

Chiltern Woodlands Project

News of the Woods



No 50 Summer 2014

and Annual Report 2013-2014

Chiltern Woodlands Project

A registered charity founded 25 years ago in April 1989 and based in the Chilterns Conservation Board's offices in Chinnor. It works across the Chilterns Natural Area, which includes all the Chilterns AONB. Please see our webpages at www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project which includes a new gallery of woodland photographs taken by John Morris.

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The Chiltern Society is delighted to sponsor this newsletter



Help us to care for the Chilterns today

The Chiltern Society is a local charity, committed to conserving the Chilterns for the enjoyment of everyone. It organises weekly walks and cycle rides, and cares for a growing number of heritage sites and nature reserves which it opens to the public.

There are 2 volunteer groups working on footpath maintenance and improving footpath access by installing kissing gates in the place of stiles, 9 conservation groups working on Chiltern woodland, rivers and commons, and the charity also campaigns on planning issues affecting the Chilterns.

With more than 6,700 members and 400 volunteers, the charity is funded by income from membership and donations; it receives no statutory funding. We welcome new members and volunteers. Members receive our quarterly magazine, free entry to our sites and discounts at many local attractions.

White Hill Centre, White Hill,
Chesham Bucks HP5 1AG
Tel 01494 771250
www.chilternsociety.org.uk



HERITAGE • CONSERVATION
ENVIRONMENT • WILDLIFE • LEISURE

25 years

Some major achievements!



Harvesting firewood near Checkendon, Oxon

The Project, through John Morris, has continued to offer advice and assistance to woodland owners in the Chilterns since 1989, with a particular focus on small unmanaged and often ancient woodlands in the AONB. Hundreds of woodland owners have been helped and thousands of hectares of woodland managed. The Project has improved awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the famous beech woods, which are a key component of the Chilterns AONB landscape.

The Chiltern Woodlands Project has promoted sustainable woodland management across the Chilterns through our News of the Woods newsletters since 1992, this is number 50! Promotion has also included leaflets, information sheets, books and talks, walks, events and the web pages.

25 years – a timeline of activities

1988 The Chiltern Woodlands Project developed from the earlier Chiltern Society Small Woodlands Project (1983 - 88) which started worked in Bottom Wood and other sites. We have helped the Chiltern Society to manage Bottom Wood as a nature reserve with volunteers from the Bottom Wood Group to the present day.

1989 the Project became a limited liability company, based in High Wycombe, employed 9 people. I am pleased to say that over half of these are still working in woods in the Chilterns today.

1992 Became a registered charity and stopped direct practical work.

1997 The Project organised Chilterns Woodland Conferences since 1997 and a range of woodland festivals, including “Woods at Work” and other forestry events. Moved office to Pigotts.

1998 We started a programme of woodland archaeology workshops in Pigotts Wood, which have continued ever since and have proved to be popular and led to the publication of three books and several articles.

1998 We were a partner in the European Transnational Woodland Industries Group TWIG Project (May 1999 - June 2002) with partners in Trier and Thuringia (Germany) and Evia (Greece). TWIG investigated Sustainable Woodland Management and Local Added Value to woodland products.

1999 Moved to the Chilterns AONB office in Princes Risborough.

2002 Supported the Deer Initiative in the Chilterns (from 2002 - 2010) to try to manage the increasing population of deer by providing information and encouraging cooperation.

2004 Worked closely with the Chilterns Conservation Board, since it was established by Parliamentary Order in 2004, to help implement elements of the AONB management plan, the latest version was published this year.

2005 CCB moved the AONB office to Chinnor, Project moved there too.

2006 We ran the Special Trees and Woods Project supported by Heritage Lottery Fund (January 2006 - June 2010) with over 100 volunteers recording 779 special trees and 168 special woods in the Chilterns. Held 5 conferences.



Special Trees at Low Scrubs - this is probably one ancient repeatedly coppiced beech tree

2007 We carried out a pilot ancient woodland survey in 2007. Then updated the Ancient Woodland Inventory for the Chilterns (May 2010 - June 2012) and published a report. This found that 60% of the woods in the Chilterns are considered to be ancient, having existed for at least the last 400 years.

2009 Supported local forestry businesses and promoted wood fuel, including as a Local Action Group member of the Chilterns LEADER programme (from 2009) and also as a steering group member of Wood Fuel East (2009 - 2013).

