongly recommend you take a look at what DAC Education offer – they also do a wide variety of other outdoor training at reasonable prices.

Louise Bacon,
Chair of the East Anglian Coppice Network
louise.bacon2@btinternet.com
Contact for DAC Education



EACN member Faye fails to fully get to grips with a monster beech pollard

[credit: Guy Lambourne]

East Anglian Coppice Network

The East Anglian Coppice network met in March for a belated AGM at Wakelyns, the site of NCFed's 2024 Gathering. After a morning of business - discussion of coppice grants, heritage, history, hedging, the coppice season and more, we headed out for a short Wakelyns walk. Later some of us ventured to nearby South Elmham Minster, an atmospheric site, possibly the seat of a tenth century bishop that contained, as well as the ruins of the Saxon Minster, some fantastic veteran pollard beech trees. At some point in the past, it was presumably more notable for its elms, given the name.

A big thank you to David at Wakelyns for the free meeting space, Rachel and Fay for cakes, Michael our stepping-down treasurer for his work over the last couple of years and of course, to our geographically dispersed and diverse members from across five counties for attending.

Louise Bacon,
Chair



Just a few of SSCG's puzzling tree ID specimens

[credit: Ashley Martin]

Sussex and Surrey Coppice Group

Skills Days – Focus: Tree Identification

So, another of the Group's bi-weekly Skills Day, lots of socialising, bbq, teas and coffees BUT this Saturday the pressure's on for the Tree Identification Competition! Absolutely nobody's getting competitive and nobody's looking for sneak previews. Twenty two branches/trunk sections – one international interloper and one double. We all took a sheet and wrote down our answers. Around the table it became a little more relaxing – species revealed – mark your own! Ultimately, we all crumbled and it ended up becoming a general discussion. It was comforting that our tree gurus were struggling on a couple but small comments and each answer helped the learning process. Graham Bowbrick revealed little, Tina Bowbrick did very well! Say no more... But, everybody had some success. I did fine. And no, I'm not telling you my score! A quality event.

Apart from that we had a variety of other stuff going on: spoon carving of course, some tool handles, sign making, some kids involved with the Group were making a coppice product den and I showed a couple of families the Junior Coppice Award I'd said I'd create for Junior Coppicing Activities. All good!

Ashley Martin
SSCG Show Sec & NCFed Rep

Hampshire Coppice Group

On 29th May a successful members' networking meeting was held at The Woolpack public house just outside Alton. During a lively and convivial evening, it became clear that the event Hampshire CG's members are looking forward to most is the Hampshire Wood Fair. This is a joint venture with Butser Ancient Farm, at their site near Petersfield and not far from Guildford, over the weekend of 11th - 12th July. See our Instagram page for details of the hurdle and spar making competitions on the Sunday with big prize money at stake along of course, with prestige. All hurdle and spar makers are welcome

[Editor's note – hopefully this edition will be in your inbox before this date, allowing you time to rush to Butser with spar hook in hand].

Yours in green woodwork,

P S Jameson,
Hampshire Coppice Group Rep

Dorset Coppice Group

Dorset Coppice Group's Living Classroom was venue 36 (out of 294) for Dorset Arts Week from 23rd May to 7th June 2026 (we work long weeks in Dorset). Ten colleagues were exhibiting and at least two were on site every day. As well as talking about the work on show, they managed a live craft demonstration. Some visitors came along to talk coppice as opposed to art, so we are spreading the word.



[credit: P Jameson]

The view out over the counter in DCG's living classroom

For those of you who were not lucky enough to make it to the county without a motorway, see Dorset Coppice Group's Instagram page.

Yours in green woodwork,

P S Jameson,
Dorset Coppice Group Rep

Coppicing In Coed Cefn, Crickhowell, Wales

NCFed Affiliated Coppice groups across the country work with various organisations, in a variety of ways. Here, Jane Lee from Llangattock Community Woodland explains how they have successfully partnered with the Woodland Trust.

[credit: Jane Lee]

Coppice regrowth protected by a dead hedge

Llangattock Community Woodland (LCW) is a community based charity run by volunteers in the Llangattock/ Crickhowell area of Wales. Operating for over a decade, we run weekly work sessions attended by around 20 volunteers.



