



# South East Woodland News

August 2010

## A Local Harvest



Since its launch in 2008, Harvest Wood Fuels has always aimed to source the raw materials for its wood pellets locally. This has not been straightforward and whilst the pellet market has grown rapidly most of the Company's sales have been of pellets bought in from outside the Region.

Wood pellets are made either from sawdust, wood chip or shredded waste wood and the moisture level of the raw material needs to be 15% or lower to make a good pellet. To maximise sustainability pellets should be made from waste material or from wood which has no other useful purpose; each part of the tree should generate as much added value as possible.

Dry sawdust is sourced from sawmills in the South East, but the product is costly to transport and the quality is difficult to control. Consequently Harvest are looking

at other supply options, including; waste wood (usually shredded pallets) and low grade timber from local woodlands.

Most of Surrey's woodlands are not managed and there is a huge under-utilised resource. Small diameter round wood doesn't have markets so could be used as a raw material for making pellets; however it is very difficult to make this source of raw material cost effective. Round wood used as a raw material for pellets needs to be de-barked, to reduce ash levels, which pushes up the cost per tonne of the raw material.

Once air dried the de-barked logs can be chipped, which further dries the wood, (it doesn't work chipping fresh cut wood as it is too wet and composts). The chip will typically have moisture content of 18%. This will need to be hammer milled into smaller wood fibres which are then fed into an air dryer (wood-fuelled) and dried down to the required 12-15% moisture level for pellet production.

The whole process is onerous and expensive but if efficiency savings can be made, through, for instance, reduced transport costs, it should be possible to make it work in practice, bringing both a secure supply of raw material to Harvest and a return to the woodland owner.

James Little, Harvest Wood Fuels

Future growth in pellet production is likely to be met by a combination of all three sources.

For the full article please use this [link](#)

See also: [www.harvestwoodfuels.co.uk](http://www.harvestwoodfuels.co.uk).

### Editorial - Jonathan Rau FC

Despite the economic downturn noises from the various layers of the woodland sector indicate that business is brisk and demand high for quality local woodland products from firewood and hazel hurdles through to bespoke timber buildings.

This issue highlights a number of businesses and initiatives that are seeing continued growth. With the onset of the Renewable Heat Incentive in 2011 this will hopefully drive up demand for low quality wood/timber and, in doing so, encouraging growth throughout the woodland sector as the economics of woodland management are enhanced.

**IN THIS ISSUE** Woodland Products, myForest website, Grant Update, Events.

# Woodland Products in Aquatic Engineering

Simon Cain, Cain Bioengineering Ltd

Located on the water meadows of the upper Hampshire Avon in rural Wiltshire, river bank and [Erosion Control](#) specialist [Cain Bio-engineering Ltd](#), has been a consumer and promoter of locally produced woodland products for over 25 years. Coppiced sweet chestnut posts of varying lengths and hazel faggots are used in virtually all our projects and these two staple woodland products can be used to great effect to deliver environmentally-friendly and durable [River Restoration](#) solutions.

Because our work involves [habitat restoration](#) in designated, environmentally sensitive locations, these products are ideal not only because they are highly effective when used correctly but also because they are natural, free of chemical preservatives and, where necessary, can be easily transported to point of use by hand or floating pontoon. Some of our regular clients including Environment Agency and Natural England stipulate FSC accreditation for woodland products used by their contractors. One could argue that these products shouldn't require accreditation given that sustainable harvesting is fundamental to copse survival. However would-be suppliers need to be aware of this requirement as we have experienced supply chain issues in the past.

The hand-driven sweet chestnut post is the means by which structures are fixed onto or into [river banks](#) and beds. They come in a wide array of shapes and sizes from whole round lengths to half rounds and quarter rounds depending on the depth of water and nature of the bed or bank. Sweet chestnut is an ideal material for use in aquatic environments as the hardwood has a naturally long lifespan and maintains its structural integrity for many years without the need for chemical treatment. Posts are used in various ways to create a wide variety of structures including terraces, sloping banks, underwater habitat features, straight canal banks, or sinuous meanders.

Hazel faggots are used primarily as sediment traps into which vegetation will grow if they are correctly situated. They don't fare well if used in direct currents where turbulence and water-borne objects such as logs impact against them during winter floods, or where they are frequently walked on by anglers. However the skilled river designer can use them to great effect where the accumulation of trapped silt creates anaerobic conditions that preserves the woody material indefinitely whilst the structures are bound together by marginal vegetation.

Here are couple of interesting examples of structures we installed in the recent past using sweet chestnut posts and hazel faggots.

