



Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on Countryside Skills (traditional & modern)

In association with the Field Studies Council



23 May 2016

Developing biodiversity skills for the future

It's fair to say as an organisation Field Studies Council (FSC) are concerned about a lack of taxonomic skills. Some graduates are leaving university to start work in the environmental sector without the necessary field identification skills and there are fewer volunteers training courses helping with the knowledge needed for the critical role they play.

External evidence of the need for more expertise and knowledge at a professional level includes recent national surveys and reports published by (C)IEEM (2011), NERC (2007) and the British Ecological Society (2011). The skills and knowledge deficit has also been highlighted in a sequence of parliamentary reports (e.g. House of Lords 2010).

FSC also has extensive evidence that the decline in field skills and knowledge is deep-seated in schools. We have published several reports in conjunction with national partners such as the Association for Science Education and British Ecological Society which have highlighted a long-term decline in whole-organism biology and associated field skills (e.g. Outdoor Science, 2011).

'FSC believes that the more we understand about and take inspiration from the world around us the more we can appreciate its needs and protect its diversity and beauty for future generations.'

As a charity developing more skills to help people monitor, identify and record biodiversity is at the heart of what FSC want to do.

Inspiring 'Young Darwins'

One thing that is clear to us is the need to engage our young people with the natural world early on. Many children and teenagers visit FSC on school trips but we also offer Real Family Holidays¹ - affordable UK breaks to encourage families to try new activities like pond dipping or moth trapping so they can start to learn more and enjoy the environment.

For young people who have already got that interest we have created the Young Darwin Scholarship. This pioneering scheme awards 15 scholarships each year to 16 and 17 year olds who are studying or interested in science - especially ecology, geography, geology or the environment. They begin with a five day residential at one of our centres, honing their identification skills, bonding with each other and making useful connections with us and other experts.



Young Darwin Scholarship participants (Cathy Preston)

One of our first Young Darwin Scholars was Douglas Boyes, now an undergraduate studying biological science at Oxford and a county recorder for butterflies and moths. He is proactively working to increase the number of records submitted. He now delivers his own training courses to others. Douglas credits an FSC family holiday for sparking his interest in moths in the first place.
<http://www.douglasboyes.co.uk/about.html>

The Scholars continue to benefit from ongoing mentoring and events, including FSC's subject-specific summer camps², building their own network to put them in the best possible position to succeed in an career in this field and continue using and developing these crucial skills. The aim is to build a future generation of 'Darwins'.

Accredited training

To improve the number of people with good field biology skills we are proud to have been offering accredited courses in biological recording for 20 years. We now run two courses in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) which focus fully on this: Certificate in Biological Recording and Species Identification³ and MSc Biological Recording³. These qualifications have gained increasing recognition from employers such as government agencies, environmental consultants, councils and record centres. They are strongly vocational courses allowing people to really up-skill in a practical way and gain a recognised qualification.



Earthworm identification (Pete Boardman)

Another area in which FSC is working hard is for less well-studied organisms like earthworms, springtails and soil mites. Their fascinating stories and potential to provide meaningful indicators of environmental change is at odds with the 'uncharismatic' label often attached to them.

Through Tomorrow's Biodiversity⁴ (or Tom.bio), an FSC project funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for five years, we are identifying important gaps in identification and monitoring skills, as well as barriers to filling those gaps, and developing/trialling solutions with new training and resources like new AIDGAP guides or electronic resources.



Soil mesofauna course (Charlie Bell)

Dr Charlie Bell is our Tomorrow's Biodiversity Project Assistant. She shares her experience of a recent Tom.bio-supported Soil Mesofauna training course.

'First question – what exactly is Soil Mesofauna?' The quick answer is basically any invertebrate living in the soil which is visible to the naked eye – even if just as a speck - and about small enough to pass through a 2 mm mesh. So things like bacteria, most nematodes and most single-celled organisms are not 'mesofauna', but animals such as mites, springtails, smaller spiders, smaller beetles etc are.

The first day saw the group learning about soil – and what a fascinating

subject it is! My top facts:

- In arable soil, there can be 5 tonnes of soil organisms per hectare. This equates to approximately 100 sheep! In grassland, this increases to 100 tonnes per hectare (or 2000 sheep!)
- Soil is home to a quarter of the species on Earth. Most of these live in the top few cms.
- Nematode worms are so numerous and abundant, that if you were to remove all other matter from the planet you would still see a 'ghost' Earth picked out in nematodes.

Truly incredible, and somewhat humbling!

Day 2 focused on springtails (*Collembola*), a fascinating group of creatures with some truly beautiful species, including the bright pink one recently found for the first time in the UK⁵ by Pete Boardman. There are around 250 species in Britain, so care must be taken with identification!

Day 3 was Mite Day - After learning about mite morphology and anatomy, we concentrated on three different orders of mite – *Mesostigmata*, *Prostigmata* and *Astigmata*, and tried (sometimes even successfully!) to key them out to family level. What a fascinating class of animals – and, under the microscope, some of them are incredibly beautiful.

On the final day, we attempted a soil 'bioblitz' – putting our new skills to the test in an attempt to identify every specimen from one of our soil cores.



Mites (Charlie Bell)

I found the course a revelation. As ever when I use a microscope, I was struck by the whole new world which becomes apparent when you look down the eyepiece. It also became apparent that, even on an intensive four day course, we were only barely scratching the surface (pardon the pun!) of Soil Mesofauna.'

Read Charlie's full blog post.⁶

BioLinks

FSC is delighted to have received support from HLF for a further new project to ensure our future biodiversity and resource development add increased value to the sector through working with others. This project is in its infancy and it will be linking with other organisations to ensure FSC continue to provide support where it is most needed.

There is more information about FSC and all our work to build biodiversity skills for the future at www.field-studies-council.org. We also offer around 300 natural history training courses each year and produce wide range of highly-regarded publications, including the AIDGAP (Aid to Identification in Difficult Groups of Animals and Plants) guides, which provide a valuable resource for the field biologist.

Links

- 1 <http://www.real-family-holidays.org/>
- 2 <http://c-js.co.uk/1YydQWV>
- 3 <http://bit.ly/1gl7qh1>
- 4 <http://www.tombio.uk/>
- 5 <http://c-js.co.uk/23WXxVe>
- 6 <http://www.tombio.uk/?q=soilblog>

How To Effectively Deliver BREEAM Ecology - The Ecology Consultancy Training Course
Book your reduced price early bird ticket on our course that provides an introduction to the ecology chapter of BREEAM New Construction (2014). Each of the five parts of BREEAM Ecology will be reviewed and discussed. Lunch provided. <http://c-js.co.uk/1rZAJZk>

Dormice Licence Training – Saturday 20th August 2016, 9:30am - 4pm (£100) Mick Peacy has worked extensively surveying dormice at Siccaridge Wood reserve for over 20 years. In this course Mick will share his expert knowledge with those looking to gain their dormouse licence. For more details call 01452 383333 or visit <http://c-js.co.uk/1T8vaQT>

Join Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) and NEWWildlife for an introduction to the ecology and identification of British reptiles. Thursday 2nd June at Rhydymwyn Valley Nature Reserve from 9.15am to 2.30pm. Booking is essential as places are limited, please contact Mandy on mandy.cartwright@arc-trust.org or 07810 184508.

Come along and join NEWWildlife to learn about your local reserve. There will be information stands and family wildlife OPAL surveys to take part in, plus interesting walks and talks around the site! Saturday 11th June, 11am to 3pm at Knowle Hill Nature Reserve, Buckley. Contact NEWWildlife on 01352 742115 or kwilson@newwildlife.org.uk

Animal Tracks and Signs 08/06/2016 (7 Days). Wild things!, Findhorn, Moray. 01309 690450 enquiries@wild-things.org.uk <http://c-js.co.uk/1YBd63x>
Discover animal tracking. Learn how to be more aware, understand animal senses, and how to analyse and identify animal tracks and signs. Animal Tracks and Signs is accredited as an NCFE Level 3 Award.