2012 We held a series of LEADER funded training workshops in 2012 and produced information sheets available on the website, in partnership with the Sylva Foundation and their MyForest website.

John Morris represented the Chilterns at a national level on the Forestry Commission's Applicants Focus Group (until 2013), The Woodland Initiatives Network (until 2013), on the Sustaining England's Woodlands Review (2002), and the government's Forest Regulation Task Force (2011). He chaired the Small Woods Association from 2000 to 2005 and was a trustee until 2010.

The Project worked in partnership with many organisations including the Forestry Commission, Natural England, Woodland Trust, Chiltern Society, National Trust, Sylva Foundation (MyForest), BBOWT, Royal Forestry Society, Small Woods, Oxfordshire Woodland Project, ngage / LEADER, Chilterns Conservation Board, County, District, Town and Parish Councils.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported our work, both financially and in kind, over the last 25 years.



The Chiltern Woodlands Project provides the following services

- Woodland Management advice (free first visit)
- Woodland Management plans *
- Tree and Woodland Surveys
- Woodland ecological and historical assessments
- Woodland Grant applications
- Felling licence applications to the Forestry Commission
- Identifying and marking trees for felling
- Finding and supervising contractors
- Training, Events, Conferences, Talks & Guided walks

*Long term woodland management plans - the Forestry Commission grant scheme currently offers a management plan grant of £1000 towards the cost of preparing the plan, for woods over 3 ha. (More grant for woods totalling over 50ha). These plans, once approved, may lead to other grants and felling consent. These plans are linked to the UK Forestry Standard see www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs
However the grant scheme is changing this year as the next round is brought in and it is not yet clear what funding will be available in coming years.



Beech seedlings Common Wood

NB - The Chiltern Woodlands Project does not carry out any practical work itself but works with other companies, contractors and consultants (and sometimes volunteer groups) as appropriate.

Types of advice given during a typical woodland visit may include:

- An assessment of the condition of the trees and woodland
- Type of woodland, methods of management and maintenance of trees
- Woodland biodiversity - identification of woodland flora & fauna.
- Woodland archaeology - what features are present e.g. sawpits, banks.
- A discussion on aims and objectives for the wood (s)
- Tree health and disease issues.
- Pest control - identification of likely problems and possible solutions
- Management / control of invasive or problem species eg laurel.
- Timber utilisation - what trees are present and how they can be used or sold.
- Wood fuel supply for own use or sale.
- Amenity and leisure issues - both public and private
- Landscape issues - how the wood meets local plans and strategies
- Felling regulations and grants
- Tree and hedge planting, protection and aftercare
- Practical management such as weeding, pruning and ride cutting.
- Contractor contacts or other ways to implement work



Beech with fungal decay at Peterley Wood

Annual Report 2013-2014

For the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014

The Chiltern Woodlands Project has a long record of success since it was set up in 1989 by the Chiltern Society with Countryside Commission and local council support 25 years ago. John Morris has been its lead officer since the start. Our challenge is to find ways of ensuring that woods are healthy, productive and useful, so they survive as a valuable resource for future generations.

Our vision is to achieve a cherished and thriving natural woodland resource across the Chilterns and surrounding areas; through the promotion of effective and sympathetic woodland management, so protecting the landscape, conserving nature and promoting a sustainable woodland economy.

The Chiltern Woodlands Project offers an advisory service to help bring woods into management, working in partnership with others including contractors and volunteer groups.

The Chiltern Woodlands Project's aim is to promote and encourage the sensitive and sustainable care and management of woodland in the Chilterns. Work is across five linked themes:

- A. Landscape:** to protect and enhance the wooded landscape of the Chilterns.
- B. Biodiversity:** to maintain and enhance nature in the Chilterns.
- C. Economy:** to promote a sustainable woodland economy in the Chilterns; including the use of timber and wood fuel.
- D. Historic Environment:** to raise awareness and interest in the history and archaeology of woods across the Chilterns
- E. Community:** to increase awareness, understanding, and enjoyment of Chiltern woodland.



Felling is a part of woodland management

Chairman's Report

The Chiltern Woodlands Project has now been working for 25 years, so it is useful to reflect on our achievements over this time. John Morris has been employed by the Project since its conception and he has continued to offer advice and assistance on the careful and sustainable management of mainly small and often ancient woods across the Chilterns.

These are uncertain times and there are major changes to the funding and organisation of various forestry and agricultural grant schemes to be introduced over the next year, we will have to wait and see if they are going to encourage owners to manage their woods for the wide range of benefits that woods can deliver.