## Project 1.

Emergency maintenance of the sea defences on the [river Rother SSSI](#) in Rye was urgently required to prevent collapse of the inter-tidal flood bunds and inundation of the adjacent saltings. Unexploded ordnance and treacherous mud banks precluded the use of traditional engineering techniques such as sheet piling. So the erosion cavity was filled with 6,000 hazel faggots to form a giant sediment trap.



The installation of sweet chestnut fixing posts up to 4m long. These were installed into sloping mud banks using a long-reach excavator.



The cross-hatching of long hazel faggots between the posts to create cavities for the trapping of sediment. 6,000 faggots were used in this project to fill a cavity 200m x 4m x 25m.



Within 6 months of completion the hazel-filled cavity was 75% reclaimed with tidal sediment.

On completion of all our projects we re-use waste off-cuts from sweet chestnut posts as fuel to heat the company HQ in wood burning stoves. This 'closed loop' management process ensures that sweet chestnut is a waste free building material that also provides virtually carbon neutral heat energy.

Further details of the way we use woodland products can be found via the attached links or direct from our website at [www.cainbioengineering.co.uk](http://www.cainbioengineering.co.uk)

## Project 2 - Floating brushwood causeway on deep sediment – river Kennet



1. Deep sediment makes river side access impossible (another view can be seen in the main picture on our front page)

[The Kennet project](#), completed in March 2010 was one of the most ambitious projects undertaken by the Environment Agency and Natural England to restore historically impounded river channel back to a free-flowing state. Sluices were removed, leaving wide banks of deep sediment. One of the techniques used in this project involved the placement of hazel faggots on the exposed mud banks to create 'floating walkways'. Hazel brushwood was used extensively in the project and the extent of these structures can be clearly seen from aerial images taken on completion of the project in March 2010. Details can be found on our website on the Denford Kennet case study in the rivers section.



2. Laying down hazel brushwood to form a base on top of the deep sediment.



3. 'Floating' causeway is primed with site-won soil

4. Fully functional access causeway 3 months after completion

# myForest - Online woodland management website

Alistair Yeomans, Sylva Foundation

The Sylva Foundation has launched a new web-based service that aims to support the mapping and sustainable management of woodlands,



## MyForest offers:

- **Online woodland account and management planning facility.** Woodland owners or agents can sign up to create a free woodland management planning account. A simple Geographical Information System (GIS) based on Google maps and aerial photography enables users to map the boundaries of their woodlands and individual compartments. Inventory information can then be entered relating to each compartment. The myForest management plan is available as a PDF document that can be saved, emailed or printed. The plan is based on the Forestry Commission England's

management planning template, ensuring the myForest management plan is compatible with the EWGS woodland planning grant requirements.

- **Free promotion of your business to the local woodchain.** Forestry businesses are able to create a free account, and then detail their location on the business directory map. Many businesses have signed up in the South East to promote their products and services, these include woodland contractors, sawmills, woodfuel merchants etc. Users of myForest are then able to search for business by category in their region.
- **Web-maps of woodlands, products and businesses.** Owners or their agents can make woodlands 'visible' on the 'Woodland Resource' map. If they are visible potential customers can contact owners/agents to enquire about woodland products. The woodland owner remains anonymous until they decide to respond to any expression of interest.

On the 'Wood Market' map, account holders can market timber and wood either as standing trees, roadside lots, or processed products.

The SYLVA Foundation would like to thank the Forestry Commission South East for their support of the myForest project. We welcome suggestions as to how the site can be improved and hope the service can be of benefit to woodland owners and forestry businesses alike in the South East region.

[www.myForest.org.uk](http://www.myForest.org.uk).

# Woodland Products in the garden

Julie Bolton, Environment & Heritage Team, West Sussex County Council

Metal and plastic plant supports are certainly functional but they don't always look pretty – why not think about using a completely biodegradable, renewable product and support your local woodlands and coppice workers at the same time?

Hazel isn't just for hurdle fencing, its versatility means it can be crafted into a wide range of products for the garden: from straightforward bean poles to woven planters, bed and lawn edging, arbours, pergolas and wigwams. Pea sticks aren't just for peas either! These can be used to create a low structure to help support tall growing plants by bending over the twiggy tops of the sticks – once the plant has grown through, the support can hardly be seen.

Instead of panel fencing for your garden boundaries, consider locally sourced cleft oak or sweet chestnut fencing – durable, attractive and very long lasting. Woven hazel fencing panels slow down the wind, allowing it through small gaps and are not so readily blown over like solid panels.

Some hazel products may last for up to 5 years. As they decay, they can easily be dismantled and added to your log pile or chipped and added to your compost heap.