Whale & Dolphin Survey Training Course - 25th & 26th June 2016 again 10th & 11th September 2016 with Sea Watch Foundation. The course will consist of illustrated lectures and presentations, as well as headland watches and boat surveys aboard a local research vessel.
Contact katrin.lohregel@seawatchfoundation.org.uk or visit <http://c-js.co.uk/1NFsSDp>

In partnership with the Field Studies Council this course looks at the main UK invasive non-native (INNS) species, how they arrived, why they are so successful, their basic ID features, current control methods, legislation and potential future INNS. Resident (Sole Occupancy) £200, Resident (Shared Room) £170, Non-Resident: £150 <http://c-js.co.uk/1QYduml>

The National Dormouse Conference 9th/10th September 2016 is your opportunity to hear the latest in hazel dormouse mitigation, monitoring, ecology and conservation, The Friday programme is aimed at the ecological consultant and Saturday is for NDMP volunteers – but anyone with an interest in dormice is welcome. Details: www.ptes.org/dormouseconf

In partnership with Denmark Farm this course looks at the main invasive non-native (INNS) species in the UK, how they arrived, why they are so successful, their basic ID features, current controls methods, legislation, recording projects and potential future INNS. £40 waged / £35 low-waged and unwaged. Book via <http://c-js.co.uk/24N72Mq>

Managing Limestone Grassland for Butterflies – Wednesday 29th June, 9:30am - 4pm (£100) Join Dave Simcox, Large Blue Project Officer at Daneway Banks, for this in-depth introduction to the ecology and habitat management of limestone grassland for rare butterflies. For more details - 01452 383333 or <http://c-js.co.uk/1T2Sdum>

Cotswold Wildflower ID - Saturday 25th June, 9:30am - 4pm (£22/£25.50) Explore Kilkenny SSSI reserve with GWT expert botanist, Alan Sumnall. In this one day course you'll get right up close to wildflowers and learn about the management needed to help them thrive. For more details call 01452 383333 or visit <http://c-js.co.uk/1TyQoFc>

Grassland Ecology - Sunday 19th June, 9:30am - 4pm (£45/£48.50) This one day course starts with an introduction to grassland ecology, including lowland evolution and various British grasslands. Outside study will focus on various grasslands at Robinswood Hill, including grazed/ungrazed and improved/unimproved limestone. For more details call 01452 383333 or visit <http://c-js.co.uk/1UP2JtG>

Coastal Activity Leader Training 24/07/2016 (7 Days) Ecology Centre, Kinghorn, Fife. 01309 690450 enquiries@wild-things.org.uk <http://c-js.co.uk/27yoraF> Discover how to lead outdoor education sessions in a coastal environment. Students will learn coastal bushcraft skills, naturalist knowledge, conservation, cetacean surveying, seashore activities & seaweed identification. Accredited as an NCFE Level 2 Award.

We offer a wide range of courses in Conservation, Ecology, Habitat Management, Species ID, Countryside Skills and Crafts, plus Sustainable Living and Wildlife Photography. Denmark Farm is a stunning West Wales venue with a selection of comfortable Eco Accommodation all set in a diverse 40 acre Nature Reserve. www.denmarkfarm.org.uk

Butterfly ID and Ecology Course, Hamstreet Village Hall and Orlestone Forest, Kent Saturday 28th May, 10am-1pm. Covering all species found in Kent, ID tips for each family as well as practical advice to encourage them. The Conservation Volunteers, Kent Heritage Trees Project. £10 suggested donation. Tel. 01233 666519

14/07/2016 - 10:00 - 15:00 Bumblebee Identification - YWT Potteric Carr. Cost: £35 non member, £30 member. A comprehensive day looking at bumblebee identification and finding out how to become a bee walker for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Lunch and Bumblebee ID guide included. Please inform us of any dietary req's. Details: <http://www.ywt.org.uk/whats-on>

Professional be-spoke training in invasive non-native species. Training includes invasive plant and animal identification, legislation and biosecurity. Training available in and around Kent and London. Fees apply - please contact for information. MVCP: andrea.griffiths@kent.gov.uk or 03000 414795 www.medwayvalley.org

Coastal Activity Leader Training 03/07/2016 (7 Days). Wild things!, Findhorn, Moray. 01309 690450 enquiries@wild-things.org.uk <http://c-js.co.uk/27yoraF> Discover how to lead outdoor education sessions in a coastal environment. Students will learn coastal bushcraft skills, naturalist knowledge, conservation, cetacean surveying, seashore activities and seaweed identification. Accredited as an NCFE Level 2 Award.

Field Studies Council is a leading provider of environmental training with a network of centres across the UK, expert tutors and an annual programme of 300 courses to choose from. Our professional training courses cover all aspects of the natural world and help with career development at any stage www.field-studies-council.org/professional

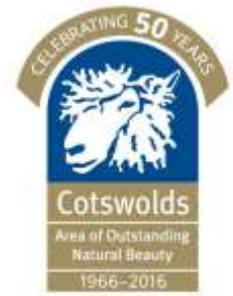
Woodland Activity Leader Training 11/07/2016 (7 Days). Wild things!, Findhorn, Moray. 01309 690450 enquiries@wild-things.org.uk <http://c-js.co.uk/1RmvXhm> Do you have a passion for outdoor learning and environmental education? You'll learn: leadership, bushcraft, conservation, plant-identification, foraging. Alternative to forest school training. Woodland Activity Leader Training is an NCFE Level 2 Award.

Painting Pollinators Workshop – 15 August. South Cotswolds. A closer look at the relationship between pollinating insects and plants, with Cath Hodsman, Wildlife and Natural History Artist. For more information: <http://bit.ly/1qOpTAR>

Summer Tree Identification, Tuesday 7th June - 10 - 12.45 Singleton Environment Centre, Ashford, Kent TN23 5LW. Covering the basics of identifying trees in summer, looking at tree shapes, bark, leaves and fruit. The Conservation Volunteers, Kent Heritage Trees Project Suggested donation £10 Tel 01233 666519

Rural skills – their importance and how we can preserve them

By David Molloy, Rural Skills and Grants Officer



While travelling back through the Langdale Valley, after a short and soggy Easter weekend camping trip to the Lake District, a friend turned to me and said 'I do like how the fields are so small here'. At the time I simply nodded and agreed as my mind was more focused on regaining core body temperature. Thinking back now, my friend's observation and expression of appreciation for this feature of the landscape raises a number of important issues, particularly with regards to traditional countryside skills.

As those who have visited the Langdale Valley will know, the landscape is criss-crossed with a mosaic of dry-stone walls and it was these that created the small enclosures that delighted my friend so much. Dry-



Cotswolds AONB Dry-stone Walling Competition 2011 (Gareth Kingdon)

stone walls are prominent features in many of the UK's protected landscapes, including here in the Cotswolds AONB. But why are traditional skills, such as dry-stone walling, so important to maintain? What benefits do they provide and what do we risk losing if they disappear?

From the point of view of landscape protection, rural skills tell an important story about how humans have interacted with the landscape over the centuries and how they continue to do so today. They inform us about the geology of the area, predominant land management practises and even the changing dynamic of the countryside's labour market. For instance, in the Cotswolds AONB, the links between rural skills and limestone is prominent in

every town and village. Whether it be in the stone tiles found on rooftops, the use of lime for mortaring and rendering properties, or in the construction of the dry-stone walls in the surrounding countryside. These skills are integral to maintaining the landscape that we see around us and without the craftsmen proficient in these skills we would be in danger of losing what makes the Cotswolds and many other protected areas special.

Of course, the benefits of rural skills go beyond enhancing the visitor experience. Traditional skills such as hedgelaying and coppicing both make a significant contribution to local biodiversity by providing wildlife corridors and diverse woodland habitats. The resurgence of woodland coppicing over the past few years is very welcome in this respect and it can only be hoped that other rural skills will follow this path. But why is it that so many rural skills are perceived to be dying out? One argument is that in a world driven by the market economy, traditional methods of countryside management, such as dry-stone walling or hedgelaying, are no longer cost effective. After all, why spend thousands of pounds repairing a dry-stone wall, when a post and rail fence costing a fraction of that would do the same job? Indeed, with the ever increasing financial pressures placed on UK farmers and land managers, it is understandable why traditional methods of field boundary maintenance have fallen by the wayside.



A young coppicing enthusiast at work (Cotswold AONB)

As with many issues in countryside management, it is necessary to look at reasons beyond cost-effectiveness for the work that we do. A Cotswolds AONB or Lake District National Park criss-crossed by post and rail fencing is a stomach turning thought.

Traditional skills are our link to the past. They tell us about who we are and how we got here. They help form the protected landscapes which attract over 260 million visitors each year and which contribute over £20 billion to the economy in England*. At the local level, the impact of traditional skills is far reaching, particularly with regards to rural jobs. In the Cotswolds, hedgelayers help generate greater levels of coppice woodland management due to the need for stakes and heatherings. Similarly, the demand for lime and limestone products for rural skills supports the quarrying industry in the area. The long term loss of these skills would therefore not only be detrimental to the character of the surrounding landscape, but also to the rural economy. So what can be done to reverse this trend?