The severe storms and heavy rain over the last winter took their toll on the woods and had an impact on our work, with some old trees being lost and others causing damage to homes and blocking roads. Fortunately the



damage to woodlands was not as bad as that from the 1987 and 1990 storms but are still a reminder of our changing climate and the threat that severe weather poses.

The demand for our woodland management advisory services remains high and new issues such as tree diseases affecting major species, including ash and oak, mean that the concern for the health of woods in the Chilterns is high.

The need to control pests, such as grey squirrels which strip the bark from broadleaved trees, and the impact of increasing numbers of deer browsing in the woods, are also having a major influence on the quality of woods in the area, with the next generation of trees being particularly affected.

Thanks once again to our active Board of Trustees for their efforts. We are grateful to the Chilterns Conservation Board, Chiltern Society and all our other partners for their continuing support and assistance.

Andrew Ingram June 2014



The main areas of work in the last year included:

Woodland advisory work in 2013/14

It has been a busy year with 55 owners visited, who collectively own 598 hectares (1477 acres) of woodland. About 60% of the owners visited now have woods entered into Forestry Commission grant schemes or felling licences. Some of the other woods may be too small for the grant scheme or not in need of any major felling at the moment. A range of practical work was organised in the woods once consent or funding had been arranged. It may take a couple of years to organise work and the felling permission may last for up to ten years once given.

About 6 more woodland management plans are currently in the pipeline and these should all lead to further practical work.

District	Number of owners visited	Area (ha)	In FC plan or licence	Practical work arranged
Chiltern	24	275.5	12	13
Wycombe	15	138.3	9	10
South Bucks	3	12.6	2	1
South Oxon	6	46.6	1	2
Three Rivers	2	46.6	2	2
Dacorum	4	65.5	4	3
Aylesbury Vale	1	12.5	1	0
Total	55	597.6	31	31

Surveys of National Trust woodland properties in the central Chilterns

John visited the following sites and reviewed the existing management plans (from 2002) for the **National Trust** (totalling about 184ha = 455 acres of woodland) and is making suggestions on future management.

Pulpit Wood 26.5ha (partly PAWS and scheduled monument)

Coombe Hill & Low Scrubs 33.1ha (ancient coppice on former commonland)

Hogback Wood 9.1ha (ancient woodland)

Aston Wood and Juniper Bank 42ha (SSSI & SAC ancient woods)

Greenfield Copse, Howe Wood and Lower Deans Wood 67.9ha (ancient woods)

West Wycombe Hill 5.4ha (mainly recent secondary woodland)



National Trust - Pulpit Wood



Fallen yews, still alive, with ash regeneration on West Wycombe Hill (NT)

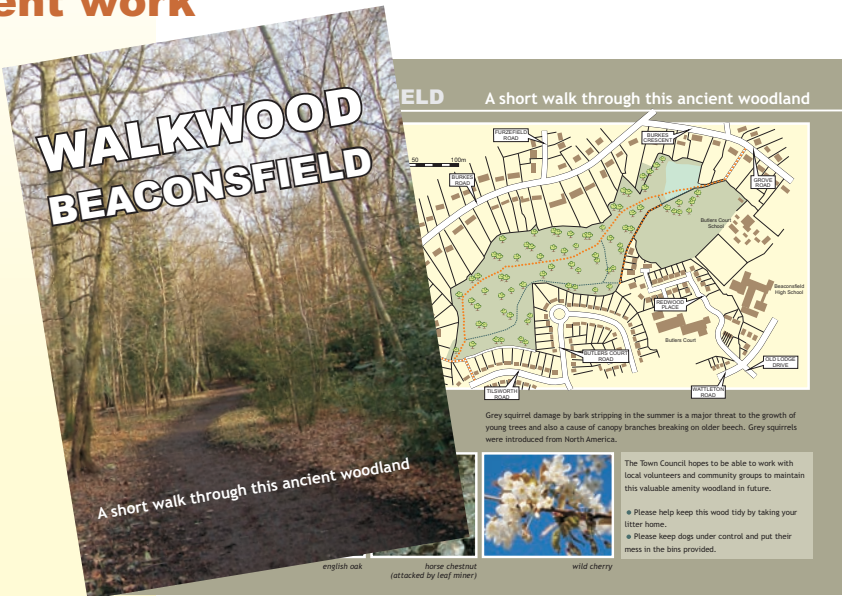
Some examples of recent work arranged include:

Surveys and reports for Wood Fuel Roads WIG -

paid consultancy fees by ngage for 10 site visits to assess applications and complete reports during the year, visiting sites in Berkshire, Hampshire, Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns. (See article on back page)

Some examples of practical work arranged include:

Walkwood, Beaconsfield Town Council - new leaflet produced.



