



## Wood Products Workshop Report

Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise  
Thursday 7th and Friday 8th March 2013



**“A woodland that pays, is a woodland that stays”**

### Workshop Synopsis:

Woodlands can be managed for the production of a wide range of saleable products beyond conventional timber and woodfuel markets. Developing wood products provides opportunities for employment and skills training, whilst adding value locally supports local economic development.

This workshop follows on from two Wood Product events held in Ross-shire in 2011 (reports from both these events are available to download at <http://www.communitywoods.org/about-documents.php> under “Event Reports”.). The feedback from these events demonstrated that more practical training and confidence building was required,

To address this CWA teamed up with the Big Tree Society and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to deliver a 2 day workshop which was practical, informative, challenging and fun. Participants explored the route from woodland to workshop, possible ways to market and identified what's next for them and their woodland.



### Workshop Objectives:

This workshop was aimed at people involved in community woodlands who enjoy making woodland craft products and who would like to develop a strategy for their woodland. The workshop covered the planning, processes, prototyping, production, preparation and presentation of a small timber product from community woodlands to consumer. The workshop was organised through the CWA Employability Services project and funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Led by Eoin Cox, the Big Tree Society workshop leaders collectively have over fifty years' experience of working in the woods and forests, coppicing and making furniture and other woodland products. They brought with them a very hands-on teaching technique demonstrating that pieces produced are often the by-product of the workshop days. The aim was for participants to leave engaged, fulfilled and confident to learn more and share that practical knowledge of the woodland resource with their own groups.

### Location:

Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise, Lochgilphead, is based in inspiring, tranquil, healing and accessible woods in the heart of Argyll. The woodlands form part of the sanctuary of Lochgilphead's Argyll and Bute Hospital. Restored in 2007 they feature all-abilities access, sculptures and artworks. The woods feature a mix of native and exotic trees.



Blarbuie Woodland  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd's nan Eilean



AWARDS FOR ALL SCOTLAND  
LOTTERY FUNDED





# Wood Products Workshop Report

## Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise: 7th & 8th March 2013



### Programme:

#### Day 1: Resource management and product development

Assessing and identifying resources - using Blarbuie Woods as a working example. Based on resource assessment and potential markets, participants developed prototype products.

#### Day 2: Markets

Participants benefited from further practical experience; identifying markets, brand development and marketing techniques. The workshop concluded with a learning review, and action planning session.

### Those Involved:

- |                       |                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Eoin Cox MBE        | The Big Tree Society              |
| • Gail Donald         | The Big Tree Society              |
| • Hugh Fife           | Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise      |
| • Alan Campbell       | Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise      |
| • Peter Quelch        | AGWA                              |
| • Jamie Chaplin-Brice | Kilfinan Community Forest Company |
| • David Campbell      | Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise      |
| • Colin Willment      | Kilfinan Community Forest Company |
| • Lorna Schofield     | Knoydart Forest Trust             |
| • Melanie Feydieu     | Urban Roots                       |
| • Pam Noble           | Highlands and Islands Enterprise  |
| • David Douglas       | Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise      |
| • Colin Campbell      | Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise      |
| • Diane Oliver        | Community Woodlands Association   |
| • Anon                | Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise      |

**Photographs** from the 2 days can be found on the **CWA Flickr site** <http://flic.kr/s/aHsjEjMG2t> and 2 short **films** on the **CWA YouTube channel** at <http://youtu.be/MIKqM7bU6sg> and <http://youtu.be/Zxv9RC-Otw4>





# Wood Products Workshop Report

## Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise: 7th & 8th March 2013

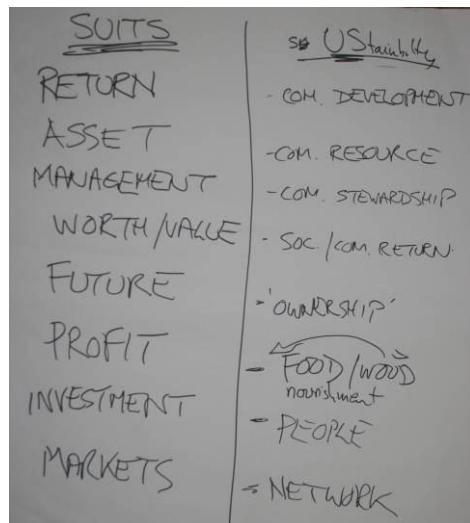


### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013:

Following introductions, Eoin introduced the workshop explaining that the 2 days would be based on the theme of

**"A wood that pays, is a wood that stays".**

The groups explored the differences between how the traditional 'corporate' world might use language to describe their business and how woodland groups would use different words to describe their activities. The possible conflict between the two – especially around the potential difference in values can make it difficult for woodland groups to feel comfortable entering the commercial world and placing a financial value on their work.



