



## Woodland Heritage in Dumfries and Galloway, 2 Day Seminar



Exploring the corn drying kiln at Knockman Wood

*“This event has been supported by the Scottish Government Skills Development Scheme and the Robertson Trust.”*

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### **REPORT**

#### **Introduction**

“This report focuses on the **Woodland Heritage in Dumfries and Galloway** event delivered as part of the CWA Knowledge and Skills Development Scheme 2011/12. This event took place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012, training a total of 41 people. This report summarises this event and gives feedback on the success of the project“

#### **Purpose of event**

The purpose of this event was to bring together local experts and national consultants to discuss the woodland heritage of the Cree Valley as a forerunner to a new Cree Valley Woodland Heritage project currently being developed by Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust (CVCWT).

#### **Course Aims**

The seminars objectives were to raise awareness of the woodland heritage in the Cree Valley and to train participants in a range of research techniques and field feature recognition.

#### **Event Trainers**

**Peter Norman-** Dumfries and Galloway Council Biodiversity Officer

**Graham Roberts-** Dumfries and Galloway Library Archivist

**Archie McConnel-** McConnel Wood Products

**David Hawker-** Plant recorder for Kirkcudbrightshire; Botanical Society of British Isles

**Michael Ansell-** Forestry Commission Gaelic place name expert

**Peter Quelch-** Woodland Consultant

**Coralie Mills-** Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist

## Course Participants

Gerry Lewis
Stephen Blow
Elaine Abbot
Harry Henniker
Will Clark
Tara Lumley
Gabriel Vindt
Ian Cornforth
Alan G James
Gavin Chambers
Kirsty Robertson
Chris Barratt
Alex Dinsmore
Iona Dunbar
Hugh McKnight
Tony Brotherton
<a href="#">Graham Roberts</a>
<a href="#">Peter Norman</a>
Pete Robinson
Linda Moorhouse
<a href="#">Archie McConnel</a>
<a href="#">David Hawker</a>
<a href="#">Michael Ansell</a>
Jonathan Hudson
<a href="#">Peter Quelch</a>
<a href="#">Coralie Mills</a>
Philip Skinner
Joan Mitchell
Jean Bartlett
Jack Orchel
Pauline Orchel
Nick McCormick
Ed Iglehart
Jane Brann
Martin Webber
Alyne Jones
Richard Kay
Andrew Shankland
Margaret Shankland
Clair McFarlan
Anne Robinson

## Course Content

# Woodland Heritage in Dumfries & Galloway: 2 Day Seminar

DATES	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> and Friday 8th June 2012
HOST	CWA + CVCWT
LOCATION	Crown Hotel, Newton Stewart
NUMBERS	TBA
TUTORS	See below

### OUTLINE – Day 1

9.00-9.30	Registration/Tea & coffee	Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust (CVCWT)
9.30-9.45	Welcome, introductions, housekeeping	Pete/Linda, CVCWT
9.45-10.15	Overview of Woodland Heritage; What is it? Why study it? How to study it?	Peter Norman, Biodiversity Officer D&G Council
10.15-10.45	Dumfries & Galloway's map history & the value of maps for woodland heritage studies.	Graham Roberts, D&G library/archives
10.45-11.00	Tea break/Displays	
11.00-11.30	Timber in buildings in D&G before 1750; concepts of timber availability and shortage.	Archie McConnel, McConnel Wood Products
11.30-12.00	Plant indicators of Ancient Woodland in D&G	David Hawker; Plant recorder for Kirkcudbrightshire, Botanical Society of British Isles
12.00-12.30	Questions/discussion	All
12.30-1.30	Lunch	
1.30-4.30	Wood of Cree Site visit	All

OUTLINE - Day 2		
9.30-9.45	Introductions/ review of day 1	Peter Norman
9.45 -10.15	Place name evidence for Woodland and Hunting in Galloway & Carrick	Michael Ansell
10.15-10.45	Woodland Industry and crafts	Peter Quelch, Woodland Consultant
10.45-11.00	Tea break/displays	
11.00-11.30	Types of historic woodlands, veteran & worked trees, ecological evidence	Peter Quelch, Woodland Consultant
11.30-12.00	Tree-ring evidence	Coralie Mills, Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist
12.00-12.30	Field techniques/woodland archaeology	Coralie Mills, Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist
12.30-1.30	Lunch	
1.30-4.00	Knockman Wood site visit	All
4.00-4.30	Sum up and thank you/finish	Peter Norman/CVCWT

### Activities in brief

The delegates were treated to some fascinating and enlightening presentations from a range of local experts as well as professional consultants.