Boxmoor Trust - laurel cleared, ash trees thinned and areas replanted.



Tree planting in Ramacre Wood for Boxmoor Trust

Chilterns Crematorium, Amersham - 3 photos below show management of ancient woodland included the felling of Norway spruce and cypress trees, sold for wood fuel.

Angling Spring Wood - further thinning of beech for safety reasons and to rejuvenate areas, producing firewood.



Felling deteriorating beech by bridleway in Angling Spring Wood



Some examples of recent work arranged include:

Bottom Wood - a 14.5 hectare ancient woodland on the boundary of Radnage and Stokenchurch parishes. It was gifted to the Chiltern Society by Mrs Cynthia Ercolani in 1984, to be managed as a nature reserve. Bottom Wood was the base of the Chiltern Society's Small Woodlands Project which evolved into the Chiltern Woodlands Project in 1989.

Bottom Wood Group volunteers carried out experimental hazel coppicing / laying to try to improve the habitat for dormice and limit deer browsing.

John led 2 guided walks to celebrate 30 years work in Bottom Wood for Chiltern Society on 29 September.

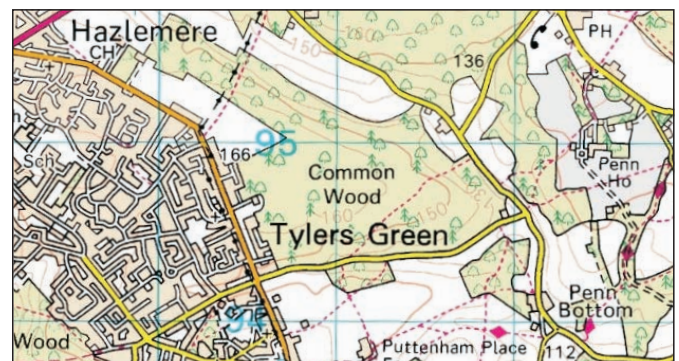
Common Wood: a case study - A large wood (100ha) owned by Penn & Tylers Green Residents Society and open to visitors with numerous paths.

It is largely a beechwood but there are also stands of oak and avenues of mature conifers including Douglas fir and Scots pine. The woods attract many different species of flora and fauna and in the spring there are carpets of bluebells.

About 300 tonnes of firewood was felled early this spring.



Pete Whipp cutting glade on Toothill (Bottom Wood)



Common Wood - a large wood east of High Wycombe



Common Wood before and after felling deteriorating beech to create a ride



A recently thinned plantation....



felling beech



stacked wood



Other activities

The Project held another two well attended woodland archaeology workshops at Pigotts Wood in March.

John gave presentations and guided visits at history and archaeology workshops on Naphill Common and Nettlebed Common for the Chilterns Commons Project.

He led a guided walk for the Woodland Trust in Penn Wood looking at archaeological features in April.

The Project organised the Chilterns Woodland Conference at the Clare Charity Centre, Saunderton in June, with 60 participants.

John was asked to chair the Oxon/ Bucks division of the Royal Forestry Society in March 2013. See www.rfs.org.uk

Chilterns LEADER Local Action Group

completed its first phase of funding for farm diversification and woodlands, John was a member of this steering group. All LEADER funds for the Chilterns for the March 2008- December 2013 Programme were successfully awarded. Qualifying rural businesses included farmers, foresters, estate managers and local food retailers, as well as tourism and equestrian-based enterprises.

LEADER is a European Union funded delivery mechanism to support rural businesses. A new LEADER Programme is due to start in January 2015 (subject to funding being confirmed), and the LEADER Team would like to encourage potential applicants to get in touch and register their interest. They are happy to discuss ideas and offer guidance, as well as share best practice examples and contacts.

See www.leader-programme.org.uk/

Wood Fuel East steering group

covered Eastern England, including Herts & Beds, with grants to support woodland owners and contractors to invest in harvesting and processing equipment and related infrastructure. It completed its work in December 2013. John Morris was a member of the steering group throughout, helping to appraise applications for funding.

