WELCOME
What a year! I cant quite believe that it is December and that Christmas is less than a week away... It’s time to grab a mince pie and reflect on the past 5 months...

As always our members and staff have been bustling away in the woods. This edition of the e-newsletter brings news of the CWA annual conference, Santa’s visit to Laggan, Shakespeare taking over Morvern and funding success for SWAT... and lots more news from across the country...

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas. Super solstice and happy healthy 2012! Ros

Details on how to get your groups news into the next edition of the CWA newsletter can be found on the final page of this publication.

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CWA NEWS

CWA CONFERENCE 2011 — Thank you!

The 2011 CWA conference has been and gone – and what a weekend it was! We experienced our first Shakespearean heckle, jazz hands in full swing at the ceilidh, “the best selection of sandwiches at a buffet... ever!” An enthusiastic line up of speakers, interesting workshops and site visits... not to mention the surreal dream we all had about linear forests...

We had a blast organising and taking part in this wonderful event, and we wanted to say thank you to everyone who made the event such a success. CWA Staff and Directors are delighted with the feedback received and a full report on the weekend activities will be available in due course on the Community Woodlands Association website www.communitywoods.org

Turn the page to see a selection of photos from the weekend. All our photos are now available to view on our new Flickr photo-share site www.flickr.com/photos/communitywoods/sets/
CWA EMPLOY MEDIA AND PR CONSULTANT... For you...

CWA are delighted to announce that we have employed the services of Chris Kane of Bee Heard Media to support the association and our membership in the promotion and publicity of the excellent work of community woodland groups in Scotland. We are looking for you to send your news and press releases direct to us so that Chris can work his magic and get all of us the coverage we deserve.

We are interested in all stories – no matter how big or small, if your group has an event, a celebration, been awarded funding or you wish to promote a particular issue, please get in touch.

rosslyn@communitywoods.org

GROWING WOODLANDS UPDATE... Forest Gardening in Scotland

Kilfinan Tree to Table event Aug 2011 - For those of you with good broadband connection, check out Kilfinan Community Forest Trust’s community event “From Tree to Table” by clicking on the link to YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgaAjV8bj50

Glasgow’s Growing Woodlands event October 2011 – unfortunately this event had to be postponed due to a lack of interest from delegates. The day was set to be an interesting mix of expert speakers and discussion about forest gardening in Scotland. We hope to host a similar event in 2012.

Rebecca’s Farm DVD – Rebecca’s Farm was originally screened on BBC 2, a documentary following Rebecca Hopkins in her journey to create a sustainable future for her family farm; the documentary explores the potential impact of peak oil and the inevitable rise in the cost of food, concluding that Forest Gardening (Agro-Forestry) is the way forward. CWA have a copy of this fantastic film (which we screened during the 2010 conference in Callander) it is available on loan for our members; please contact Ros if you would like to borrow the film. Further information on Rebecca’s Farm can be found by following this link http://www.coveredinbees.org/node/255

E-Bulletin – From January 2012 CWA will be including a community growing section in our monthly e-bulletin. This will be used to promote training, jobs and funding in the community growing sector. If you wish to contribute to this section, please get in touch with CWA Woodland Advisor, Ros Mills.

Our Friends – CWA would like to thank all the organisations and individuals that have supported the Growing Woodlands project throughout 2011. Particular thanks the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, The Agro Forestry Research Trust and Greenway Consulting for their advice, promotion and encouragement.

Get Involved – does your group have an interest in producing food in or around your community woodland? CWA can help. Growing Woodlands – forest gardening in Scotland is a project set up and run by CWA to support member groups in the development of their own community growing space. Working with partners already involved in community gardening and those practicing Agro-Forestry we aim to help support any type of growing (from allotment beds to multi-layered plantings). If your group are interested in taking part in the project, or wish to discuss an idea relating to community growing, please get in touch with CWA Woodland Advisor, Ros Mills.
EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES PROJECT UPDATE—Highlands

As part of the milestones for the LEADER funding for the Employability Services Project, Diane has been busy writing reports about each of the groups involved – below are links to those that are completed so far. The rest of the reports are currently a work in progress and will go up onto the CWA website in due course. Links below will open a word document for you. Please let Social Enterprise Development Officer, Diane Oliver know if you are not able to access them.