Willow too is also used for very attractive garden products, not just baskets, and comes in a wide range of colours. Buying these products helps to keep woodlands working, particularly our ancient, semi-natural woodlands, supporting coppice workers and the wildlife dependent on well managed woodlands.



The following links will help you locate your nearest producer:

**Sussex & Surrey Coppice Group:**  
[www.coppicegroup.wordpress.com/products-services/](http://www.coppicegroup.wordpress.com/products-services/)

**Hampshire Coppice Group**  
[www.hampshirecoppice.org.uk](http://www.hampshirecoppice.org.uk)

**Coppice Products:**  
[www.coppice-products.co.uk/](http://www.coppice-products.co.uk/)

**WoodLots:**  
[www.woodnet.org.uk/woodlots/fencing-horticulture-and-garden](http://www.woodnet.org.uk/woodlots/fencing-horticulture-and-garden)

## Events

### The Arb & Forestry Event

August 6th-7th

Kingswood Training Services, Wagons, Back Lane, Shipbourne, Kent, TN11 9PP

<http://www.frjonesandson.co.uk/show/activities/>

### Amenity Arboricultural Conference 2010

September 12th - 15th

Manchester University

The Arboricultural Association presents two major conferences specialising in Utility Arboriculture and Amenity Arboriculture

<http://www.trees.org.uk/training-events/Amenity-Conference>

### Weald Woodfair

September 17th -19th

Bentley Wildfowl & Motor Museum

The Weald Woodfair is designed to bring together representatives from the entire timber industry 'from forest to final form' and attracts public and woodland enthusiast alike.

[www.bentley.org.uk](http://www.bentley.org.uk)

### APF International Forestry Exhibition

September 23rd - 25th

Cannock Chase, Staffs.

The UK's largest forestry and arboricultural exhibition is returning to the same location as its hugely successful 2008 event.

<http://www.apfexhibition.co.uk/>

### Industry Events

See the [RFF Industry Events](#) page for information on woodland related events in 2010

## Publications

Recent Publications available to download from the Forestry Commission website:

[Open Habitats Policy](#)

[So you own a woodland?](#)

## Links

For a list of links to directories and organisations relevant to the forestry sector, please go to the [Useful Links](#) page.



## Grant Update



Within the south east of England the majority of our woodland lies within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or the two recently created National Parks. The woods themselves are important as a very high percentage of them have been growing in these landscapes since the 1600s, or consist of predominantly native species. They form an important part of the south east, providing a long heritage of woodland management unlike many other regions of the country, where other land uses replaced the woodland. To reflect the importance of these landscapes, the Forestry Commission offers targeted woodland improvement grants to help with the management of the ancient and native woodland areas. This includes;

- improvements to rides within the woods to facilitate future management,
- the control of invasive non-native species,
- restoration work in ancient woods and
- reintroduction of traditional management such as cleaning, thinning and regular coppice cutting.

The enhanced 80% Woodland Improvement Grant is available in the following areas: Isle of Wight, Kent Downs, High Weald, Chilterns, Surrey Hills, New Forest, North Wessex Downs, Cranbourne Chase & the Cotswolds AONBs and the South Downs and New Forest National Parks.

You can find out more information at [Targeted Grants](#)

**Local use of local wood and timber puts money into the local economy and brings a range of added environmental benefits from managed woodlands and lower transport costs.**

[AJP Log Construction](#) Tony Ponting and [Woodland Products](#)

are a small family run company specialising in bespoke oak frame buildings, post and beam timber frame buildings, tongue and groove wall logged and fully scribed log cabins. The wood they use is sourced within a 60 mile radius, supporting our local estates and forestry contractors. Using mainly English Oak, Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar, all wood is felled under Forestry Commission Licences and Woodland Management Schemes. On average they process 300-500 cubic metres of useable timber a year.

The timber is brought into the works yard where it is milled on their own sawmill and converted into what ever is required at the time. Depending on the works it will then be either kiln or air dried (on site) and then sent through their own planing mill to be fabricated to the required specification. A complete service is provided in situ, which allows more control of the product. It gives the end user a more personal touch and cuts out any "middle man", giving the ability to cater to each individual budget.

A wide range of buildings have been provided over the years, from octagonal oak framed fishing huts along the River Test in Hampshire, Douglas Fir timber framed garden offices, to two bed log homes. The sawmill runs daily and if they're not cutting for building projects they are providing general sawmilling for local tradesmen and the general public.



## Contact us...

To subscribe to this free newsletter: please call 01420 23337 or email us at [southeast.fce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:southeast.fce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

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