Peter Norman, D&G`s Biodiversity Officer kicked things off with an explanation of how the story of woodland heritage can be pieced together like a jigsaw using information from a variety of sources such as archaeologists, ecologists, archivists and many others. This was followed by Graham Roberts, D&G Library Archivist who explained how, using a sequence of old maps from Pont`s maps of 1584-1600 to the first edition Ordnance Survey maps of the 1840`s, we can unravel the history of woodlands.

Archie McConnell, McConnell Wood Products gave everyone a great insight into how historical events have affected the fluctuating fortunes of our woodlands and the influences on people`s lives. The packed morning programme was completed by David Hawker, the plant recorder for Kirkcudbrightshire and of the Botanical Society of the British Isles. David explained how a particular suite of plants called Ancient Woodland Indicators can be identified and used as an aid in identifying ancient woodlands.

Following an excellent buffet lunch, the afternoon was spent at the RSPB`s Wood of Cree reserve, a recognised ancient woodland and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Many ancient woodland indicator plant species were found and past uses of the woodland were indicated by the discovery of two charcoal platforms, where wood was converted into charcoal.

Day 2 was off to a flying start with an absorbing talk by Michael Ansell, whose passion for Gaelic place names and their meanings revealed the many Dumfries and Galloway names which have woodland connotations such as Killygowan, from the Gaelic `coille a' ghobain' which translates as `wood of the blacksmith'. The rest of the morning was shared between Peter Quelch, Woodland Consultant and Coralie Mills, Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist. Peter talked about woodland history and crafts with reference to a fantastic collection of books and tools which were on display at the seminar. He followed this with a presentation which illustrated how recognising the different growth forms of trees can give us information on the past management of the woodlands.

Last but not least, Coralie explained how analysing a core taken from the trunk of a tree can not only tell us the age of the tree, but much more such as growth rates. The presentations were completed with a talk from Coralie on how to investigate woodland archaeology and field techniques used, referring to a past case study as an example.

The final afternoon was spent at Knockman Wood, one mile from Newton Stewart which is to be an important woodland in CVCWT's new Cree Valley Woodland Heritage project. A demonstration of tree coring and much lively discussion and investigation of archaeological features and woodland tree forms more than made up for the damp weather and multitude of midges!

## **Conclusions**

The information discussed, skills learned, contacts made, offers of help made during the seminar will be used to plan and implement Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust's new Woodland Heritage project. A closing seminar for this project will hope to bring back together the people involved to discuss the findings of the project. Feedback was very positive from the event.

## Photos



A demonstration of `tree coring`



Discussions on a charcoal platform



Tools for woodland products

## Feedback from Participants

Total number of participants returning feedback was 22

### How did you hear about this event?

Cree Valley Community Woodland, Word of Mouth, LBAP group and CWA

Please rate the event against the following criteria, circling the appropriate statements:

	V.Good	Good	Fair	Poor	V.Poor
<b>Location</b>	14	8			
<b>Organisation</b>	18	3	1		
<b>Catering</b>	6	15	1		
<b>Facilities</b>	9	10	3		

### Do you feel that the event delivered your expectations?

Yes 19 No Partly 3

### If your answer was 'No' or 'Partly' please tell us why, and how we might improve things.

- Partly - felt the first afternoon was not organised to suit the number of people & the terrain with narrow paths which lead to a disjointed result.
- I found that aspects of the site visits were not well planned or with clear objectives. They were very much specific to the visited site and much of the content was not easily transferable to other woodlands. There was a lot of standing around (getting eaten by midges) whilst a point of purely local interest was discussed. On occasion it was more like a conversation between two people with little effort to project to the group.
- Guided walks sessions in the afternoons were not well coordinated, the size of the groups was too large and many stops appeared to be unplanned and much discussion had occurred before all participants had arrived