[credit: Jane Lee]

LCW members planting whips following coppicing

Our project focuses on improving individual physical and mental health together with enhancing the health and biodiversity of local woodlands. We offer a range of activities from woodland craft through to felling and have several volunteers with chainsaw tickets.

For the last four years, we have worked in partnership with the Woodland Trust in a much-loved woodland in Crickhowell. Known locally as Bluebell Wood, Coed Cefn is a mixed woodland with lovely beech glades carpeted in spring with bluebells. Within the woodland there is the earthwork of an Iron Age fort.

Under the guidance of the Woodland Trust, LCW volunteers are coppicing the woodland. The wood has been divided into eight coupes, each one offering a different challenge due to the access and terrain. In each coupe coppiced we leave several standards (identified by Woodland Trust staff) and fell the remaining trees. The felled timber is removed and taken to LCW's base, processed into firewood or charcoal which is sold locally.

Following felling we create dead hedges for wildlife with the brash and guided by the Woodland Trust we have been experimenting with aftercare. In the first coupe we planted hazel nuts (in hindsight almost certainly just a feast for the squirrels!), in the second and third coupes we planted a mix of cherry and hazel saplings and in the fourth we planted hazel in rows with the aim of the area becoming a working coppice.

Following clearing we have seen a proliferation of

bluebells, foxgloves, bramble and some natural regeneration of species such as holly, sycamore and birch.

For LCW, this is a welcome partnership with the Woodland Trust. The work raises our profile locally, offers an opportunity for volunteers to fully use their chainsaw skills and provides a source of firewood and charcoal which is an income stream for the charity. The Woodland Trust now has a woodland that's managed at low cost, by a skilled workforce. A productive and mutually beneficial partnership.

Jane Lee
Trustee, Llangattock Community Woodland



[credit: Jane Lee]



New coppice in Oxfordshire beckons a new cutting season

[credit: Alex Musson]

The enterprising young furniture maker Jacob Marks, who approached NCFed a couple of years ago for advice, is powering along and has just published his research called ‘Coppicing the Future.’ Funded initially by a grant, he has since made some exquisite furniture using products from Rawhaw Wood, Northamptonshire, owned by Carolyn Church & Hugh Ross. Wattle Collection comprises so far of a beautiful bed, framed in oak and with the headboard made from woven hazel, like an exquisitely made hurdle. Also some stools with ash/hazel and a hazel-framed mirror. We wish him luck and hope to see more – go to jacobmarks.co.uk and then find ‘Coppiced Hazel’ under ‘Collections’.

My experimentation with the anti-deer browsing stuff called Trico hasn’t gone well but I’d welcome feedback from others. It’s expensive at £50 for 500ml, in a concentrate. I planted some cherry trees and had a three-