Then it was off to the workshop.



Eoin and Gail guided the group through making small timber products from what could be perceived as offcuts or waste products. This is an important skill in adding value to resources available from the woodlands.



The group made a small whistle and then vessels learning/ practising/ sharing some basic skills on the way. Further discussion and trials were carried out to develop the finish and explore opportunities for a range of uses.





## Wood Products Workshop Report

Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise  
Thursday 7th and Friday 8th March 2013



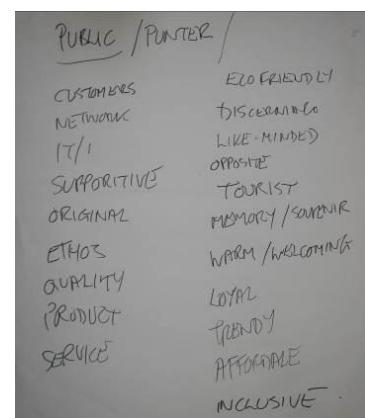
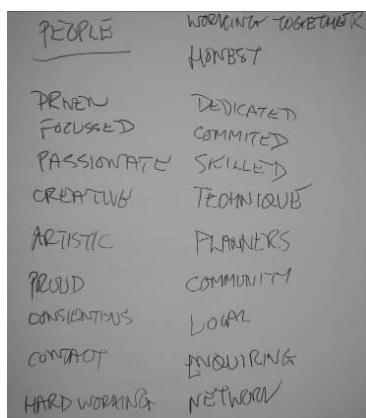
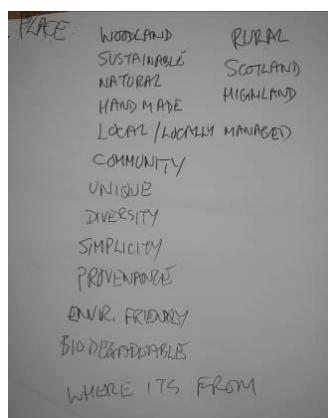
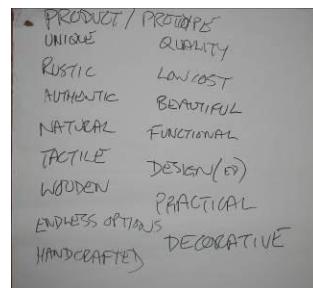
The groups identified current products and outlined future aspirations.

Group	Products Now	Futures and Markets
Wooplaw	training (vols) willow courses (public) forest schools small products	develop small product courses pay people
Kilfinan Community Forest Company	woodfuel composting allotment produce courses/ training	expand firewood markets - processing logs garden outlet: small – medium energy/ crofts
Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise	plant sales composting fire wood contracting (path work) guided walks	tree guards planters lump wood
AGWA (Peter)	charcoal	grow markets
Urban Roots	training including beekeeping (paying) community garden	shared network community woodlands (Mall Mire) small products
Knoydart Forest Trust	woodfuel log candles small products training arts	develop woodfuel increase products develop training/ volunteer action breaks

### Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013:

The groups identified words associated with each of the following headings:

- Place
- Prototype
- Process
- Product
- People
- Public/ promotion



Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd's nan Eilean



LOTTERY FUNDED



## Wood Products Workshop Report

### Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise: 7th & 8th March 2013



After lunch Hugh Fife gave a brief presentation about the history and development of Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise. Originally set up as a partnership 10 years ago between Reforesting Scotland, NHS, Scottish Association for Mental Health and Lochgilphead Community Council, Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise spun out from the lead body (Reforesting Scotland) as an organisation and charity in its own right in 2012. The Enterprise now manages the NHS owned woodlands, a plant nursery and produces a range of products including CDs and cards.

Hugh led a tour of the woodlands.



#### 'Marketing' Back Stories:

Based on the words gathered on the flipcharts folks divided into groups to develop marketing stories for groups, place and products.