Midlands style hedgelaying (Gareth Kingdon)

Financial incentives to encourage landowners and farmers to employ rural skills practises is without doubt key. The inclusion of payments for skills such as dry-stone walling and hedgelaying in Defra's Countryside Stewardship scheme is indeed welcome in this respect. Beyond this, it is essential that the traditional methods and techniques of rural skills are passed on to future generations. To achieve this, it is vital that the training of these crafts is facilitated. Learning centres such as the Dorset Rural Skills centre, the Derbyshire Eco Centre and the various agricultural colleges around the UK, all play a pivotal role in the continuation of these skills.

The purpose of providing rural skills training however, should not be limited to the development of expertise alone. Here in the Cotswolds AONB, we have been running rural skills training courses for over 14 years. In that time it has been noticeable how the interest in heritage crafts has increased. Why the sudden clamour for traditional skills you might think? From our experience, many people attending our courses do so out of an intrigue for the skills in question. 'I've always wanted to give it a go' is a phrase I often read when the feedback forms come in. While their interest may seem short-term and somewhat wistful, this 'give it a go' crowd are integral to the long term survival of rural skills. Although their physical contribution to these skills may stop at the end of the course, we know that they go away with a deeper appreciation of these skills and are only too willing to tell friends and family of their experience. The significance of producing such rural skills ambassadors should not be underestimated.



Cotswolds AONB landscape (Cotswold AONB)

The UK has a rich history of rural skills. Providing land managers are adequately supported, training provision facilitated and the public actively engaged, then these skills and their imprint on our landscapes (including the small enclosures of the Langdale Valley) should be here for many years to come.

*So much more than Just a View – England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, <http://c-js.co.uk/1sIWTEK>

For further information on Cotswolds Rural Skills visit www.cotswoldsruralskills.org.uk

Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 June. Two-day course with craftsman Neill Mapes learning how to make a traditional hay rake perfect for making hay in a small wildflower meadow. Cost £65. Based Shropshire/Powys border, SY5 0LD. To book call 01938 561741, email info@stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk, www.stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk

A training programme developed by Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme to teach traditional rural skills to manage and conserve the area's natural & built heritage. The programme includes taster days, certificated courses and traineeships. Based Shropshire/Powys border. 01938 561741, info@stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk www.stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk

Coracle Building Course, Exmoor. Based in a fantastic location on Exmoor National Park. Simonsbath House Outdoor Centre is offering a Coracle Building Workshop (ash laths and calico skin) Saturday 15th – Monday 17th October 2016. £245 per person, £155 for 2nd person working on same coracle Bunkhouse accommodation available 01643 831382 or email: enquiries@shoc.info

Learn to scythe with tutor Steve Tomlin. Course will include: setting up the scythe to fit your body, ergonomic mowing technique, sharpening in the field, peening the edge, care and maintenance of your scythe. To book contact Nicki Dyas at n.dyas@staffs-wildlife.org.uk or ring 01538 381356

EasTec Ltd is a Lantra approved training provider based in East Anglia which specialises in environmental and land-based training and delivers a wide range of quality training courses at competitive prices country wide. The training courses cover a wide range of disciplines and include Chainsaw and Tree Surgery, Machinery, Grounds Maintenance, Pesticides and Pest Control courses. We pride ourselves on using well established, highly skilled and professional Instructors who are well respected within their field of expertise. Please visit www.eastec.co.uk or ring Jane on 07899 685472.



Dry Stone Walling: A Living Craft for the Present Day

Dry stone walling in Britain stretches back thousands of years, to the village of Skara Brae in the Orkneys, and the Iron Age brochs of northern and western Scotland. Dry stone walls, built without mortar, are found mainly in upland areas of Britain where soils tend to be thinner and rock much nearer the surface and where trees and hedges do not grow easily, due to altitude and/or climate.



Training course (DSWAPL/A Shaw)

A dry stone wall is an amazing structure, having numerous benefits over other boundaries. A wall is built using stones placed tightly together with the length of the stone going into the wall for strength, and the middle being filled with smaller stones, known as hearting. Walls form a strong, load-bearing construction that not only bears the load of its own weight, but can withstand the forces of weather battering it and livestock pushing against it. As the wall settles, the stones knit together making the structure even more robust. A dry stone wall is also a very effective shelter against the elements for animals and crops, and indeed humans. How many times have you sheltered in the lee of a wall for a picnic whilst out in the countryside?

Dry stone walls also provide valuable habitat for a range of small mammals, plants and insects. The middle of the wall is usually quite dry so an ideal place for voles, birds and even stoats to make a home. Lichens and mosses colonise the outer surfaces, which in turn offer a foothold for other plants such as stonecrop and ferns to establish themselves.

The Dry Stone Walling Association (DSWA) is often asked the following question "Isn't dry stone walling a dying art?" In recent years there has been an increase

in the interest in the use of dry stone walling, whether for field boundary repair or for landscape gardening. There is also a small increase in the use of dry stone walling for civil engineering projects, although the individual nature of dry stone walling can make engineers and architects slightly wary of its capabilities.

There are opportunities to gain recognised qualifications in dry stone walling. Some colleges offer specific dry stone walling courses whilst others teach the skill as an additional option to courses such as horticulture, landscaping or land management. There is also an apprenticeship in dry stone walling, accessed via the Environmental Conservation Apprenticeship. Currently, the DSWA also has five bursary trainees funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The DSWA has a network of local branches stretching across the country and many of these branches offer short, beginner weekend courses, an ideal way to gain a basic insight into the skill.



Field wall near Hawkshead, Cumbria
(DSWAPL/A Shaw)

Like many traditional crafts, dry stone walling is perhaps perceived as something carried out by “the older generation” but there is no reason why young people cannot make a successful career out of dry stone walling, providing they are willing to work hard and take time to learn the skills and understand the materials they are using.

Further information is available from the DSWA website, www.dswa.org.uk or by contacting the office on 015395 67953.

Alison Shaw, Dry Stone Walling Association, Lane Farm, Crooklands, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7NH

Practical course in traditional dry stone walling.

Learn the basic skills of the craft on a two day training course in the Scottish highlands rebuilding a section of wall from the foundations to the cope stones. For further course details contact Innes at Highland Stonecraft. mob: 07775 692139 email: info@highland-stonecraft.co.uk

The National Stone Centre runs weekend courses in

Dry Stone Walling for beginners and improvers on its site on the edge of the Peak District in Derbyshire. The courses cover the basic dry stone walling skills and the geological context and stone sourcing. For more information see our website www.nationalstonecentre.org.uk

We provide courses on the conservation of our built

environment including lime in building, lime plastering, thatching and drystone walling as well as the use of colour in the environment and traditional paints. Courses are provided for professionals, homeowners, local authorities, universities and schools. Tel: 01874 611350, email: megan.rees@lime.org.uk, www.lime.org.uk

Study natural garden design, mud brick construction,

permaculture, self sufficiency and more. www.acsedu.co.uk or info@acsedu.co.uk for more information

Next Generation of Countryside Custodians

Over the last decade, many young people from across the Yorkshire Dales have completed bespoke rural apprenticeships, courtesy of local charity Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT).



Woodland learning (Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust)



During this time the scheme has been through several incarnations, and has been known by a number of different names, but the aims have always remained constant:

To provide young local people with a potentially life-changing opportunity to gain the qualifications, experience and rural skills needed to manage the Yorkshire Dales landscape sensitively and sustainably.

Jo Boulter, project co-ordinator at YDMT, said: “Opportunities for young people in the Yorkshire Dales can be limited, so it’s a real pleasure to be able to help secure exciting local employment and

personal development opportunities for our trainees. By providing financial support and expert advice to a range of local businesses wishing to employ an apprentice, we’re able to help them grow their organisation

whilst passing on their knowledge and skills. It is an important investment in the next generation of custodians for this fantastic rural landscape, and I hope the project will continue to go from strength to strength.”

The apprentices gain hands-on work experience over two years through placements with local employers, complemented by part time college study for a Level 2 Diploma, and specialist certificated training courses, such as chainsaw and brush cutter use, off-road driving, habitat surveying and tree planting, to name just a few.

The apprenticeships have led to many success stories over the years, with many of the young people finding themselves well placed to forge ahead on their chosen path of personal development, whether that be further education, or a fulfilling career in environmental conservation and countryside management.

Case Study - Zach Thompson

An apprentice with Dinsdale Moorland Services from 2010-2012.

Zach came into the scheme at the age of 18 with 7 GCSEs and a diploma in countryside management, specialising in game keeping. Although this was similar to the course being offered, it was sufficiently different to be able to offer him a place. His placement at Dinsdale Moorland Services gave him a wide variety of opportunities including travel to jobs in Wales, Northern Ireland, Bristol and Warwickshire.



