

Kirkton Woods; Strathcarron

“Raising Awareness of the Woodland Environment”

27th July 2012

This report summarises and provides feedback on the Raising Awareness of the Woodland Environment event, which took place on the 27th July 2012 – described as being a windy and damp summer day. The event was held in Strathcarron (Scottish Highlands) and run by Kirkton Woodlands and Heritage Group. It has been declared a huge success.



Venue: Kirkton Woodland Treehouse & new workshop at Strathcarron Smithy

Event activities:

- Woodland based craft demonstrations & tuition
- Woodland animal tracking / surveying
- Woodland flora & fauna identification
- Edible foods from the woodland – demonstration & tuition
- Medicinal & dye materials from woodland resources
- Talk and interpretive display on the importance of woodland management & the history of Kirkton Woodland.

Outcome:

- People are better informed about the woodland environment & the opportunities available
- People have a better understanding of the importance of woodland management

This event is part of the CWA Knowledge and Skill Development Training Programme, funded by the Scottish Government Skills Development Scheme and the Robertson Trust.

- The demonstrations and workshops provided delegates with the chance to try something new
- The event provided KWHG with the opportunity to update potential members on group activities and an update on progress relative to the proposed woodland acquisition
- Four relatively new members of KWHG have been involved in the setting up and running of this event – giving them a confidence boost.
- Delegates felt that the opportunity to up-skill would add value to the work / projects of KWHG
- Locally based tutors had the opportunity to market their skills to a new audience

General observation:

Nine new people joined KWHG as a result of this event.

Tutors:

- Lesley & Tom Kilbride
- Dr J. Tosney
- Monique Bervoets
- Paul Swan
- Vicky Stonebridge
- Highland Council Rangers
- Forestry Commission Ranger

Participant list:

Vicky Stonebridge	Christobel MacKay
Kristine MacKenzie	Malcolm MacKay
Paul Swan	Moira Murray
Lesley Kilbride	Christopher MacDonald
Tom Kilbride	Michelle Teago
Hannah Cundiff	Jan Teago
Ann Beaton	Mairi Young
Monique Bourveots	Rita Stonebridge
Keira MacFleat	Rita Sykes
Helen Murchison	Gill Rennie
Bart MacFleat	Joy Moran
Melanie Gaff	Cathy Valle
Sheena MacKay	Terry Hitchen

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Event Feedback:

(27 forms returned)

How did you hear about this event?

Various; local flyers, friends, website, news-sheet, through Ranger Service

Please rate the following:

	V.Good	Good	Fair	Poor	V.Poor
Location	18	9			
Organisation	18	9			
Catering	17	10			
Facilities	15	12			

Do you feel this event delivered your expectations?

Yes	27
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Why did you want to take part in this event?

- To learn more about forageable & edible woodland fruits
- Learn woodland ID skills (plants & wildlife)
- To discover more about the biodiversity in the woodland; habitat and species
- Wanted to try willow weaving and basket making
- Interested in developing new woodland craft skills
- Interested in the history of the woodland
- Outdoor activity
- Interested in willow weaving
- Pass the time
- Meet up with friends to do fun activities
- Interested to find out more about the woodland
- new to the area and wanted to find out more
- I have always wondered which plants and berries were safe to eat
- We felt a day in the woods would be very educational.
- To learn a new craft
- I had never seen a demonstration before and had no idea how versatile willow was
- I am interested in crafts and wanted to extend my knowledge of basket weaving
- To gain more information on the woodland, foraging and identifying species of trees. Understanding the eats in the undergrowth
- to be able to identify trees and edible plants / mushrooms
- to identify what materials can be used for crafts
- Initially, simply to go for a walk

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

- Better informed about the importance of woodland as a sustainable fuel resource
- Learned a lot about the history of the woodland
- better informed about the woodlands role as a natural resource for craft materials
- Raising awareness of woodland in general has made me want to join the local group
- Learned about woodlands

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- Id trees, plants and wildlife
- Wintertime hobby
- met new people, feel involved in my community
- Learned new skills and hobbies
- awareness of the outdoors
- learned a lot about the history of the woodland and woodland based crafts
- a full meal can easily be made from plants collected from the woodland
- prior to this event, we had no idea of the woodland heritage
- learnt to find and when to pull willow, also the many different objects that willow can make
- I will possibly have a go, but may need some more training
- I now have many new ideas of the different items that willow can make, i.e. Animals and wall hangings
- I will happily walk around the woodland knowing what is all around me. Also collect fungi and berries
- It was very informative
- I was amazed at the information a wood can give, as was my son, from identifying the different tree, foraging and woodland crafts. Its history was also extremely interesting.

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

- use them to support the development of the local group
- have a go myself
- develop the skills learned to allow us to deliver more woodland based training events
- make use of what I have learned
- Develop my new interest in woodland art
- Make better use of natural materials
- take up new hobby
- take them home with us
- Pass on to all my friends who are interested in forest / wild food. There really is so much to be gained from a woodland
- encourage parents to take their children out into the woodland for the day - they will be amazed at what they will learn
- If good enough, I may be able to make Christmas presents!
- I will start with some ideas and hope to put them together without tying myself up...
- Practice, practice, practice...
- I shall continue to learn
- Take a lot more interest in our woodland
- Hopefully we will all (as a family) will continue to investigate the woodland

Would you recommend this event to a friend

Yes	27
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Comments (from yes)

- Gets you outdoors
- Increase knowledge in new areas
- raises awareness of the local environment
- we should all know about our woodlands
- using willow is a totally wonderful craft
- completely different craft from the ones usually seen around
- It is a good way of passing long winter nights

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- the event passed so quickly, I would like to go on an extended course, and persuade others to join in
- we should all take an interest
- I had to persuade my 16 year old son to accompany me and was very happy at how interested he became. We saw the woodland in a new light.

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

- More of the same
- take it to the next level
- Chainsaw art
- Woodland craft
- Workshops to increase the skill level of woodland craft persons within KWHG
- Offering workshops & demos at different levels
- Similar events and training
- History of local woodland
- eco-art workshop
- extend the range of woodland craft activities
- any other outdoor family activities would be beneficial
- any other courses the association would be willing to fund
- support any other courses with an environmental link
- continue to support events like this
- any future courses around the woods would be well received
- Further funding to support other initiatives
- other woodland themed courses

General Comments on this event:

- Very enjoyable and informative
- Great idea for getting the community actively involved in their woodland
- Form heritage craft co-op with woodland theme, using local producers and tutors
- Good day out for all the family
- heritage crafts co-op is a great idea!
- enjoyed our day, thank you
- The HC Ranger walk was very well organised and informative.