Wood Fuel East had 4 staff and ran from 2008 - 2013 with an RDPE grant of £3.28 million, plus support from the Forestry Commission. Its aim was to develop sustainable wood fuel supply chains in the East of England by building capacity. The grants brought in matching private sector investment of over £3.5 million. Over 100,000 green tonnes of timber were brought to market annually and nearly 10,000 ha of woodland brought into positive

Details are in the final report see [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WoodFuelEastProjectIndependentEvaluationFinalReport.pdf/\\$FILE/WoodFuelEastProjectIndependentEvaluationFinalReport.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WoodFuelEastProjectIndependentEvaluationFinalReport.pdf/$FILE/WoodFuelEastProjectIndependentEvaluationFinalReport.pdf)



Visit to Naphill Common, veteran tree and pond



Treelife are one of the businesses supported by Chilterns LEADER



Wood Fuel East funded infrastructure including this barn converted to store wood chips

management. This about doubled the figure for wood brought to the market. One other objective was to save carbon by using a renewable fuel and displacing the use of oil for heating. Wood Fuel East also offered advisory services to woodland owners to suggest woodland management to bring wood to the market.

Information available on our web page

www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project

Page Unique page views
1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014

Chiltern Woodlands Project 703

Special Trees and Woods 494

Ancient Woodland 408

Total PDF's downloaded 606 (see list below)

Ancient Woodland Survey report 75

Ancient Woodland Survey Appendix Chiltern 37

Ancient Woodland Survey Appendix Wycombe 22

Ancient Woodland Survey Appendix South Bucks 20

Ancient Woodland Survey Appendix Dacorum 13

News of the Woods summer 2013 64

CWP news and Events Spring 2013 38

Information sheets downloaded from website

Ivy on trees 54

Thinning 46

Air Drying of Timber 38

Woodland archaeology 34

Woodland bats 27

Deadwood 25

Woodland management plans, an introduction 23

On site sawmilling 21

Woodland management for wood fuel 17

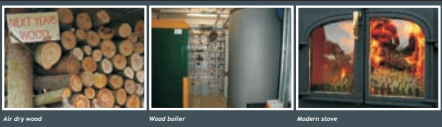
Mobile sawmilling 16

Marking broadleaved trees for thinning 13

Wood fuel case study 13

Selling conifers 10

Woodland Management for Wood Fuel



The woods of the Chilterns have survived for centuries because they were an economic resource supplying London and local markets with wood fuel and other woodland products.

Lack of management is contributing to a decline in the biodiversity of our woodlands. Bringing endemised woodlands into active management can benefit a range of flora and fauna, including rare and threatened species. By ensuring woods are made up of several stages - new planting, clear ground, mature trees and younger areas, more species will be present thereby increasing biodiversity.

There are many benefits from actively managing woodlands. These may include one or a combination of the following:

- Timber production
- Landscape enhancement
- Recreation
- Shading
- Wildlife conservation (biodiversity)
- Wood fuel, either as logs or chips
- Shelter (in various forms)
- "Ecosystem services" such as pollution, flood control and carbon storage

Careful woodland management

Careful woodland management can improve the woodland habitat for many species of native wildlife. Many woods have become dark, shady places with a restricted range of species, letting in light allows many woodland flowers to flourish hence providing food for a wide range of associated species including birds, butterflies, bats etc. For guidance and further information visit www.forestry.gov.uk/uklps

One option that currently is likely to produce a considerable amount of benefit and economic return is wood fuel. This can often be produced by selectively thinning out poorer and deteriorating trees so that others can develop into higher value, larger timber trees.

Wood fuel

Woodfuel is wood that is burned to generate heat or electricity. It can be a clean, sustainable, low-carbon form of renewable fuel.

www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk/

There are three main types of wood fuel that can be used to produce heat and hot water very efficiently using modern systems.


With high and increasing oil prices, use of wood for heating has great benefits but it does take forward planning, particularly if you are using your own woodland for your fuel supply. You should consider your fuel needs at least one year ahead, so that the wood can be cut and dried before use. Stoves can be linked to hot water storage tanks and central heating systems.

1 Logs - the traditional wood fuel market, is currently buoyant. Most hardwoods can be used but some prefer to use species such as ash and beech, which are the commonest trees in the Chilterns. Logs should ideally be dried for at least a year so that they produce more heat. Modern stoves are much more efficient than open fires.