Zach Thompson (far left) – one of the tractor team at Dinsdale Moorland Services (Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust)

Qualifications

As well as gaining his Level 2 Diploma in Environmental Conservation, Zach collected the following certificates: Health & Safety, First Aid, Pesticides PA1, PA2 and PA6, Chainsaw CS30 and CS31 and B & E Trailer test. He also attended a fencing day and a woodland management day.

Zach's job included heather regeneration (seeding, brash spreading, gully blocking etc), bracken spraying, the installation of paths, tracks and parks, creation and restoration of lowland mires and the building of mountain bike tracks.

After completing his apprenticeship Zach continued working at Dinsdales for a time.

Now Zach is self-employed and using the skills and experience he gained through the scheme to provide a variety of countryside management services across the region.

Case Study - Arkady Bogg-Hargroves

An apprentice with Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority from 2013-2016.

Working with Rangers, Arkady carried out a range of practical tasks, including maintenance and restoration of rights of way (paths, fences, walls, gates, stiles, signs etc) as well as working with volunteers, school groups and the Young Rangers.

Having completed his Level 2 Diploma in 2015, Arkady was one of three students who went on to complete a Level 3 Advanced Diploma in Environmental Conservation - a first for both YDMT and Craven College who



Arkady Bogg-Hargroves repairing a gate (Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust)

had not offered this qualification before.

Qualifications

As well as gaining his Level 2 & 3 Diplomas in Environmental Conservation, Arkady collected the following certificates: Health & Safety, First Aid, Pesticides PA1 and PA6, Brushcutter, Chainsaw CS38 and CS39, ATV driving and B & E Trailer test. He also attended a mountain rescue scenario training day and an outdoor group leadership day.

When his placement with the National Park Authority came to an end, Arkady received glowing reports from his managers and colleagues. Comments included: "The bar has been raised so high - Arkady will be a hard act to follow."

Thanks to the wealth of experience gained through the apprenticeship scheme, Arkady received multiple job offers. He has recently taken up a position at Webbers Forestry which will allow him to specialise in his favoured field of arboriculture.

The Future

YDMT will be working with 20 more young local people, aged 16-24, over the next four years through the new 'Dales and Fells Trainee Scheme'.

Building on the success of previous schemes, YDMT will offer exciting two-year apprenticeships with employers including Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Conservefor Ltd, Marsden AES Ltd, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Garden Doctors, Sedbergh School and Horton Landscaping.

Initially the charity is looking to recruit ten young people by July, ready to begin apprenticeships by September 2016. Ten more placements will be available in the future with a start date of September 2018.



Mountain rescue scenario training
(Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust)

These opportunities are available through two new programmes: Stories in Stone which is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund thanks to National Lottery players, and Green Futures, part of Our Bright Future - a forward-thinking social movement of 31 projects funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund.

For more information please contact Jo Boulter at Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust:
tel: 015242 51002 email: jo.boulter@ydmtd.org web: www.ydmtd.org



With over 25 years in the industry and still actively involved commercially, Scott Fraser Training Ltd is the ideal place to deliver your training. A range of NPTC and Lantra certificates courses available, at our 250 acre site. Tel: 01825 731810
Email: scott@scottfrasertraining.co.uk
Web: www.scottfrasertraining.co.uk

We supply courses from tree planting to machinery operation across the South & West of England. For more information visit:-
www.chainsawcoursesouthwest.co.uk
Contact us on info@chainsawcoursesouthwest.co.uk or ring 07836 594404.

MWMAC Ltd, Unit 4 East Street Enterprise Park, Rhayader, LD6 5ER 01597 810306; enquiries@mwmac.co.uk; The leading Welsh training provider and assessment centre for all your Agricultural, Land-Based, Forestry, Trees & Timber needs. City & Guilds NPTC and Lantra courses available.

Professional Tree Inspection courses - Lantra Awards Certificate - June 13th to 15th - £495 - Cotehele House (Nat. Trust) near Tavistock - ring 01822 832232 or email: admin@lynher.com for full details. Also all chainsaw units - all year round - see www.lynher.com for latest dates.

Lantra Woodchipper or Brushcutter courses - every month near Plymouth (Saltram House Nat. Trust) - ring 01822 832232 or email: admin@lynher.com for full details. Also all chainsaw units - all year round - see www.lynher.com for latest dates.

BMC has been delivering Countryside Management qualifications for over 25 years, and our expert staff and strong industry links support students to become fully qualified industry professionals. Our stunning 850 acre estate is the perfect setting, and our new teaching facilities are of the highest quality.
www.brooksbymelton.ac.uk or 01664 855444

Arbschool run courses aimed at achieving NPTC awards in operation of Equipment by blending modern training methods with Professional equipment. The rural environment is increasingly seen as a great employment option whether in, Tree & Vegetation management, Forestry or Estates work. Skills in demand & largely involve working with Great Equipment, 01287 644555 www.arbschool.co.uk

Millhouse Training Ltd provide high quality affordable training specialising in training for people who work within Land based industries. All our training is professionally accredited and can be tailored to meet your needs Please contact us for more information 08444 125808 or www.millhousetraining.co.uk

Fancy a career in the great outdoors?! Well why not come and train with us! We offer everything from degrees to BTEC Diplomas in Countryside Management - check out <http://countryside-management-moulton.blogspot.co.uk> and <http://www.moulton.ac.uk> or email enquiries@moulton.ac.uk. Thanks for looking! James, Mel, Jenni, Adam and the rest of the team.

Fast-track tree surgeon training courses in Conwy, North Wales. Be ready for work in just 20 days. Lantra courses, City & Guilds assessments. Also shorter courses in chainsaw, felling, tree climbing etc. Details, costs, dates, see www.webbertrees.co.uk Keith Webber 01492 650684, e mail keithnwts@gmail.com

Wide range of land based training courses available. Including Safe Use of Pesticides, Woodchippers, Brushcutters, Hedgecutters, Ride on and Pedestrian Mowers, Tractors, and ROLO Health and Safety Awareness training. Covering Scotland, North of England and the Midlands. Contact David Whyte 07769 359545 or email hortlandscape.solutions@gmail.com

We specialise in nationally accredited qualifications in the environmental and land-based sector including: environmental conservation, ecological assessment, and volunteer management. Delivery is online via distance learning. All courses are assessed to UK national standards and accredited by an external awarding body. admin@environmentalschool.co.uk 01353 780048 www.soesuk.com

The Conservation Volunteers is committed to the training & development of individuals working & volunteering with community & environmental projects. We offer high quality traditional environmental skills, Lantra qualification skills & Community Development skills. For more information contact Tricia Burden t.burden@tcv.org.uk 01786 479697 www.tcv.org/scotland

Tony Darbyshire Arb Training: With over 20 years' experience in arboricultural training at both Merrist Wood and Sparsholt College and now an independent NPTC and Lantra Training Provider and Assessor, Tony offers personalised courses for all Arboriculture and Forestry Chainsaw related qualifications, leading to nationally and industry recognised certification. 01264 773229, thedarbyshires@yahoo.co.uk, www.sawpod.co.uk

Countryside Courses at Aberystwyth University. Foundation Degree Countryside Management & Conservation. BSc Countryside Management. BSc Countryside Conservation. • Progression routes from Foundation Degree to BSc • Study in amazing countryside • Track record of turning students into countryside staff • Experienced and knowledgeable staff. Contact Ian Keirle (ike@aber.ac.uk / 01970-624471 / <http://c-js.co.uk/1XmHW1e>

Chainsaw Training - Maintenance, Crosscutting & Felling to 380 mm (Units 201,202, 203) (NPTC) £460 + assessment cost - Devon/Cornwall sites - ring 01822 832232 or email: admin@lynher.com for full details. All chainsaw units run all year round - see www.lynher.com for latest dates.

Land based non profit making training provider. Covering agriculture, countryside & conservation, arboriculture, wildlife, strimmers, mowers, tractor/fork lift driving, responsible & effective rodent control and many more. Tel: 01777 872075 / 07973 890021 Email: info@trentvalleytraining.co.uk Web: www.trentvalleytraining.co.uk Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn & Twitter

NPTC Pesticides Application units PA1,PA6A/AW - every month near Tavistock - places available June 7th & 8th, July 5th & 6th - ring 01822 832232 or email: admin@lynher.com for full details. Also all chainsaw units - all year round - see www.lynher.com for latest dates.