Abriachan Forest Trust - http://db.tt/T7E1FDIT
Assynt Foundation - http://db.tt/GcTmcTy
Dunnet Forestry Trust - http://db.tt/Am7EAXa
Laide & Aultbea Community Woodland - http://db.tt/FG7d6RTp

Diane has also been busy promoting the possibilities of enterprise through wood products. She has successfully hosted two events on the theme, videos from these events are now available on our YouTube channel and links to the videos are below.

Wood Products Workshop Part 1 http://youtu.be/SHu5bGN7X0w
Wood Products Workshop Part 2 http://youtu.be/TIuaQGc58ls

CWA MEMBER NEWS

DUNBAR COMMUNITY WOODLANDS – East Lothian

Dunbar Community Woodland Group was delighted to receive the runner-up prize in the “Scotland’s Finest Woods” competition, run by the Central Scotland Green Network. The judges were particularly impressed with DCWG’s commitment to community engagement and the programme of improvements to Lochend Woods, made possible with WIAT funding (Woodland In and Around Towns), administered by Forestry Commission Scotland.

The photo shows Scottish Government Environment Minister, Stewart Stephenson, presenting the award to Isobel Knox, former DCWG convenor and current Community Liaison link. Isobel gave thanks to Mark Page, Forestry Consultant for expertly implementing the Management Plan, and to CWA and Forestry Commission advisors for all their help and support. The second photo is of Isobel, DCWG committee member Ute Penny, and Forestry Consultant Mark Page. The presentation took place in the Scottish Government Pavilion at the Highland Show back in June.

Isobel Knox, Dunbar CW
STEWARTON WOODS ACTION TRUST (SWAT) – North Ayrshire

The SWAT volunteers have been incredibly busy this year, with works taking place in Lainshaw Woodlands throughout the year. Including the planting of 90 trees (donated by McLaren’s Nurseries) to enhance the areas of the woodland lacking in native species, the group repainted the benches and upgraded steps and drainage.

Back in 2010 the group also took on the search for funding for the maintenance and upgrading of Cunningham Watt Park and thanks to successful application to LEADER funding, part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme, the Lottery funded ‘Awards for All’ and donations given by Stewarton Fundraisers, the Roundtable and private donations, SWAT were able to forge ahead with a number of tasks in 2011, this included a completely new bridge, a new path from the bridge to Cunningham Watt Road, repair and “make safe” of four stepped areas. Upgrading of footpaths, making them safer with better gradients, removal of old bridge and handrails, and removal of concrete bridge support. The groups plans for the future of the park do not stop at pathways and lighting - with hopes of refurbishing wrought-iron work, upgrading seating and installation of information boards; to name but a few of the groups ideas.

SWAT Newsletter

LAIDE AND AULTBEA COMMUNITY WOODLANDS – North West Highlands

2011 has been a productive year for Laide Wood the group have installed 8 nature trail boards in the woodland, adding yet another facet to the ever growing points of interest to note when taking your woodland constitutional. These boards not only offer information on the existing flora and fauna, but bearing in mind they should have a useful life of twenty years, they also represent a look at some things that have a realistic chance of establishing over the next two decades.

To complement the installation of the new interpretation boards the group launched the first ever Laide Wood Quiz at the end of July. Aimed at youngsters visiting the woods, the quiz encourages those walking round the woodland to use the new boards to find the answers to the given questions. For the launch, two entry sheets ages 5 – 8 and 9 – 13 were available from the butcher’s shop, Aultbea, where the completed forms were returned for checking. Those returned with the correct answers received a prize – A Laide Wood pencil! The names of those with all correct answers will be advertised on the notice board in Laide Wood car park and on the group’s web page www.laidewood.org.uk.