2 Wood chips - suitable for larger heating systems, you need to produce dry material and use an appropriate chipping. All species can be used but hardwood logs sold for firewood have a higher value so chips are most commonly made from lower value conifers. Storage of the woodchips requires investment and is a key part of the process, which can be fully automated.

Chiltern Woodlands Project

Registered Charity No. 1002212



Why wood fuel?

One of the simplest ways to produce energy from biomass is to burn it. Wood chips, wood pellets, logs and straw can all effectively be burned to produce heat or electricity at a range of scales, from small domestic wood boilers to large scale district heating systems.

Nearly half of our energy consumption is used for heat but currently less than 1% is renewable heat sourced from biomass. The use of renewable heat is expected to increase with the introduction of the Renewable Heat Incentive.

Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns has a large potential for the installation of biomass boilers. The Renewable Heat Incentive was published in March 2011. It offers financial support to encourage the uptake of renewable heat. It will pay per kWh of heat produced from renewable sources for 20 years.

Oil is likely to run out in the next 40 years if we use it at the current rate. There is a drive to cut carbon emissions in order to reduce the impact of climate change. Burning wood in modern systems produces less carbon than alternatives such as oil or coal and growing more trees absorbs more carbon.


The Woodfuel Implementation Plan (2011) outlines how woodfuel can be promoted by increasing wood supply by bringing more privately owned woodlands into active management. See www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6PGGQR

Wood heating systems require investment but should be considered for both new builds and replacement of old oil burning systems.

The change from oil or electricity to biomass can bring large financial savings. A 50% saving can be achieved per kWh when substituting oil with wood chip, and 75% when replacing electricity with wood chip. Fuel prices currently provide a strong incentive for the uptake of woodfuel; with the cost of wood chip currently 2.5p/kWh and oil and electricity at 5.5p/kWh and 12.0p/kWh respectively.

See **Biomass Action Plan for Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns (2011)** for more information www.buckscs.gov.uk/assets/content/bcc/bccs/sustainability_fund/biomass_action_plan.pdf

Produced with support from Buckinghamshire County Council



3 Pellets - need processing elsewhere and so are the most expensive form of wood heating. Pellets are made by compressing sawdust. They are usually made from softwoods ie conifers. They are suitable for small scale automated heating systems.

Forestry harvesters are more frequently used in conifer plantations where their computerised cutting head can sort and cut conifers in seconds into different grades of logs, so a single tree may produce a top quality saw log a second quality timber and knotty tops suitable for wood chips

If you want to produce your own firewood for your own use then you may be able to do so without needing a felling licence, but this depends on how much material you want to burn each year and what your woodland is able to produce. You will need a felling licence if you fell more than 5 cubic metres every calendar quarter.

In the Chilterns many broadleaved (beech and oak) woods will increase in growth by perhaps 2 to 4 tonnes per hectare per year. Faster growing broadleaves such as ash and cherry may produce double this amount. Conifers may put on 10 - 20 tonnes a hectare a year, depending on the species and growing conditions.

Grants

Current information about the Forestry Commission's grants and felling licences available under their English Woodland Grant Scheme are shown on their website. See www.forestry.gov.uk

A requirement is that woodland management should meet the UK Forestry Standard.

To qualify for Forestry Commission grants you need to register with the Rural Payments Agency for a Single Business Identifier number and also have all the land shown on the Rural Land Register.

Decide what you want to do for the benefit of the wood and what your objectives are: this will help you make decisions about which trees you want to fell. Get advice.

For further information and advice
Contact John Morris, Chiltern Woodlands Project
(01844 355503)
email woodland@chilternsaonb.org
www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project.html
Registered charity no 1002212

The Project has worked with many contractors and businesses in the last year to implement work in woods spread across the Chilterns.

They include the following (the names are the contact for work, not necessarily the owner of the business) apologies to anyone who I have missed.

Pete Whipp - Ridgeway Woodlands

Ian Gibbon - Arborcare

Geoff Edwards - Eco Forestry Contractors

Derek Fletcher - Three Counties Timber Contractors

Nick Keighley - Face North Forestry

Greg Vickers - Englefield Forestry

John Shaw - Chiltern Rangers CIC

HG Matthews Brickworks

Nicholson Nurseries

Murray Maclean, Colliers Farm tree nursery

Steve Roberts - Straight from the woods - mobile sawmill

South Bucks Tree Surgeons

R Watts Tree Surgeons

Joe Brownsell

Donald Macleod Forestry

Roderick Wilson Tree surgeons and contractors

Adam Clissold

Plus volunteer groups and, of course, the woodland owners.