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Countryside, Wildlife and Conservation courses at Stafford College. Our wildlife and conservation courses combine practical and theory based learning, with a strong emphasis on acquiring essential practical skills in a variety of habitats. Visit staffordcoll.ac.uk for more information or come along to our next open day.

Lantra Training Provider for all land based training, specialising in Arboricultural and forestry training. ROLO Health and Safety training provider. Arboricultural Approved contractors for tree surgery with commercial and domestic customers. 01785 246974 / 07825 302483, info@countrysidetraingltd.co.uk, www.countrysidetraingltd.co.uk

Embrace the Dark Side; How to Plan and Resource an Environmental Project

By Keith Tomkins, Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership Manager and Chartered Health and Safety Advisor, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, and Rose Revera, People and Wildlife Officer, The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales



South and West Wales
De a Gorllewin Cymru

We've all been there; you've just come up with a great idea for a project that you think could really help with the conservation of a species or management of a certain habitat, but you have no idea where to go from there. A good project, ecological knowledge and enthusiasm is a good start, but if you want to create a successful project and gain the funding you need to deliver it, you are going to have to embrace some of the darker arts of the sector.



Volunteers scything the wildflower meadow at Elizabeth and Rowe Harding Nature Reserve as part of the Clean Cut Gower Project (Rose Revera)

First off, you need a catchy idea. There are hundreds of ideas for great projects out there, how can you make yours stand out? Is there a different angle you can present that makes yours more exciting than others? Do plenty of research to see if anything similar has been done before and find out what made them work (or fail!). The more you know about the subject, the more likely it is that you will make a success of a project.

Health and safety! It's a term that's usually associated with a groan of dismay, but it is absolutely essential and should be built into every project you work on. Risk assessments should be in place for all the

sites you intend to work on and for all your activities. If you are unable to evidence health and safety competence, your project will fail.

The next thing to consider is your costs. How much money will you need to deliver the project, in terms of staff time, material costs and consumables such as printing? All of these costs need to be presented to a potential funder, and there is always more than you think when you start. Create a spreadsheet to help you determine what your costs are likely to be before you begin to look for funding. Also be aware that some funders may not fund certain aspects of a project, such as staff time.

You also need to know what your funders want. You know that you want a result, such as a wetland or a re-built drystone wall, but your funders may want to see other aspects, such as community engagement, health and wellbeing or species recording alongside your main aim. How could you build these requirements into your project? Could you upskill some volunteers whilst getting that drystone wall re-built? Recognising these additional benefits and building them into your project immediately makes it more attractive for funding purposes.



Swansea University students working on the SITA funded Lapwing Revival Project at Parc Slip Nature Reserve (Rose Revera)

Consider your ambition. It takes nearly as much work to apply for £10,000 as it does £100,000, so could you go big and build your idea into a larger scale project with more benefits for wildlife? This may not always be appropriate, but it's worth thinking about.

The last thing to do is to embrace and ignore your fear of failure! Be realistic, accept you might fail. You can be 100% sure you will fail if you don't try.



Pond Dipping as part of the Clear Streams Project in Swansea, funded by Welsh Water and NRW (Robert Davies)

The ability to take a good idea and add the above elements is the dark art of Project Development. Some of these arts can be learned, particularly health and safety and budgeting, while others require a mixture of competitiveness and experience.

Is there 'certification' for this 'dark art'?

There are training courses out there which can help you with Project Management, risk assessment and applying for funding, keep your eye on CJS!

The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales runs a full programme of ecological training courses every year.

To find out more, visit

<http://www.welshwildlife.org/things-to-do/training-courses/>

An Introduction to Project Management Course – 19 September. Royal Society of Biology, Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU. A course for those who have recently become involved in or responsible for project management but who have limited or no experience or training. For more information: <http://bit.ly/1Y86Gbn>

Outdoor First Aid Course Monday 27th & Tuesday 28th June 2016 This 16 hour course is ideal for outdoor leaders not only does it validate NGB qualifications but takes you through the skills essential for rescue and emergency care. Simonsbath House Outdoor Centre, Exmoor, Somerset TA24 7SH. tel: 01643 831382 or enquiries@shoc.info

Presentation Skills – 7 June 2016. Royal Society of Biology, Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU. A presentation skills course, for those who have had little experience of giving presentations. For more information: <http://bit.ly/1WKMqw6>

Coppicing - realising the potential of our woodlands



National Coppice Federation
www.ncfed.org.uk

The word coppicing means many different things to different people. From clear fell, slash and burn on one hand and a bit of pruning of the undergrowth on the other. For me the key element is not necessarily how you cut or how much to cut but how you look after the regrowth. Because at heart coppicing is a management system that is about cherishing the regrowth, giving it sufficient light to grow, protecting it from browsing and damage from machinery or fire. Focusing on restocking when needed and ensuring an endless succession of coppice cycles can be cut without reducing vigour or productivity.



Brian Williamson demonstrating layering of hazel at Westonbirt Arboretum (Rebecca Oaks)

Productivity too can have many meanings, there is a spectrum of outputs from a coppice wood that will be as diverse as species driven habitat management to commercial production of chestnut palings. However all outputs rely on one thing, a sustainably managed woodland that can continue to deliver for many, many years to come.

One thing to remember is that our ancestors when working out the best way to crop trees on a rotation were not driven by the desire to provide habitat for high brown fritillaries this happened as a by-product of our need for small poles for all the many myriad of uses we can put them to. We have a lot to thank the conservation movement for, bringing focus back to what could so easily be lost if we don't maintain

the traditional ways of working in the woods. But now more than ever we need to provide a sustainable financial model for coppicing and focus must be on the new uses and markets we can find for coppice wood.

This is why training in coppicing is so essential. A skilled coppice worker will know just by looking what products are possible from a standing crop, they will know that cutting low will create wider stable stools that will withstand future cutting cycles without decay. They will see where stool density has become a bit sparse allowing regrowth to be spreading and branched rather than lovely and drawn up tall, they know about layering to fill in those gaps or how to raise new maidens from seed to replenish the standards within the woodland. They know the damage just one deer pushing through an ill-fitting temporary fence on a winter morning, will do to a newly sprung coppice when there is little else around to eat and new shoots are an irresistible delicacy. They will know to their shame how not dealing with the deer problem can lead to certain coppice death as those beleaguered trees push up new shoots and more new shoots until they are exhausted and die.

Coppicing then is all a bit more complex than just heading to the woods with a chainsaw or bow saw and hoping for the best! That is why more and more folk are now looking into the possibilities of coppice apprenticeships or failing that getting onto a course with someone who really knows what they are doing. The potential of our woodlands is only just re-emerging from obscurity and I urge everyone to take a fresh look at the potential of coppice woods.

Rebecca Oaks, NCFed Chair



Coppice products from Deans Row
(Les Brannon)

NCFed are leading the way in bringing the needs of conservation and commercial coppice together and had a conference entitled 'Coppicing, Conservation and Commerce' on 9/10 May 2016 at the Weald and Downland Museum, in Sussex. A synopsis of the discussion at that event was published on the NCFed website www.ncfed.org.uk

TCV Skelton Grange offers training for teachers, nursery staff, childminders and environmental professionals for Learning Outside the Classroom. We also run lots of public events and courses in traditional crafts such as willow weaving, cheese making, wine making, art and sculpture. Join in, Feel Good!
www.tcv.org.uk/skeltongrange

Learn to make a traditional gate hurdle in Moreton Wood, Herefordshire. From selecting the log to the finished product using only hand tools you will learn the skills required to make your own cleft chestnut hurdle to take home. Contact 07920 851674,
www.moretonwood.co.uk

Coppice Restoration. 5 - 6 November 2016. £ 140.00
This is a hands on practical course based within a coppice woodland on Wenlock Edge. All aspects for restoring a neglected and over stood coppice woodland will be covered including: felling, layering and re-stocking, economic and wildlife benefits and pest control. www.smallwoods.org.uk

Do you own a woodland? Are you thinking of a new career working in woodlands or forestry?
Cumbria Woodlands offer skills and interest training courses, from traditional coppicing to chainsaw training and or introduction to woodland management. Take a look at www.cumbriawoodlands.co.uk for more information on our training and courses.

Woodland Ecology, Tuesday 7th June, 1.15 - 4pm
Singleton Environment Centre, Ashford, Kent TN23 5LW Kent has one of the richest stocks of woodlands in the UK. Discover how British woodland has evolved over time. The Conservation Volunteers, Kent Heritage Trees Project Suggested donation £10
Tel 01233 666519

Two day introduction to Coppicing, including how to lay out an area, arrange your products and uses for coppiced material in Jonesborough, Co. Armagh; 1st & 2nd October 2016. For more information visit www.ringofgullion.org/events or call Alison on 028 3082 8594.