### Please tell us why you wanted to take part in this event?

- I've been interested in Wildlife for many years and wanted to learn more about the Woods and their history.
- I am a volunteer with CVCWT and I wanted to learn more about their new project
- Being an ecologist, I know about woodland from an ecological standpoint, but felt I had knowledge gaps with regard to the historical and heritage context of woodlands within the region
- general interest in woodlands and their history
- An event directly relevant to D&G, rather than other parts of Scotland/UK that are often the location for such events.
- To help to advise a forthcoming project
- my interest in planting and maintaining woods
- Working with the Ancient Tree Hunt and so there are obvious links.
- Personal interest, to get a broad based understanding of some of the background to ancient woodlands and the current thinking on preservation/conservation, etc
- I am a volunteer with Cree Valley Community Woodland Trust because I love trees and enjoy being outdoors. I was interested in finding out about so many different aspects of woodlands, especially the historical background to our local woods.
- I thought that the subjects looked appealing and had not seen many of these aspects offered in training courses before. In particular I hoped for tools to assist in interpreting the history of woodlands and using such knowledge to grow local interest and attachment.
- This is a subject area I am very keen on

- An opportunity to learn from experienced folk and two nice long walks in interesting countryside. To make the acquaintance of local people involved in various kinds and levels of woodland management
- Interest in subject matter. To learn more about a local area and techniques used to study subject. Visit the woodland areas with experts.
- Interest in woodland history
- To support local CVWCT group & their HLF woodland heritage project, & to support CWA.
- As a tutor, to follow up on introductory woodland heritage workshop run for CWA 2011
- To hear & learn from local experts & group members
- To get to know better the historic woods in the area
- A general interest in countryside matters with a particular fascination with maps. Woodland also features in my home situation.

**What benefits do you feel you gained by attending this event?**

- A widening of interpretation of woodlands by seeing them through others eyes, eg archaeology, woodland use and input from various disciplines
- I have learned much about lost skills, industries and crafts, I have learned about forest management and economics as well as the links between people and the archaeology of woodlands.
- Part of my current role involves providing ecological & environmental advice in relation to woodland management and long term forest design plans. I now feel that there is an additional "facet" relating to the historical and heritage context of new and/or existing woodlands, which may also require consideration, especially as forest designs now frequently incorporate natural reserve, open ground and woodland pasture areas; or are planned for areas where there is an ancient woodland recorded. I now feel I have some understanding to be able to provide more informed comment on such features.
- stimulated further interest - no specific plans to use
- Gained much local knowledge and some useful contacts. Will hopefully put some of the skills into action with CVCWT, but if not, they will be useful elsewhere.
- Great knowledge, ideas and networking opportunities. I will use these to develop our new project.
- will have a go at making things from wood and my general knowledge of woodland has been increased
- Networking opportunities with woodland managers. Gained information about tree aging which was useful in ATH context. Hopefully some of networking contacts will result in more records submitted to the ATH.
- Learnt a lot of information about different aspects of woodland, its history and how complicated it is to determine origin and use. Also how subjective the subject is overall. Intend to get involved with CVCWT to further the experiences and ideas gained from the course and utilise existing skills if possible.
- As I hope to help contribute to the Cree Valley Woodland Heritage Project I found all parts of the event relevant to any future historical research I may do.
- I learned a lot about the history and potential timeline of a Woodland, especially with the aid of Maps and satellite images. I've already studied historic maps of my local woods (which were discussed during the seminar) and searched for evidence in the wood.
- I did gain more from the morning speakers who were universally enthusiastic about their topics and whose content was more easily used on woodlands in general.
- Good contacts, learnt a lot in the morning sessions from both days and some good information was also gained in the afternoon field trips
- As expected
- Learned a lot of interesting facts. Met some interesting people with varying talent
- Gained an overview of several different aspects relating to woodland history and met some interesting folk
- Learned a great deal from the other speakers & participants
- Learned from preparing info on specific local woodlands & visiting them
- Got to know the history & archaeology of these community woods better
- Got to understand the interests & expertise of local volunteers and participants

- Wonderful varied program. Felt that many there knew elements of what they were hearing but for me it was all a new delight.