Board of Directors

Andrew Ingram	- Chairman
Adrian Lepper	- Company Secretary
Howard Pool	- Hon Treasurer
David Harris	- Chiltern Society (Vice Chairman)
Cherry Aston	
Richard Pushman	- Buckinghamshire County Council
Nigel Shepherd	- Chiltern District Council (until AGM)
Keith Muras	- Chiltern Society (until AGM)
Heather Barrett-Mold	- Chilterns Conservation Board
Susan Howkins	
Steve Patrick (sadly died during the year)	

The AGM to approve the accounts and elect the Board for the coming year will be held in September in Chinnor.

Staff

John Morris, Director

We are most grateful for the continuing support of the Chilterns Conservation Board, who provide the project with office accommodation in Chinnor.

Officers from key partners are members of the steering group and attend the Board meetings. Our thanks to Steve Rodrick Chief Officer Chilterns Conservation Board, Richard Pearce of the Forestry Commission and David Stowe of Chiltern District Council who attended these meetings for their help.

Financial Summary

Payroll services were provided by Danton Partners Ltd of Aylesbury

Howard Pool carried out the book keeping role on a voluntary basis.

Annual accounts are prepared this year by Fiona Bowers. Copies of these accounts will be available from the office on request.

Income 2013/14

Total Income	£ 55,262
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Expenditure

Total Expenditure	£ 58,307
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Loss on year	£ 3,045
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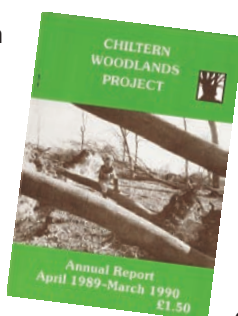
Book sales continue to generate some income, over £1,318 last year. Both books can be ordered direct from the Project or bought from the Chilternsaonb website.

The Cultural Heritage of Chilterns Woods - an illustrated guide to archaeological features written by John Morris and published by the Chiltern Woodlands Project in April 2009 has sold 80 copies last year.

Special Trees and Woods of the Chilterns was written by volunteers and published in November 2010. Edited by Rachel Sanderson and produced thanks to the efforts of Marie Hanson, an MA graduate from Oxford Brookes University. The Special Trees and Woods book sold 73 copies last year and over 700 in total.

A few reflections on the last 25 years

Our first annual report in 1990 featured the storm damage that occurred that winter. We have now suffered another series of storms this winter. Other problems like the impact of grey squirrel damage on most species of young broadleaved trees have not gone away, the impact is cumulative and is probably getting worse. Grey squirrels became a pest in the 1930's and the damage they cause is a major disincentive to the planting of beech, oak and other native trees. They have been followed by rapidly increasing deer numbers (Roe were almost a rarity in 1990, muntjac are common and large fallow herds occur in the west and east of the Chilterns). Deer browse young trees and can destroy the ground vegetation. Local pests such as the fat dormouse, Glis glis, also have an impact on other trees (such as wild cherry), and now a whole suite of new tree diseases are a concern. Some have arrived in the Chilterns, including Acute Oak Decline and diseases affecting Horse Chestnut trees, but others such as Ash



dieback, Chalara, threaten to cause new and severe problems. These new pests and diseases may in part be due to a changing climate but are also spread by global trade.

Since 1990 the market for beech timber, the main tree of the Chilterns, which once supported the "furniture town" of High Wycombe has collapsed as sawmills closed. Beech timber is still a fraction of the value it was in 1995. However the development of wood as a renewable fuel in the last five years has started to make harvesting of wood more viable again. This is a traditional use and probably the main reason why there are still so many woods in the Chilterns.

Red kites were introduced into the Chilterns 25 years ago and are now a common sight and a conservation success story; they are found nesting in many woods in the area. Buzzards and now ravens have naturally recolonized the area.

Grey squirrel damage

Severe bark damage to young broadleaved trees by grey squirrels remains one of the greatest threats to the next generation of trees in ancient woods in the Chilterns (and elsewhere in England).

A recent Royal Forestry Society survey of woodland owners and members (published April 2014) rated grey squirrel damage the number one threat at 69%, above tree diseases 63%, climate change and increasing deer numbers 41%. However one of the main methods of control using warfarin bait is being stopped in the next year due to warfarin being used in human medicine and the cost of getting approval to continue its use for squirrel control. Without warfarin alternative methods, such as trapping, will have to be considered.