Sustainable Woodland Management Course with Ben Law, 7th - 11th Nov 2016, £495 A 5-day training course focusing on woodland management, biodiversity and practical skills, tutored by Ben Law, takes place at our centre in the South Downs, near Petersfield, and Ben's Prickly Nut Wood. For more details: www.sustainability-centre.org/woodland-management-course.html 01730 823166

Green Wood Crafts - Skills in the Hills. We are holding a series of one day taster sessions in Basket Making (16 July), Spoon Carving (20 August), Rustic Stool Making (24 September) and Shrink Pot Making (1 October). Cost £45 each. Based Shropshire/Powys border. To book call 01938 561741, email info@stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk, www.stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk

Grassroots Challenge: creating a bright young force for nature

Faced with the possibility of climate crisis and having experienced a global recession, it is a critical point in the lives of the current generation of young people. Social mobility is more challenging than ever before and research has revealed a lack of opportunities for young people to access green skills, knowledge and experience to help them into employment or further education.



Young person Micheal brushcutting (© Ulster Wildlife)

Our Bright Future might just be the best agricultural tool for this job. With funding from the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund, Our Bright Future is made up of more than 30 projects up and down the UK.

As a result of this new programme, the quality of our built and natural environments will benefit and our communities will gain a wealth of benefits from improved local places. As well as significantly improving the environment, this new programme is supporting young people to develop new employability skills, broaden their social experiences and grow their confidence.

Collectively the programme is gathering strong evidence about the development of the environment and young people. In particular, it is looking at the importance of addressing both issues together through growing our green economy. Those involved are confident that this evidence will soon start to guide economic choices made at local, regional, and national levels in the UK.

In Northern Ireland, Ulster Wildlife's 'Grassroots Challenge' project will bring the great outdoors to life for 5,000 young people, aged 11-24, mainly through Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster.

Through the design and delivery of 'wild ideas' projects within their own community, young farmers will have the opportunity to gain new personal and environmental skills, work towards an accredited environmental qualification, enhance their employment prospects, as well as improving their own neighbourhoods.

Projects undertaken may include planting a wildflower meadow, building bird boxes, developing a community wildlife garden, running fun family nature events and activities for their local community or raising awareness of environmental issues with local councillors. Specialised training will be provided for specific projects such as health and safety and chainsaw, brush cutter or pesticides use.

Young farmers will also be given the opportunity to take part in an Assembly Engagement Programme and receive training on how the NI Assembly works, how to lobby effectively to influence environmental policies and practices, and meet political representatives.

Through the project, research will be completed on the job skills required for young people wishing to work in the environment sector in Northern Ireland to address skill shortages and gaps.

A range of partner organisations are involved in delivering the 'Grassroots Challenge' project including Keep NI Beautiful, Northern Ireland Environment Link, Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Lantra.

You can find out more about the programme and opportunities to get involved at www.OurBrightFuture.co.uk



Young people's wild ideas include hedgelaying (© Ulster Wildlife)

A Career in Conservation Grazing?

Ruth Dalton, Northern Field Officer, Rare Breeds Survival Trust



If you go down to the woods today...or to the moors, meadows or moorlands, you may be surprised to find some large hairy herbivores quietly munching away at the vegetation. "Conservation grazing" is the term given to the use of livestock to restore or maintain rare habitats, and is on the increase in the UK. Some conservation organisations own and manage their own



There is no substitute for practical, hands-on experience (Darren Morris, Hebridean Sheep)

flocks and herds for the sole purpose of grazing, some work in partnership with graziers who provide livestock. "Conventional" farmers may include conservation grazing animals as part of their farm enterprise under government agri-environment schemes which encourage good stewardship of the land.

For someone interested in getting involved with this sort of work, volunteering or serving an apprenticeship with a farmer or grazier is vital if you don't already have a background in livestock management. Most of the skills you will need are practical, and learnt by experience. It will help if you already have excellent observational skills, a good dose of common sense, and the ability to be calm and patient in a crisis.

It's also important to be able to balance the needs of the animals with the requirements of the habitat being grazed. The main impacts of grazing animals are threefold: the removal of plant material through the actual grazing or browsing process; the nutrient enrichment of the soil through dunging and urination; and disturbance of the ground by trampling hooves. Undergrazing can result in the dominance of a few coarse species that are usually kept in check by grazing and the growth of unwanted scrub. Overgrazing can lead to desirable plant species being eliminated and so-called weed species increasing, often through the introduction of too many animals or the use of the wrong type of livestock.

It is useful to have basic plant identification skills and a knowledge of indicator species for different sites. As a conservation grazier you will be constantly assessing whether the target habitat requirements, in terms of sward length and diversity of species, are being met and there are many factors that can influence whether grazing animals will achieve your objectives.

Sheep are highly selective grazers, with small mouths able to pick the sweetest and most nutritious plant species from a sward. Their hooves are small and relatively light, compacting the ground. Evolved for a mountainous environment, they can suffer from foot problems and from the effects of flies in a lowland setting. However, appropriately managed, sheep can be useful animals, for example in heathland restoration where they can be summer grazed to reduce the expansion of scrub and promote heather growth, which they tend to eat only in winter. If managing sheep for conservation grazing, a well-trained dog can be very useful, and some conservation organisations have even purchased trained sheepdogs for their staff.



Late season grazing with cattle can take the place of a hay cut on difficult sites (Ruth Dalton, Shetland cattle)

Cattle are perhaps more useful animals than sheep in terms of their impacts on vegetation - although they will avoid certain species, their large mouths make it harder for them to discriminate between preferred plants and less palatable ones. Well equipped to graze longer grasses and herbs, they create a variable sward structure benefiting a host of species. Their dung is also valuable for invertebrates and their heavy feet can break up compacted ground to provide seeding opportunities for plants. However, if grazed on wet ground or at high densities, cattle will poach the land and create bare patches that encourage weed growth. Cattle are less prone to dog attacks and health problems than sheep, but when something does go wrong they can be more problematic to deal with owing to their larger size.

Native ponies are hardy and exempt from much of the regulation that accompanies the keeping of farmed livestock. They have many of the benefits of cattle grazing when used at a similarly low stocking density and are naturally resistant to parasites and disease. They tend to create "latrine" areas which may cause localised enrichment of the soil so they are best used on large sites or for shorter periods of time. Like cattle, they will browse as well as graze and will not preferentially eat flowering heads of plants as sheep do.

Moving stock from site to site is an important part of conservation grazing. You will need to take additional qualifications if you are going to transport livestock over a certain distance (65km) and if you will be towing trailers above a certain weight if you passed your driving test after January 1997. Some employers will put you through this training, but it will be a plus point on your application if you have already done these tests.

Equally valuable are land-management skills such as using a chainsaw, fencing, hedge-laying and dry-stone walling. If you can do these jobs yourself, you will be a huge asset and save the additional expense of calling on contractors for smaller land-based tasks.

There is a considerable amount of paperwork involved if you are the owner or keeper of the livestock in your care, including registering births and completing movement licences and medicine records. Familiarise yourself with the basic requirements, and if possible gain experience of doing the paperwork yourself. You will need to be organised and methodical, you may undergo an official inspection and irregularities in ear-tagging or record-keeping will incur a fine if you or your employer claim environmental payments.



Familiarise yourself with livestock transportation regulations
(Ruth Dalton, Whitebred Shorthorn cattle)

There is a tendency to use native breeds in conservation grazing. Before the 1950s, and the onset of the Common Agricultural Policy pushing farmers to produce maximum yields, livestock had been bred to grow and reproduce on relatively low inputs. A lack of affordable "concentrate" feed or artificial fertilizers meant that animals had to be thrifty and hardy and these attributes work in favour of the conservation land manager. Many of these traditional breeds are now classified as rare, so the opportunity to prove their usefulness as conservation grazers also secures their valuable genetics for future need. Having a basic understanding of breeds and their different qualities will definitely benefit your application.



Equines will browse as well as graze
(Juliet Rogers, Exmoor Pony)

There is also increasing interest from the farming community, as changing government policy makes extensive, low-input grazing systems with rare and native breeds a more viable option so you may find it's possible to get valuable experience or even paid work working for a local farmer.

As a first step, consider going on a Conservation Grazing course, where you will be introduced to the principals behind design of grazing systems as well as being given a grounding in the legal framework that underpins your responsibilities as a stock owner or manager.