A recent newsletter from the group stated that the Quiz “is part of our commitment to continue to improve the Laide Wood experience with a focus on wildlife and nature giving both enjoyment and education to our youngsters.”

Laide and Aultbea Newsletter

WOOPLAW COMMUNITY WOODLAND – Scottish Borders

This is one for all you techy folk – Wooplaw Community Woodland’s gadget loving members have been putting modern technology to use to promote their woodland. The group have discovered and made use of a fantastic App that you can download to your smart phone. The App (360 Panorama) allows you to take 360° photos of your woodland (or anything else you fancy) and upload them to your website! You can pan around the photo, zoom in and get your bearings with the built in compass... Great eh... the app costs about 69p from the Apple App store and is really simple to use.

You can see the 360° photo from Wooplaw – with a great view of the log cabin, bbq area and fire pit by following this link http://360.io/vzm933. Please note that the link does not work well with older versions of Internet Explorer, for best results download Google Chrome.

Bob Fleet, Wooplaw CW
ECHLINE COMMUNITY WOODLAND—South Queensferry

The Echline Community Woodland volunteers in South Queensferry held their second annual ‘Big Prune & Bonfire’ event on Saturday 12th November 2011. The group were joined by 10 extra bodies from the Lothian Conservation Volunteers who made a big difference and proved that many hands make light work. The ground was damp from the night before but clouds gave way to beautiful sunshine and conditions were perfect for a roaring bonfire which had no difficulty in getting going.

Lunch was some wonderful homemade soup heated up in the embers of the fire. A great day was had by all! The group are now looking forward to 2012 which will be the woodland's 20th birthday celebration.

_Huw Thomas, Echline CW_

GREENFERRY (THE VAT RUN) – South Queensferry

GreenFerry is one of 85 groups in Scotland who were recently awarded the RBS Community Force award (£6,000) for their Vat Run project. The Vat Run is a series of new mountain bike trails, pump tracks and jumps currently in construction at Port Edgar, South Queensferry. The project has had a great deal of support from locals and from those who are keen on mountain biking in the Edinburgh and Lothian’s Area. With over 328 votes cast for the project, it was a clear winner. Well done to everyone involved!

The enthusiasm for the project can be seen on the groups Facebook page (the Vat Pack (https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/124387957577414/)) and a video covering the development of the trails can be viewed on YouTube by following the link below:  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9phanOx9-A&noredirect=1
A significant moment for community woodland groups in Scotland took place on Mull this August. Environment and Rural Affairs Minister Richard Lochhead and Education Minister Michael Russell visited North West Mull Community Woodland Company to witness NWMCWC Director (and future forest crofter) Iain Thompson sign a historic document that will allow the group to move forward with their plans to develop forest crofts in their woodland.

Colin Morrison chair of NWMCWC said on the day that “something entirely new has been created here and it is incredibly exciting to be there right at the very start. Our woodland crofters are sure to be the first of many in Scotland and we are proud to be pioneering new types of land access and use that will in time be seen to benefit many across the country”.

The first three forest crofts will be up to four hectares in size, and to prevent the all too familiar problem of crofts being purchased and decrofted, the agreement specifies that no more than 20% of the crofters land shall be open space. And should the crofters decide to give up their plot, the croft and land will be returned to the community company. Initial uses for the crofts are likely to include a tree nursery, agro-forestry, performance spaces and holiday accommodation.

Whoa! That's so cool" some younger members of the audience yelled when Puck (played by Jake Willis) zipped down from high up in the trees to follow up a command from his fairy king Oberon (played by Keith Adams). Achnaha Community Woods in Morvern was transformed into a magical world on Saturday the 18th and Sunday the 19th of June when a unique community production of Shakespeare’s comedy A Midsummer Night's Dream took place in these woods.