Ash is one of the few native timber trees that rarely gets damaged by grey squirrels so the possible future loss of this tree to Chalara (Ash dieback) will have very serious consequences. An alternative tree to plant could be small leaved lime as this too is rarely attacked by grey squirrels, but planting lime will change the appearance of woods in the area.

Our beech and oak woods are under particular attack by grey squirrels, birch, hazel, field maple and hornbeam also are frequently damaged and the impact on the quality of our woods is a cumulative one.

Bark stripping starts in May once the trees are in leaf and continues through June and July, year after year, with damage in some years being more severe than others.



Beech bark strips are a sign of grey squirrel damage

A new Squirrel Accord for the British Isles which emphasises the need to control grey squirrels to protect the UK's woodlands as well as conserving red squirrels was agreed in May 2014. The Accord was unveiled at Dumfries House and has the support of HRH the Prince of Wales as well as Environment Minister Owen Paterson, Scottish Natural Heritage, Defra, the Scottish Government, the Forestry Commission and the Red Squirrel Survival Trust.

Chilterns Box Project

Working with volunteers to record the distribution of box in the Chilterns. See www.chilternsaonb.org/box for places to visit to see box, such as Wendover Woods.

Box trees are a distinctive but often overlooked feature of the Chilterns AONB. The largest natural box wood in England is at Great Kimble, near Wendover on the chalk scarp. Its importance was recognised as long ago as 1915 by Charles Rothschild when he proposed that it should be a nature reserve. Box is a very long lived and potentially very valuable evergreen timber tree that thrives on steep chalk hillsides. Its fine grained dense wood has many uses including:

- Engraving and printing blocks
- Wood wind instruments, such as recorders
- Bobbins for lace making
- Chess pieces
- Nit combs

Sarah Wright is the project officer based in the AONB office, email swright@chilternsaonb.org



Box in Greenfield Copse (NT)



Woodland Improvement Grant scheme extended – apply now!

The Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) has been extended and is open for applications, but only until the end of September this year. So get your applications in as soon as possible.

The Woodfuel WIG funds access projects which will enable the sustainable extraction of timber from woodland where it is currently inaccessible. (It can also pay for professional support measuring and marketing timber from under-managed compartments.)

The current grant covers up to 60% of the cost of work and can be used to fund development on every type of forest road, from quad bike tracks to haul roads for 44 tonne timber wagons, and everything in between. Funded work could include the installation of new roads, loading bays or entrance gates, or repairs to faults along access routes, such as damaged bridges and drainage repair.

The timescale for the application process is as follows:
End of September 2014 - All grant applications must be submitted

End of December 2014 - Contracts must be signed

End of September 2015 - All work must be completed and claimed for

Previous grants handed out include £9,600 to improve access roads to a woodland area; £7,500 for the construction of long haul extraction tracks, loading bays and bridge repairs; and £50,000 for the creation of access tracks to a previously unmanageable area of land.

[Click here](#) or go to www.ngagesolutions.co.uk/case-study/woodfuel-woodland-improvement-grant-hub/ to read about these and other grants awarded by the Woodfuel WIG scheme.

To find out more about getting a Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant, contact Mike Furness on 01494 568970 / mike.furness@ngagesolutions.co.uk

The grant is delivered by Ngage Solutions across the South East, South West and the county of Cumbria, on behalf of The Forestry Commission.

Coming Events

Sunday 14th September Chilterns Countryside Festival at Ashridge



Chilterns
Countryside and Food Festival
Sunday 14th September 2014
from 10am to 4pm
at the National Trust Ashridge Estate
Bridgewater Monument, Near Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 1LT
Adults £4, children £1. There is a small charge for some activities
Free parking in the meadow
Discover the activities, crafts and industries
Masses to see and do for all the family
For more information phone: 01442 851 227 or 07788 49 11 40
linked with our local countryside

Grown in Britain

This campaign aims to create a sustainable future for our woods and forests by creating a wood culture that captures personal health and fitness, well-being, community and encourages the use of more wood and forest product. It aims to create a new and stronger market pull for the array of products derived from our woodlands and forests.
www.growninbritain.org/



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Find the Chiltern Woodlands Project on facebook
facebook.com/chilternwoodlands

Creating an extraction track in Goddards Wood