This article has been a whistle-stop tour of conservation grazing, merely touching on the complexities of managing sites using livestock. Every site manager has slightly different objectives, each group of stock is liable to behave in a slightly different way, every year the climate presents new challenges - there is no rulebook but plenty of people trying things out and sharing their knowledge (for more info take a look at the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and Grazing Animals Project websites www.rbst.org.uk & www.grazinganimalsproject.org.uk). There is also an excellent on-line conservation grazing forum – "Nibblers" – run as a GoogleGroup, if you would like to join, please email me – ruth@rbst.org.uk

As part of its charitable work, the Society works to educate others about the countryside. We show young people where their food comes from and educate them about rural life at events aimed at schools and families including the Great Yorkshire Show on 12/13/14 July 2016. Visit www.yas.co.uk to find out more.

An Introduction to sheep keeping - A beginner's guide to sheep keeping including, current regulations, choosing an appropriate breed, management, breeding, feeding, handling, & avoiding health problems. Both classroom & practical sessions with several breeds on view. Training delivered on our farm in Devon. £54.95/person. Contact: Gillian 01837 810274 info@farmerdixon.co.uk www.southyeofarm.co.uk

Meadow Management - Skills in the Hills

This summer we are planning a series of courses to help meadow owners better manage their flower-rich grassland. Scything, stock checking and meadow management will be included. Based Shropshire/Powys border. For more details call 01938 561741, email info@stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk or see www.stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk

As part of the Save Our Magnificent Meadows

project, there are many training courses being run for landowners and volunteers to participate in, to increase your skills and knowledge to manage and conserve meadows. Please see the website for more info: www.magnificentmeadows.org.uk/visit-learn/whats-on Contact: magnificent.meadows@plantlife.org.uk

Chewing the Cud - Conservation Grazing Conference

A two-day conference on June 20th & 21st in Dover addressing the grazing issues of the day. Talks include use of commercial graziers, managing for species groups, mob grazing, meadow grazing and more. £35 for both days including lunch. For more information <http://uponthedowns.org.uk> or mike.phillips@dover.gov.uk

Hedgelaying

Ask most people what they would describe as an iconic view of the English countryside and it would be a patchwork of fields and hedgerows. Mention hedgelaying to many people and they will know what you mean and will consider it a part of that English countryside, even if they do not how or why it is done.

However, over half of the hedgerows were lost during the last century, mainly due to agricultural intensification and the decline continues today. The work of the hedgelayer has been taken over by mechanical hedgecutting but hedgelaying is still an essential skill with a very real future ahead.



The first signs of regrowth in Spring/early Summer on a hedge laid in the previous Winter (D.J. Hale)

Over thirty different regional hedgelaying styles have been recorded in the British Isles, with others in mainland Europe and even further afield, all having evolved according to farming practice, topography, climate and plant species available. The basic principle of this craft lies in cutting part way through the stem of each hedgerow shrub, laying over the stem and building it into a living, stock proof barrier. The cut is made close to the ground and ensures that the layed stem or Pleach remains alive and produces shoots while the trimmed stool will also produce, stronger shoots, one of which will eventually replace the layed stem.

Mechanical trimming of hedges, forces growth from the top and sides, while the bottom of the hedge does not grow,

eventually withering and dying from disease or old age. The hedge then develops gaps or reverts to being a line of small trees. Hedgelaying promotes new growth from ground level, rejuvenates the hedgerow and is the only hedgerow maintenance method currently known which will do this. Other advantages of hedgelaying are environmental, providing shelter, feeding and nesting sites for birds, mammals and amphibians, preventing soil erosion and other benefits to the farmer in providing shelter for livestock and crops. The insect life of the hedgerow can also be useful for example in eating crop pests such as aphids.

Hedgelaying is labour intensive and requires a high level of skill to be carried out effectively. These skills are best learned from other hedgelayers by way of courses run by hedgelaying societies (which are often linked to or part of a ploughing society).

My local organisation is the Brailsford and District Ploughing and Hedgecutting Society, very long established and one of a number around the country. "Every stem is different" is a well-known and accurate expression and the learning process never stops – there is always something new to learn, along with plenty of exercise (no gym subscriptions needed here) and immense levels of job satisfaction. Hedgelaying competitions are held around the country and provide a good way of seeing how the job is done and to the highest standards. These events also provide contact with local societies, farming and hedgelaying communities.

For further information on hedgelaying and to contact hedgelayers and hedgelaying trainers in your locality contact the National Hedgelaying Society www.hedgelaying.org.uk
Derrick Hale
NHLs Accredited Craftsman



A Derbyshire (style) hedge layed by Derrick Hale (D.J. Hale)

Hedgelaying training courses every month from September to February. Learn Devon style hedgelaying in the East Devon countryside, "hands on" with one instructor per pair of trainees. £40 per person for the day. See www.bhha.info for more details and to book a place. Email hedgcourses@bhha.info

Two day introduction to Hedge Laying, covering hedge preparation, correct laying and staking techniques in Glassdrumman, Co. Armagh; 24th & 25th September 2016. For more information visit www.ringofgullion.org/events or contact Alison on 028 3082 8594 / volunteer@ringofgullion.org

Assington Mill offers short one-to-three-day courses on rural crafts and skills, including hedgelaying scything and willow fencing. The courses are held in a large workshop built of strawbales and they include home-made lunch in the farm house. Google the Assington Mill website to see full details. www.assingtonmill.com

Delivering tailor-made hedgelaying courses for groups, in South of England or Midland style. Coppice restoration courses and scything courses for beginners and improvers. Area covered: London & South East. www.traditionalhedgelaying.co.uk/ www.austrianscythes.co.uk. Tel: 01189 470298

Courses in Wattle Hurdle Making, Hedge Laying, and Cleft Fencing - we have over 23 years experience delivering courses in The Peak District, based near Matlock, Derbyshire. For more details visit www.peaktraditionalfencing.co.uk or call Simon on 07889 107008

The use of social media in the conservation sector



Cheshire Wildlife Trust

Social media is a significant part of the way that we communicate and operate as individuals, businesses and organisations.

Over the past few years the business, charity, education and public service sectors have harnessed the power of social networks to deliver important messages, talk about brand, engage with the public, encourage new supporters, and drive leads forwards.

It's no different for the conservation sector. Whether you work or volunteer in this particular field, social media has a significant part to play in giving individuals and groups a voice and helps those with a cause or an important story to share to reach more people than ever before.

At Cheshire Wildlife Trust it's our mission to protect and create more space for local wildlife for people to enjoy and social media plays a key part in helping us to deliver this message.

This can be anything from regularly posting pictures and video to update followers about our latest conservation projects, highlighting a particular local issue or encouraging supporters to add their voice to a campaign. It's also a great way to share our knowledge, ask for public opinion, create media interest, or lobby local and national politicians.

And who better to help us communicate than the staff and volunteers who are literally in the field? It's a really valuable way of showing people what we're achieving for wildlife and how they can get involved, but it also gives us the chance to share detailed case studies with like-minded followers who want to know that bit more about our work.

We encourage our conservation and volunteering teams to update our followers on projects that we're working on or to share their wildlife sightings, whether that's the first swallow or common lizard of the season to be spotted on one of our reserves, or a particularly rare visitor to one of our sites.



Volunteer at Cheshire Wildlife Trust
(Gemma Sproston)

Although we mainly use social media as a communications tool, it can also provide important insights into how people interact with nature. Lots of social media platforms contain millions of photographs of natural spaces that are "geotagged". This can provide valuable information for researchers and conservationists that could inform future projects. Recently we've been using it to ask for people to record their bumblebee sightings in Cheshire with our local Biological Records Centre office which is collecting data to create 'bee atlas' that we will then use to inform the work that we do for pollinators in the future.

For local conservation volunteer groups social media is a crucial and, most importantly, free tool that can aid recruitment and raise awareness for their cause. It also allows groups to network with similar organisations giving them a platform to share resources, knowledge and advice to improve the way they work.

But it's really important for users to understand the importance of using these tools properly which is why, through our Heritage Lottery Fund project Natural Futures, we've been supporting and training individuals and groups to make the most of platforms such as

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Training covers a range of areas such as setting up an account, making connections, creating engaging content, promoting events, publicising surveys, gathering data and raising public awareness.

Skills gained include using insights to gauge what posts work well, learning how to time posts to reach your maximum audience and discovering how to share information and build networks.

We also point out the pitfalls of using social media. It's a 24/7 medium so we explain the need to reply to messages in a timely fashion and we highlight the importance of reputation management - posts can be shared with frightening speed and an ill thought out or factually wrong Tweet or status update can cause problems very quickly so being armed with the knowledge of how to avoid such situations, or what to do if they arise, is really important.

