



National Forestry Forum Update Achievements in 2013

Our Aims – To champion the wide ranging benefits of well managed woodland and to advise and assist woodland owners, practitioners and the general public in making the most of these benefits

Achievement Summary –

1. We have provided our membership services (information, technical helpline, events, courses, magazine and mentoring scheme) to over 2000 members. Many of our members do not have a forestry background and by working with them we are able to convert them to the cause of sustainable woodland management – in doing so we are helping to develop a wood culture among the custodians of many small woodlands.
2. At our national office, the Greenwood Centre near Ironbridge, we have embarked on a site regeneration project which has used home grown and locally crafted timber products such as cleft sweet chestnut entrance gates and Shropshire oak roof shingles to re-roof a 1000sq. ft. cruk barn. We purchased a mobile band-mill to process locally grown timber for use in our joinery workshop, giving us retail potential on site and on line. As this develops we will exploit the opportunity to inform the public about the economic/employment value of well managed woodlands – a good GiB story.
3. In the past year our West Midlands Heartwoods Project has advised on the management of over 1800ha of undermanaged woodland, provided 180 woodland event/skills transfer days and funded over 48 days technical advice from private sector woodland management professionals to 25 owners of unmanaged woodlands.
4. Working in partnerships our social forestry projects have provided over 700 days for volunteers and over 120 days of highly structured woodland activity for people with mental and physical health issues. Even greater levels of delivery in Wales.
5. We have 6 apprenticeships running – 3 in general forestry and 3 in coppice work.
6. Our training courses delivered over 360 days of training on a diverse range of subjects from coracle making to chainsaw use to sustainable woodland management.
7. The launch of the National Coppice Federation (NCFed) coincided with the launch of GiB last year and this gave additional opportunities to both. The formation and launch of the NCFed was the culmination of a lot of work and activity undertaken by the Small Woods Association as part of our ongoing national coppice restoration project.

Where We Fit In – A relatively small organisation with around 10 FTE staff and a turnover of £750,000. We are however very focussed in engaging with a key stakeholder group – the person who owns, or is involved with, woodland for personal reasons and in a hands-on way. Whilst we make sure our offer is appealing and publically all-embracing we feel that by specialising in serving our unique audience we can have the greatest effect on delivering our aims and those of the wider sector.

Mike Bentley
23rd Jan 2014

Bringing woodlands to life

Small Woods Association, Green Wood Centre, Station Road, Coalbrookdale, Telford TF8 7DR
Telephone 01952 432769 www.smallwoods.org.uk