*"This is a quality handmade product. We are a locally based small-scale, environmentally friendly woodland project that is integral to the community. We provide a woodland area that allows access for all to a pleasant green space. For our products we sustainably use the diverse range of timber grown here in our own project to design, handcraft and produce unique, practical and functional products that make you feel good and people can use at home."*

*"Knoydart is a unique, rural community in the North West Highlands. Our individually handcrafted vessels are locally grown, designed and crafted by dedicated creative members of our community. We sell these to our discerning visitors who care about the environment and who want to take a little bit of Knoydart away with them to relive their experience or to share with friends and family."*

*"These handmade products from local resources are from the community for the community, nurtured from seed to maturity. Our blood sweat and tears bring you piece of mind from firewood to furniture!"*





# Wood Products Workshop Report

## Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise: 7th & 8th March 2013



"Welcome to Blarbuie Woodland. We have various items here on the premises and you are welcome to wander through our beautiful relaxed woodyard. Look at the various types of timber and speak with our craftsman who is on hand to show you the items he makes. You are then welcome to wander through the nursery where our many volunteers tend the plants from seed to full maturity. We have many abilities here from repairing paths to recycling wood and making areas friendly and accessible for people of all abilities. Feel free to touch and smell our products. When you buy from us the money goes back into our woodlands."

### Action Planning:

Group	Action
Knoydart Forest Trust	? creative Knoydart workshop
Kilfinan Community Forest Company	shop front – virtual/ physical possible network alliance
Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise	keep making keep talking to AGWA improve our communications/ selling techniques
AGWA	network share skills and tools with others
Urban Roots	make products enthuse volunteers examine urban networks plan – templates
Wooplaw	tell everyone about you!
CWA	continue to support be available
HIE	Pam reminded everyone that she is approachable

### Feedback:

8 feedback questionnaires were completed on the day; all were satisfied by the location, catering, organisation and facilities on offer. 7 delegates felt that the event met their expectations, with 1 delegate stating that the event only partly met their expectations, explaining that "more outdoors, woodland management tuition would have been beneficial".

Delegates attended the workshop to:

- To learn new ideas and techniques and to meet with woodland project workers
- Product Development
- To focus on products and marketing, not just to problems and techniques of making
- To find out other info about other woods / community woods in the area and to see other products / ideas - also networking.
- I am interested in that kind of work
- Increase skills for own woodland products, meet similar minded / trainer individuals
- To get inspiration and ideas about how / what we could do with wood product
- I am implementing a new project (green wood working) for Urban Roots but I didn't know about the practical aspect of wood working and wanted to learn about it.

Delegates felt that they gained the following benefits:

- New skills learnt, co-operative links, highlighted the importance of networks and information / resource exchange
- Products and marketing
- Meeting others, including local groups/ thinking about products more seriously
- Networking, as above, info about other events / groups / products
- Knowledge and how to do things





# Wood Products Workshop Report

## Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise: 7th & 8th March 2013



- New knowledge of woodland crafts, marketing of these products, availability, new people = new skills. Positive attitude towards types of work, snowball effect towards our own project
- Learned some new skills - using tools, marketing. Great networking and inspiration / enthusiasm ideas about products, brand. Satisfaction and pride of making.
- Confidence, loads of ideas, motivation to do and develop project

*Delegates will use their new skills and experience to:*

- Pass on to community, utilise new practical skills, expands ideas and contacts
- Apply them for the benefit of our project
- Review my own products
- Use them to develop KCFC, and develop products to sell
- I will expand my knowledge and use my experience
- Share with my team. Explore ideas about how and who we could develop wood products to sell to tourist market. Host workshops? Local volunteers?
- Prepare the blossom festival and produce items to be sold at the event

*Delegates would like CWA to:*

- Establish links between all the woodland products
- Maybe they could bring together local Lochgilphead groups in a follow on event
- Create a window through which to sell
- I think they are already moving in right direction
- Support travel and accommodation costs for participants, trainer costs, spread the word
- More woodworking courses where we can develop extra skills and go to the next stage

*All 8 delegates would recommend others to take place in a similar event, because:*

- It has been informative, constructive and an "eye opener" in terms of growth opportunities
- It is good fun and it helps the community
- Lovely participants, great instructor, interactive course / training

*Other general comments included:*

- Thanks to all, it's been inspiring!
- Great course
- I enjoyed listing and doing the things
- Fabulous experience, new skills, new people, new ideas and fun!