**What will you do with the skills & experience you have gained in attendance?**

- I will further investigate local woodlands bearing in mind many of the pointers given by the morning speakers.
- Lots of facts learned that can be applied to other areas which may be perhaps be used in a more structured way in the future.
- Continue research into woodland history through place-names in Galloway
- Seek other opportunities to work in this fantastic area
- Develop collaborative/inter-disciplinary projects with other experts and participants present at the event.
- The map work alone has given me a whole series of new avenues of research and interest in my own local area.

**Would you recommend this event to a friend?**

<b>Yes</b>	21		<b>No:</b>	1
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**Comments (from yes)**

- Yes. There is MUCH to learn and it is very enjoyable!! :)
- Yes, I think as someone coming newly to the topic I found it very informative. The different aspects of determining the history of woodland and the subjectivity and reliability of methods employed was invaluable.
- Yes because of the wide range of subjects covered and their local relevance.
- Yes, the gathering of experts from a variety of subjects to give talks is an invaluable way of learning more and gives you the chance to talk and discuss your thoughts with like minded people.
- Yes, but only as a starter. Such courses cannot provide all the answers, but they encourage further investigation of local woods - which is where the most interesting results come to light.
- Always worthwhile spending time with knowledgeable folk with shared interests.
- Spread the good word
- Woodland Heritage is such a broad subject, it can appeal to all sorts of people's individual interests, from the natural to the cultural, and help foster local CWA group support, participation & project development.
- Excellent opportunity to hear so many different experts coming at this subject from different angles.
- An opening of levels of awareness through exposure to genuine expertise is always an exciting experience for those who are open to it.

**Comments (from no)**

- I could not recommend to colleagues that they attend a course that was of such local interest.

**What other training / seminar opportunities would you like to see organised?**

- Anything to do with actual woodland management, design, woodland wildlife or ecological impacts of commercial forestry operations would be interesting and/or useful.
- Would be good to repeat this course in a few years, but presenting some of the results that participants have come up with.
- More events in Dumfries and Galloway/Borders/Ayrshire. Perhaps a specific chance to get together with other CWA members.
- Veteran and ancient tree recording outside on sites.
- Something of a similar nature aimed at schools and other community groups.
- A course looking at how to involve a wide range of people (not only those already enthusiastic) to become interested in their local woodlands.
- Charcoal and cleft fencing demonstrations
- Carry on as y'all have so far.

- It would be interesting to learn how the project develops and have an update on the knowledge gained about these woodlands to help complete the jigsaw.
- A further seminar/training in due course on progress relating to the expansion of the Cree Valley woodlands programme northwards up the catchment
- Certain aspects covered in brief talks could be expanded to more specific, more detailed, specialist training events - this could dovetail into CVWCT's HLF project and provide them with some additional training support in specialist areas of what they seek to do in their HLF project.
- I need to take forward some of what I gained from the seminar to understand better my own personal development needs.

**General Comments on this event:**

- The format of having talks/presentations in the morning and a site visit in the afternoon worked well.
- The combination of talks and field studies was excellent also the wide variety of speakers - something for everyone.
- Overall a very positive experience that I would recommend.
- Well organised and run.
- Is it possible to do something about the midges????
- Only had time to attend Thursday morning addresses but found them most interesting and stimulating - enthusiasm of the speakers was infectious
- It was very well organised, and all the speakers/presentations at the event were excellent.
- Field visit to Wood of Cree excellent except that it coincided with a Forestry Commission Scotland event
- Say hello to the midges for me.
- Just to say thank you.
- The venue was fine but it might be better to use a place like the Cat strand in New Galloway where the screen and facilities are better
- This was a high quality event - with both speakers and participants representing an impressive range of expertise and a genuine interest in the topic and in the local project. Attendance was excellent, as was participation
- I'd like to thank all of the organisers, formal contributors, and those group members who all contributed to an extremely worthwhile event

**Demographic of those who returned feedback sheet (optional)**

<b>Gender</b>		<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Male	7	Scottish	4
Female	8	White	4
		British / White	6
<b>Age Group</b>		English	1
16-39	3	British	1
40+	14		