

# Better woodlands for Wales

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Current issue and back issues  
available on the FCW website:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/wales](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales)

## Bitten by the planting bug

Richard and Sarah Hayes, who live near Llanfair Caereinion in Powys, were bitten by the tree-planting bug 25 years ago when they lived in Oxfordshire. Richard said, "We first planted a small area of half an acre with mixed native trees when we lived in Oxfordshire and 25 years later when we moved to Wales we left behind a true wood. We were really excited to find out about the Better Woodlands for Wales' (BWW) scheme run by the Forestry Commission.

I believe that the act of planting any tree is a vote for the future. What now looks like a field of sticks will be transformed in a surprisingly short time, adding beauty and variety and creating new wildlife habitats. In its own small way it will

also contribute to offsetting the critical effects of man-made carbon emissions."

They planted up 1.87 hectares of site native broadleaves; mainly oak and ash early in 2010 and the 2,400 young trees will help towards our target of planting more new woodland in Wales.

Richard and Sarah have also planted a wild flower meadow and restored a pond which is another wonderful habitat for wildlife.

BWW is keen to fund even more planting next winter. If you have more that 0.25 hectares of land that you would like to plant, or existing woods you would like to manage we can help fund your scheme.



"The act of planting any  
tree is a vote for the future"





## Do you have a wood worth publicising?

We are often on the look out for BWW case studies to include in stories and photographs for publicity. If you have had grant through BWW and are proud of all your hard work, whether it's new planting or woodland management please e-mail [alison.evans@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alison.evans@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

# Phytophthora ramorum

An outbreak of the tree disease caused by *Phytophthora ramorum* (*P. ramorum*) was confirmed in Welsh Assembly Government woodlands in south Wales in late May 2010.

*P. ramorum* is a fungus-like pathogen that kills most trees that it infects. It was found on Japanese larch trees in south west England last year, and the outbreak in woodlands in the Afan Valley, near Port Talbot, Garw Valley, near Bridgend, and the Vale of Glamorgan is the first time it has been encountered on larch elsewhere in Great Britain.

Currently, the outbreak in south Wales only affects woodlands managed by Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) on behalf of the

Welsh Assembly Government. However, the situation is changing rapidly as surveys are undertaken and it is likely that the infection has spread more widely.

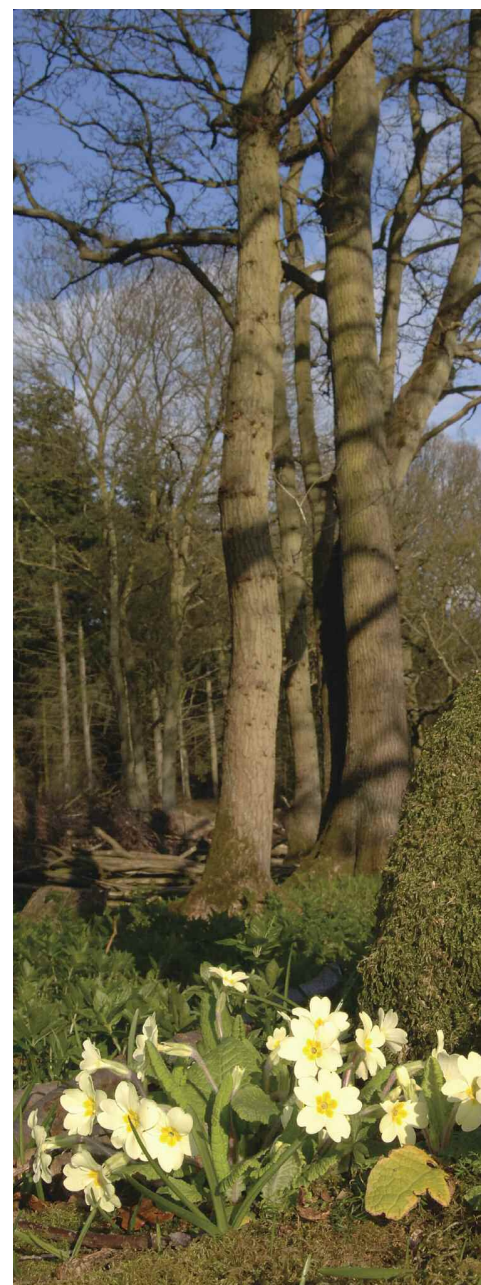
Woodlands managed by FCW remain open to the public and signs at forest entrances tell visitors what they need to do to help contain the outbreak, such as walking on paths, keeping dogs on leads, cleaning footwear and not taking any plant material away.

*P. ramorum* is not harmful to humans or animals. More information on how to spot the disease and how to help stop the spread is available on [www.forestry.gov.uk/wales](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales)

## One million trees and counting

Despite the coldest UK winter for 30 years, owners in Wales have managed to plant over a million trees, thanks to the Better Woodlands for Wales grant scheme managed by the Forestry Commission Wales.

Farmers, smallholders and other private landowners have all helped to plant up over 530 hectares (1309 acres) worth of trees. Planted at 2 metres apart, all those trees would stretch from the north to the south Wales coast and back again.