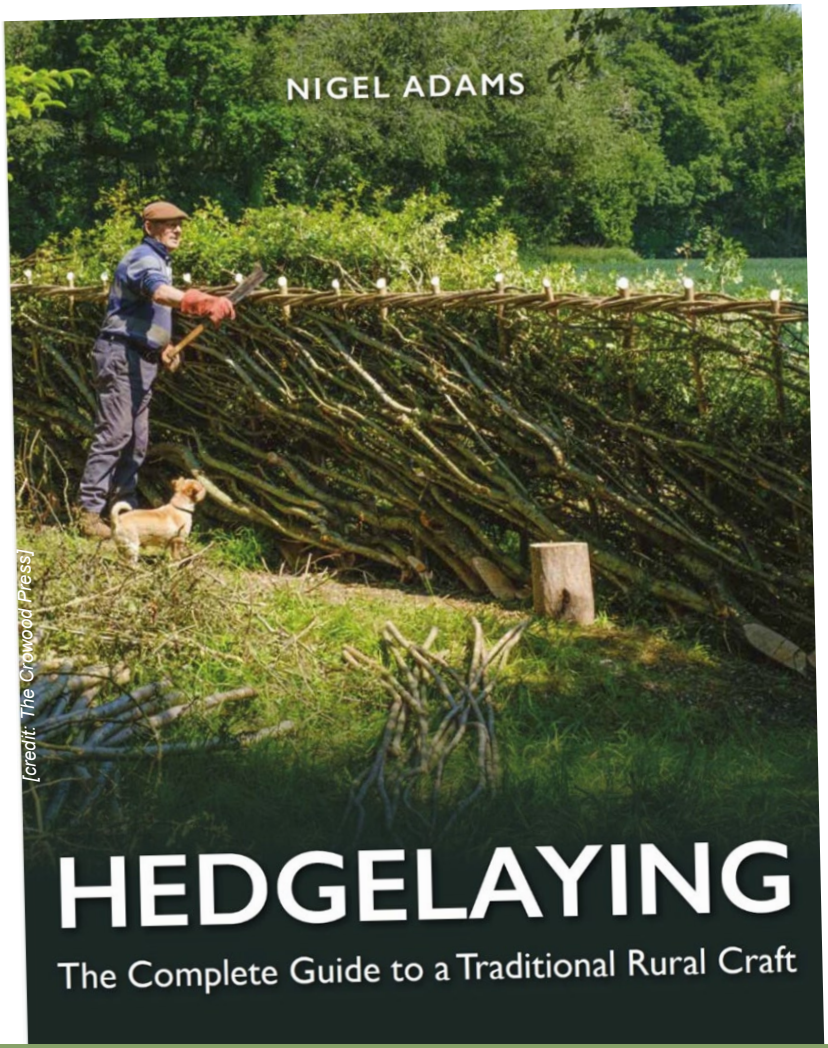
day gap in which to return and install proper guards. I said to the landowner, 'It's fine I'll spray them with Trico, to tide them over', having done an AI search that insists unconvincingly that yes, it protects from rabbits too. Anyway three days later one of the tree's main stems had been completely severed, possibly by a known muntjac. The fact that it hadn't gone on to 'browse' the leaves isn't much of a consolation. I also lost approximately 35 out of 50 hazel and hornbeam whips despite having erected anti-deer fencing and sprayed them all with Trico. I think rabbits played a role in this instance. I'm sure more research is in order but anecdotes count too.

Onto happier news, I've got access to a new 25 acre wood in very southern Oxfordshire for next season, on a 'you coppice it, I won't charge you' basis with the farmer. It has difficult access and is on a steep slope so I'm full of trepidation but have decided to invest in a TCF Engineering wide brash cart with an auxiliary drawbar that makes it towable off-road whether hitched to a quad bike or a car. A degree of nervousness about all this because with VAT and delivery from Wales it comes in at nearly £800, but my first big order is in the book and I've got to move forwards.

The hedgelayers seem to be on a roll with three books recently published – Paul Lamb's *Of Thorn & Briar: A Year with the West Country Hedgelayer* has just gone to paperback having become a bestseller; and then we have Richard Negus' *Words from the Hedge: A Hedgelayer's View of the Countryside* and Nigel Adams' *Hedgelaying: The Complete Guide to a Traditional Rural Craft*, both the latter published for the first time in 2026.



I'm not going to review them here. Lamb trundles around in a converted horsebox caravan and evokes the pastoral, with a lot of hot sweet tea. You can tell however that it's bloody hard work to live so simply and make ends meet. Negus, originally a soldier, has absolutely terrific stories to tell and ranges across the geography of his own Suffolk and East Anglia, essentially at the intersection of farming, land management, game keeping and conservation. He's full of vinegar and another substance but you warm to him. He's done battle with DEFRA and it's all in there, jovially. Adams is extremely well known in hedging circles and his book de-mystifies every secret of hedge laying, with sections reviewing more regional styles than are supported by the National Hedgelaying Society, and even international hedgelaying styles and approaches: it's encyclopaedic and intelligently illustrated, really a landmark book that will become the standard reference work in this space for years to come.



[credit: The Crowood Press]

The only reason for mentioning them is that I'm struck by the frequency of the words 'coppice' and 'coppicing'. There are now so many knackered hedges that coppicing them to the ground is the only option, leaving the odd younger stem or standard and otherwise replanting. The other trend is towards conservation style hedging where you utilize 'crops' or living stakes and use little or no binders, recognising that the ultimate goal is more laid hedge rather than slavish adherence to a fastidious style. The conservation style is twice as fast and with the traditional 'stock proof' requirement so often lacking these days, the bigger need is density of habitat for wildlife. This could be bad for us as suppliers of stakes and binders and when I look at my numbers for the past season, the binders were only being ordered at half the rate of the stakes – exactly for the reason I've stated. This was one customer with a big farm hedge, a limited grant to cover the work and a request to go as fast and as far as possible within a tight budget, never mind the fancy binding.