Yes, social media can have its downsides. It can become all-consuming and takes time and effort to keep relevant. There are people who use social media to make complaints and post negative thoughts. However, the overall benefits of using this resource much outweigh negatives and having the right skills in place to use properly is a real advantage.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust has a variety of training courses both traditional and modern scheduled for 2016. Check out the website for the full guide and all the details, cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk or contact Beth Alvey, Volunteering and Training Manager, on 01948 820728.

4th – 7th October: Social Forestry OCN course - The course explores the use of woodlands to promote social and human wellbeing, and equips you with the tools to apply Social Forestry ideas in practice. Tutor Julia Walling. Held at the Small Woods Green Wood Centre, Coalbrookdale, Telford. Book here: <http://c-js.co.uk/1qq4a5i>

12th - 15th July: Mindfulness in Woodland Settings
- A fully integrative training course providing the skills for using mindfulness with clients, service users and groups in woods and nature settings. To be held at the Woodland Skills Centre in Denbighshire, North Wales. To book contact julia.walling@btinternet.com or 01584 874636 www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk

10 – 11 & 24 – 25 September: Social Forestry OCN Level 3 Accredited. Held at Woodland Skills Centre, Wales, Denbighshire. Contact Woods for Wellbeing: 01745 710626 enquiries@woodlandskillscentre.co.uk www.woodlandskillscentre.co.uk The course teaches the use of woodlands to promote human wellbeing, and equips you with the tools to apply Social Forestry ideas in practice.

Science Podcast Production Workshop – 25 May.
Royal Society of Biology, Charles Darwin House, 12
Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU. Award-winning
science broadcaster Richard Hollingham presents an
introductory hands-on course on how to podcast - from
getting good quality sound and content - to getting your
podcast online and heard. For more information:
<http://bit.ly/1SxJFk3>

Countryside Management Association Family
Activities Training Day - Summer Sensory Session.
Monday, 20 June 2016, Gloucester. A day exploring
sensory activities to use with families and children. We
will have a playful, practical day using all our senses.
Led by play expert Niki Willows. CMA Members £30,
Non-members £40 info@natureconnections.org

Championing Apprenticeships

We are really lucky in that all of us working for the North York Moors get to be paid for spending part of our working time (some more than others!) in our beautiful national park. Judging by the numbers of applicants that we get for many of our roles, it seems as if lots of other people agree as well.

We recruit a variety of people at different levels. We take on trainees from apprentices through to undergraduate placements and post-graduate trainees. We also need experienced people from a variety of disciplines to join our Conservation and Ranger teams.



NYMNP Northern Apprentice team February 2016
(NYMNP)

working with landowners and farmers. It can be tricky to establish good working relationships and credibility without a solid understanding of agricultural practice. If we're asking farmers/landowners to do particular things, which meet our own targets and aims, it's helpful to know their viewpoints and aims too.

In managerial posts, the emphasis now is on finding resources and developing partnerships to enable others to achieve practical outcomes on the ground. Increasingly we need our countryside managers to have skills in finding sources of external funding, be adept at managing a mixed workforce of paid staff and volunteers, and look to academic institutions to help us with research that we want doing in addition to the technical knowledge that would have made them a sound practitioner.



NYMNP apprentices spraying bracken (NYMNP)

Job roles for experienced staff range from practitioner level, being out there working directly with people and making things happen on the ground, through to managerial posts. While the knowledge needed to carry out these different roles may be similar, the way in which this is used and the skills required can be very different.

From what we see, Countryside Management and more specialist degrees tend to equip graduates well academically, but one area is consistently lacking - basic, practical farming knowledge. The work that many of our staff do involves

working with landowners and farmers. It can be tricky to establish good working relationships and credibility without a solid understanding of agricultural practice. If we're asking farmers/landowners to do particular things, which meet our own targets and aims, it's helpful to know their viewpoints and aims too.

The purpose of our apprenticeships is to give people, usually school leavers, the chance to bridge the gap between education and the working environment, and to learn practical countryside management skills that will enable them to get a job in the local economy after they leave us.

We have developed our apprenticeship scheme with the local jobs market in mind, so we look to give a solid grounding in practical skills such as basic woodworking, building skills, fencing, the rudiments of dry stone walling, planting, spraying, chainsaw certification, and plenty of practice! At this stage, we don't need anything from our apprentices other than basic English and Maths plus a real enthusiasm for the

countryside and working outside in all weathers, by that we really mean the cold, wind and rain – too much sunshine isn't often an issue!

The main obstacle for us in recruiting apprentices is in the lack of understanding in schools about what apprenticeships can offer school leavers. Schools are obviously keen to fill their sixth forms and while apprenticeships don't suit everybody, all students should have information about what they can offer in terms of developing skills, earning money and the jobs that they can lead to. There are certainly improvements and Government is legislating to ensure that apprenticeships feature strongly in careers advice, but for the time being we spend as much time as we can championing apprenticeships, going to schools careers events, talking in school assemblies etc.



NYMNPA Apprentices with a newly installed gate (NYMNPA)

The world of apprenticeships is changing rapidly as is the way in which they are funded – we are leading a group of other employers from around the country who are working up a standard for 'Countryside Worker' apprenticeships. When this is completed and the new standard approved by Government, it will be the national standard for countryside apprenticeships. Anybody interested in finding out a bit more about this should contact Ian Nicholls i.nicholls@northyorkmoors.org.uk.

We take on a graduate trainee in our conservation team every two years – the post is designed to be a 'first job' post-qualification and we look to give a range of experience, working with our ecologists, grants team, woodland officer, river officers and so on. While we will certainly look to the graduate to do some productive work for us, there is considerable scope for them to manage their own training and develop skills and knowledge in the areas that interest them.



NYMNPA Apprentices installing flag paving (NYMNPA)

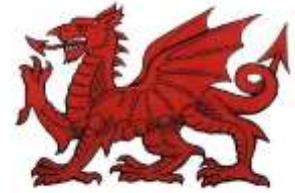
Typically we will get a couple of hundred applications for the role. Most applicants have a good academic background and an increasingly large percentage will have a second degree. The best applicants always have something different to offer for example, they will have managed to find a way of getting some work experience, they might have worked on a farm, worked directly with landowners, interacted with a wide range of people, worked extensively either as a volunteer or with volunteers and so on.

Our experience in delivering grant schemes suggest that there is still a shortage of contractors with traditional skills – for example, dry stone wallers are

in considerable demand and there is pressure on the experienced wallers to deliver work with many having long order lists. Many of the wallers are older and there don't seem to be enough younger people wanting to take this on as an occupation. It is a similar picture with traditional building skills, using local stone and lime mortar techniques, and so there are definitely opportunities for people with the right skills. It is certainly difficult for small businesses to set up apprentice schemes, but one of our aims over the next couple of years is to work with employers in our patch to try to make this happen.

Visit www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/jobs to view our latest positions and www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/volunteering to find out about volunteering at the North York Moors National Park.

We are a co-operative of self-employed free-lance trainers offering between us a comprehensive range of high quality courses at affordable prices for those within the land based sectors. Currently we have a selection of courses available with up to 50% funding however places are limited! Contact info@lowe-maintenance.co.uk 01729 825132 www.lowe-maintenance.co.uk



Free Forest School Training Taster Days in the South West. Join Nature Workshops for a taste of what it's like to train as a Forest School Leader. Be part of woodland crafts, games and ask questions about what training is like. 19th June, Plymouth. 25th June, Bath. 27th June, Truro. 16th July, Totnes
To book events@natureworkshops.co.uk

Training from the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. CLOtC courses support those working in learning outside the classroom, including conservation organisations, farms and green spaces, to link their activities to schools' priorities. Keep up-to-date with changes in education policy and practice and ensure you meet schools' needs. <http://c-js.co.uk/22eJbJK>

We offer a range of accredited outdoor learning training courses including: Certificates in Leading Forest and Coastal School, Outdoor Learning Practice and Coordinating an Outdoor Curriculum along with various workshops designed to up-skill and promote CPD. For a full list visit www.plasderwforestschool.com

Wildeye is the leading independent provider of wildlife and conservation film-making and sound recording training. We provide short specialist courses in the UK and longer overseas experiences. Visit: www.wildeye.co.uk e.g. Camera Operator Course, 17 – 19 June 2016: courses@wildeye.co.uk
<http://www.wildeye.co.uk/wildlife-camera-operator>

The CJS Team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication.

Next edition will feature Volunteering published on 19/9/16

A4 sides this CJS Focus: 23

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Details believed correct but given without prejudice, Ends.