# Commercial upland Sitka Spruce plantation in transformation to CCF through BWW



“BWW is helping at Bryn Arau Duon to create a new type of productive forestry which aims to supply the timber market with increased quantities of quality timber in cost effective and energy efficient ways”

The Read report, *Combating Climate Change - A role for UK forests* has thrown the spotlight on how Continuous Cover might be a useful tool in our armoury in mitigating the effects of climate change. This comes at a very timely moment for two CCF foresters and Better Woodlands for Wales Management Planners, Phil Morgan and Huw Denman, who are passionate about continuous cover and how this forest management alternative is adapted to provide integrated commercial, environmental and social benefits that will help to mitigate the effects of climate change. They jointly manage Bryn Arau Duon, a 680-hectare conifer plantation in the Southern uplands of Wales. Their client bought the property in 1998 as a single unit surrounded by hill grazing land and by spectacular gorges linking to a network of fields, hedges and broad-leaved woodlands. The species composition is 86% Sitka spruce, 9% other conifers, mainly larch and lodgepole pine and 5% open ground. This relatively simple species mixture has provided real commercial benefits in the establishment phase of the woodland which is now developing the character of a permanent forest due to the repeated thinning and selective felling operations. The wind hazard classification ranges from 3 to 5, however most areas have now been thinned for the first time as the track infrastructure is developed into the most inaccessible places; only extreme site types are not considered as productive and are included in a phased habitat restoration plan. The commercial nature of the forest has not deterred the managers to develop other features within the woodland; Bryn Arau Duon has some well documented archaeological remains which are carefully managed so that forest operations do not impact on the designated sites; the forest also has the largest recorded population of red

squirrels in southern Wales which are monitored and where the intruding grey squirrel is trapped and eliminated. The forest is FSC certified woodland.

Much of the work in transforming this even-aged plantation to continuous cover has been carried out with the assistance of the WGS (Woodland Grant Scheme) and now is ongoing under the BWW (Better Woodlands for Wales) replacement scheme. Numerous woodland officers have liaised with the managers over the years, but Stuart Gray in particular, who was in post when the early developments of the BWW scheme were taking place, has an appreciation of the work that has been undertaken. He was particularly helpful in establishing the criteria for determining features such as CCF and in finding incentives to fund operations to meet Welsh Assembly Government forestry targets. The tracking infrastructure is critical in limiting the environmental impacts of harvesting and without assistance from BWW would not be so extensive; the uneconomic thinning of stands requiring early interventions have been supported, enrichment planting for species diversification and initiating under-storey elements in irregular structures have all been made possible, as well as the squirrel trapping programme to remove the threat of grey squirrels to the surviving red squirrel population.

BWW is helping at Bryn Arau Duon to create a new type of productive forestry which aims to supply the timber market with increased quantities of quality timber in cost effective and energy efficient ways to support a better carbon economy while at the same time creating better more adaptive habitats that support our endangered species.

# Use of G&L Online service for owners

If you want to follow the progress of your BWW scheme or make a claim online once work has been done, you can log on and register on our G&L online service for owners.

The route to registration is via our web site and upon the completion of a simple, one-off registration process, an email will be sent to you confirming a username and password which will enable successful login in to the system at any time that is convenient.

To register, owners or agents can access the FCW web site using the link [www.eforestry.gov.uk](http://www.eforestry.gov.uk)

Choose the **G&L Online Service – to make a grant application online** and then select the **click here to register** option.

You must now use the ID and password to login to the system and in order to fully activate the account you need to phone or email the Technical Services team and inform them that you have set up as a new user. The team will then attach you as an owner, to your own case and you will be able to view the scheme details in full.

Don't forget if you are having problems with the above procedure just e-mail our Technical Services team [bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) not forgetting to include your telephone number.



# Don't wait for the new rate!

A review into grant rates for creating new woodland is now underway. Even though the outcome of the review is yet to be announced, FCW anticipates that grant rates will rise.

In order to encourage landowners to continue planting new woodland, FCW has announced that all new applications for woodland creation made from 1 April 2010 (or already submitted) will qualify for the revised grant rates.

The new rates will also apply to BWW schemes that have already been approved.

"We hope that this decision will mean that landowners keep their applications coming in so that we avoid a surge later in the year," said Head of Grants & Regulations Richard Siddons. "Woodlands can provide so many benefits to landowners and we urge them to look into the grants and free specialist advice available through the BWW scheme."

The new planting rates will be the same, regardless of whether or not you are in Glastir.

# Farm Woodland Survey

FCW commissioned a survey in 2009 to gather farmer's views on their woodlands and the woodland grants that we offer. The survey has provided valuable information on how effective our woodland grants are for farmers, and how we can improve them.

264 farmers were interviewed by Wavehill Consulting on behalf of the Forestry Commission, including 100 who, despite having woodlands on their land, have never applied for a grant. The full survey can be downloaded from our Grants and Regulations homepage [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5z8jcr](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5z8jcr)

# Complaints Procedure

Management planners and specialist assessors have all signed up to a code of practice. If you are unhappy about the performance of a planner or specialist you should follow the complaints process which can be found on the FCW web-site under BWW complaints and disputes.

Complaints made against a planner or specialist will feed into the 'Maintaining Standards' process and action will be taken using the guidance that the process outlines.

# Contact details

For general BWW enquiries, telephone: or log on to:

For, technical queries, email:

For the GLOS Service link:

Suggestions for future issues, email:

0300 068 0300

[www.forestry.gov.uk/wales](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales)

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