On a final note, I hope everyone can catch a break during the spring and summer and get their spirits back after that endless rain we had in the first two months of 2026.

By Hedge and Wall

By hedge and wall our land was bound, ancient skills were all around
In copse and spinney and woodland glade, a simple living could be made.

The tracks and paths of ancient man - to journey them a life would span
But now the tracks are turned to stone or left untouched and overgrown.

Hedgerows left to die and wither, land stripped naked, fields made bigger
Walls of stone lie crushed and broken, our planet's heart and soul - a token.

But the oft abandoned natural way, need not be lost or thrown away
For all the needs of man and beast, abound in plenty - a natural feast.

Each blade of grass, each leaf, each stem would help us all, if we help them
For our future lies within the earth that man has spoilt - destroyed its worth.

We have come so very close, to losing all that matters most
But now before it gets too late, we must begin to change our fate.

The hedge and wall can once again, be managed well for all to gain
And copse and spinney and woodland glade, now being managed by chainsaw blade.

Tracks can now be cleared and marked, where once more ancient feet had walked
Yes, now it's time for us to act, to make with nature a lifelong pact.

We'll hedge and wall and coppice trees, we'll sow and plant for birds and bees
So when our time in this life ends, we'll feel at least we've made amends.

Jilly Snelson – 1997



[credit: Kiri Roberts]

Speckled Wood butterfly on dogwood.



[credit: Kiri Roberts]

About Jilly



We started our business 'Countryside Conservation Services' in 2000 and in 2004 joined the Dorset Coppice Group. After a couple of years, we both became directors, Jilly as Secretary/Treasurer/Classroom bookings and liaison with the Forestry Commission. Jilly's clerical and organisational skills were just what the DCG needed at the time.

After many years, and having increasing health issues, Jilly stood down, leaving the Group much stronger, to concentrate on her other passion - writing poetry.

Sadly, Jilly passed away in January 2023.

Pete Snelson

About the NCFed

The National Coppice Federation (NCFed) was formed in 2013 with the aim of uniting already existing regional coppice groups under one banner. Since then more local groups have formed and become affiliated, growing our membership and reach considerably.

Aims

The NCFed has three key aims:

1. to promote coppicing as a form of woodland management that provides economic, ecological and culturally significant benefits;
2. to bring together regional coppice groups and provide a unified voice for the industry; and
3. to encourage and promote best practice

Regional Coppice Groups

Regional groups are the backbone of the NCFed. Some have been established for many years and are very active in their local areas, organising regular social meetings and training courses for members and running events for the public. Others are smaller scale and focus on encouraging networking, cooperation and support between coppice workers.

Coppicing across the country

The National Coppice Federation is the umbrella organisation for local coppice groups from across the UK.

These groups in turn have individual members. They vary in size, both in terms of membership and geographical area, and also in scope, with some groups being extremely active and others less so.

Membership Benefits

• You'll be part of a national network that shares skills and ideas and better understands the bigger coppicing picture;
• You'll be part of a regional group that will connect you with local, likeminded individuals that you can cooperate, collaborate and socialise with;
• You'll be part of a movement that aims to improve the coppicing industry and to find solutions to problems and issues;
• You'll be eligible for discounted insurance through our Insurance Scheme;
• You'll be able to attend our fantastic annual Gathering at a reduced rate.

How to join

You will need to find and join your local coppice group; membership fees include a sum that is paid to the NCFed nationally. If there is no local group to join (coverage of the UK is not yet complete), why not consider setting up a new group? Alternatively, there is now an option to join a holding group designed for anyone not in an existing group's area. Full details on the website.



[credit: Guy Lambourne]

Receive Cleft Stick and other important information from NCFed by signing up for our mailing list at:

ncfed.org.uk/news

National Coppice Federation

Supporting the Coppice Industry