



Woodland Heritage in Dumfries and Galloway, 2 Day Seminar



Exploring the corn drying kiln at Knockman Wood

"This event has been supported by the Scottish Government Skills Development Scheme and the Robertson Trust."

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REPORT

Introduction

“This report focuses on the **Woodland Heritage in Dumfries and Galloway** event delivered as part of the CWA Knowledge and Skills Development Scheme 2011/12. This event took place on 7th and 8th June 2012, training a total of 41 people. This report summarises this event and gives feedback on the success of the project“

Purpose of event

The purpose of this event was to bring together local experts and national consultants to discuss the woodland heritage of the Cree Valley as a forerunner to a new Cree Valley Woodland Heritage project currently being developed by Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust (CVCWT).

Course Aims

The seminar’s objectives were to raise awareness of the woodland heritage in the Cree Valley and to train participants in a range of research techniques and field feature recognition.

Event Trainers

Peter Norman- Dumfries and Galloway Council Biodiversity Officer

Graham Roberts- Dumfries and Galloway Library Archivist

Archie McConnel- McConnel Wood Products

David Hawker- Plant recorder for Kirkcudbrightshire; Botanical Society of British Isles

Michael Ansell- Forestry Commission Gaelic place name expert

Peter Quelch- Woodland Consultant

Coralie Mills- Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist

Course Content

Woodland Heritage in Dumfries & Galloway: 2 Day Seminar

DATES	Thursday 7 th and Friday 8th June 2012
HOST	CWA + CVCWT
LOCATION	Crown Hotel, Newton Stewart
NUMBERS	TBA
TUTORS	See below

OUTLINE – Day 1		
9.00-9.30	Registration/Tea & coffee	Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust (CVCWT)
9.30-9.45	Welcome, introductions, housekeeping	Pete/Linda, CVCWT
9.45-10.15	Overview of Woodland Heritage; What is it? Why study it? How to study it?	Peter Norman, Biodiversity Officer D&G Council
10.15-10.45	Dumfries & Galloway's map history & the value of maps for woodland heritage studies.	Graham Roberts, D&G library/archives
10.45-11.00	Tea break/Displays	
11.00-11.30	Timber in buildings in D&G before 1750; concepts of timber availability and shortage.	Archie McConnel, McConnel Wood Products
11.30-12.00	Plant indicators of Ancient Woodland in D&G	David Hawker; Plant recorder for Kirkcudbrightshire, Botanical Society of British Isles
12.00-12.30	Questions/discussion	All
12.30-1.30	Lunch	
1.30-4.30	Wood of Cree Site visit	All

OUTLINE - Day 2		
9.30-9.45	Introductions/ review of day 1	Peter Norman
9.45 -10.15	Place name evidence for Woodland and Hunting in Galloway & Carrick	Michael Ansell
10.15-10.45	Woodland Industry and crafts	Peter Quelch, Woodland Consultant
10.45-11.00	Tea break/displays	
11.00-11.30	Types of historic woodlands, veteran & worked trees, ecological evidence	Peter Quelch, Woodland Consultant
11.30-12.00	Tree-ring evidence	Coralie Mills, Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist
12.00-12.30	Field techniques/woodland archaeology	Coralie Mills, Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist
12.30-1.30	Lunch	
1.30-4.00	Knockman Wood site visit	All
4.00-4.30	Sum up and thank you/finish	Peter Norman/CVCWT

Activities in brief

The delegates were treated to some fascinating and enlightening presentations from a range of local experts as well as professional consultants.

Peter Norman, D&G's Biodiversity Officer kicked things off with an explanation of how the story of woodland heritage can be pieced together like a jigsaw using information from a variety of sources such as archaeologists, ecologists, archivists and many others. This was followed by Graham Roberts, D&G Library Archivist who explained how, using a sequence of old maps from Pont's maps of 1584-1600 to the first edition Ordnance Survey maps of the 1840's, we can unravel the history of woodlands.

Archie McConnell, McConnell Wood Products gave everyone a great insight into how historical events have affected the fluctuating fortunes of our woodlands and the influences on people's lives. The packed morning programme was completed by David Hawker, the plant recorder for Kirkcudbrightshire and of the Botanical Society of the British Isles. David explained how a particular suite of plants called Ancient Woodland Indicators can be identified and used as an aid in identifying ancient woodlands.

Following an excellent buffet lunch, the afternoon was spent at the RSPB's Wood of Cree reserve, a recognised ancient woodland and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Many ancient woodland indicator plant species were found and past uses of the woodland were indicated by the discovery of two charcoal platforms, where wood was converted into charcoal.

Day 2 was off to a flying start with an absorbing talk by Michael Ansell, whose passion for Gaelic place names and their meanings revealed the many Dumfries and Galloway names which have woodland connotations such as Killygowan, from the Gaelic `coille a' ghobain' which translates as `wood of the blacksmith'. The rest of the morning was shared between Peter Quelch, Woodland Consultant and Coralie Mills, Dendrochronologist/Environmental Archaeologist. Peter talked about woodland history and crafts with reference to a fantastic collection of books and tools which were on display at the seminar. He followed this with a presentation which illustrated how recognising the different growth forms of trees can give us information on the past management of the woodlands.

Last but not least, Coralie explained how analysing a core taken from the trunk of a tree can not only tell us the age of the tree, but much more such as growth rates. The presentations were completed with a talk from Coralie on how to investigate woodland archaeology and field techniques used, referring to a past case study as an example.

The final afternoon was spent at Knockman Wood, one mile from Newton Stewart which is to be an important woodland in CVCWT's new Cree Valley Woodland Heritage project. A demonstration of tree coring and much lively discussion and investigation of archaeological features and woodland tree forms more than made up for the damp weather and multitude of midges!

Conclusions

The information discussed, skills learned, contacts made, offers of help made during the seminar will be used to plan and implement Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust's new Woodland Heritage project. A closing seminar for this project will hope to bring back together the people involved to discuss the findings of the project. Feedback was very positive from the event.

Photos



A demonstration of `tree coring`



Discussions on a charcoal platform



Tools for woodland products