A Midsummer Night's Dream has often been played outdoors but this might be the first version in which the audience had to walk through the woods in order to see the whole story. The story which takes place on the eve of the wedding of Theseus (played by Eligio Moretti) and Hippolyta (played by Susan Taylor) revolves around the adventures of four young lovers (played by Kathy and Clara Montgomery, Douglas Taylor, and Fionn Claussen), a group of amateur actors (played by Stewart Malcolm, Donald Kennedy, Gordon French, Kay Malcolm and Veronique Walraven) and their interactions with Titania (played by Anne McNaughton), Oberon, Puck and the fairies (played by Kay and Ella Christian, Vaila Kennedy, Rachel Bolton, Floriana Lawrence and Iona Willis) who inhabit the woods. About 75 people came to the performances and their reactions have been overwhelming:

“Visually stunning” “I had to laugh so much that I was almost crying” “This was something else”

“I haven’t laughed so much in ages” “I smiled from the first scene all the way till the end”

A Midsummer Night's Dream was organised by the Morvern Community Woodlands Company.
Laggan Forest Trust – Cairngorms National Park

Santa visited Laggan Forest Trust at Wolfrax with his reindeer on Sunday 11th December. His grotto - fantastic teepee, was visited by over 150 people during the event! Santa’s elf Iona was on hand face-painting and story-telling, while the ‘‘main man’’ gave out gifts! There was a reindeer parade at lunch time that was a huge success. A Christmas Fair took place in the marquee and in the tack shed, providing the perfect opportunity to finish the Christmas shopping. Ali Meade kept everyone warm with some cracking Christmas tunes. Santa’s other elf Sandra and her helper elves provided warmth from within with soup, mulled wine, hot drinks, and hot dogs!

Neil Foote from Back Country Survival (honorary elf for the day) provided demonstrations on fire craft and outdoor cooking, including stick-baked bannocks over a real fire – yum! He used special elf magic to create Swedish candles and Norwegian stoves from single logs for lots of heat and light!

OTHER INTEREST

National Forest Estate Renewables
Community Self-development Option

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) has released details of the areas of the National Forest Estate that are available for community-led hydro developments. Communities now have an opportunity to develop proposals for renewable energy projects through the FCS’ National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS).

The available areas are detailed in maps accessed through a “map viewer” on the FCS website link to viewer from: http://www.forestry.gov.uk/communitiesandrenewables

Community groups now have until 30 June 2012 to submit an Expression of Interest Form (download it from FCS website). A similar process is planned for community-led wind energy projects and due to start around the end of January 2012 - keep checking the weblink.

CWA on Facebook – ‘‘like’’ us? Let us know...

CWA has established a Facebook “Page” to complement our Facebook Group. From what we understand about social media, Facebook is the way forward and is already one of best ways of promoting projects and people. One of the best things about a Facebook Page is that you can link with other users and groups by using the “like” button. www.facebook.com/pages/Community-Woodlands-Association-CWA/152665358133685

Our friends at Borders Forest Trust and Central Scotland Forest Trust have had pages up and running on Facebook for a while now and we are still lagging on our “likes” in comparison... but in the spirit of “healthy competition”… we want more friends than them! So we are encouraging our members to get online and show support for us.
Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. News sources from direct contact, group newsletters, group websites and Facebook updates!

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a very happy, healthy 2011.

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**NEWSLETTER—NEXT EDITION**

The CWA newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis during 2012 - with the first publication due to be sent to members in late February.

A deadline of the 24th February has been set for submitting stories. Please send your news to rosslyn@communitywoods.org for inclusion in the newsletter.

Alternatively if your group produce a newsletter / member update, please ensure that Ros is included in the mail distribution list and your stories will automatically be included.

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**CWA STAFF CONTACTS**

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