



C.V.C.W.T.

Spring 2010

Woodland habitats from "source to sea"

Issue 9



Hello and Welcome to our latest newsletter! I should like to start by briefly introducing myself. My name is Pete Robinson and I was appointed by CVCWT last summer to take on the role of Ecologist.

I come from County Durham and my love of this part of South West Scotland started forty years ago when I first visited the area on holiday at the age of six. My desire to live here was achieved 12 years ago when my wife Anne and I moved to Carsluith.

I have a lifelong passion for wildlife and have had a long involvement in conservation, most recently working with the British Trust for Ornithology and as a CVCWT volunteer and trustee. I have a 1st Class Honours degree in environmental studies achieved through distance learning with Exeter University.

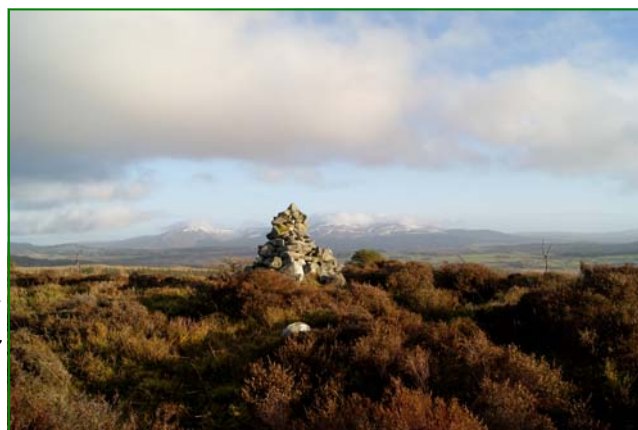
I feel very privileged to be given the opportunity to make a major contribution to the wildlife, landscape and communities of the Cree Valley and I look forward to a positive future for all.

Extension of Woodland Project

During 2009, CVCWT took on an additional 600ha of FCS riparian land in the Upper Cree north and south of Annimean Bridge. CVCWT has secured three years funding to plant native broad-leaved trees, to take out conifer regrowth and to create a mosaic of habitats along the river corridor. This is a partnership project with FCS and Galloway Fisheries Trust, which aims to improve the water quality at the headwaters of the Cree and includes the Clauchrie, Fardin and Cairnfore Burns and Loch Moan.

Woodland Updates

In the Spring of 2009, six deer exclosures were put up in the open clearfelled area at **Knockman Wood** and broadleaves are being planted by volunteer groups to expand the woodland area. A new informal path has been created in the north part of the woodland, which links to the Wood of Cree via Barclay Moor. *(Photo right is of the panoramic viewpoint from the top of the path—photo by Eykolina Benny.)* This is a funded partnership with Solway Heritage through the Wood Pasture project.



Deer fences have been taken down at the **Minnoch & Water of Trool** and removal of conifer regeneration is on-going. Broadleaf planting continues in selected areas. Deer/stock fences have been removed from **Buchan, Glenhead and Caldons** to allow grazers back in. These fences were originally erected to aid more rapid regeneration, enabling the young trees to avoid the attentions of grazing animals until they were large enough to withstand attacks.

Dyke repairs have been made at the Princes Street entrance to **Doonhill Wood**. The paths have been cleared of leaf litter. The sluice at **Blairmount** continues to be monitored & cleaned when necessary and bat and bird boxes have been installed in the woodlands.

Doonhill Wood is the venue for a new **Forest School**. Starting this Spring, Primary School children will be taking their class in this woodland setting learning about "reducing, reusing and recycling". Please be careful with dogs off leads as these children are quite small. For more information about forest school see www.fei.org or contact CVCWT.

The memorial site at **High Camer** has been weeded and continues to thrive. Bat & bird boxes have been monitored and a number of wildlife surveys (*see photo right*) have been carried out with the help of volunteers. The path and the viewing platform at Low Camer have been strimmed and the view from the platform is maintained by the cutting back of intrusive regenerating species.



Montane Scrub Habitat



During 2009, visitors to the Glentool Visitors Centre will have noticed the building work going on at the east end of the car park. Community volunteers have been preparing a Montane scrub demonstration garden (*as the photo on the left shows*). This is a partnership project with Forestry Commission Scotland. The design of the garden was drawn up by the volunteers and the aim is to replicate a mountain and treeline scrub habitat on a miniature scale.

Existing conifers have been cleared around the Merrick hill path and volunteers have been involved in the planting of mountain woodland species.

Stop Press

CVCWT is pleased to advise that it has received funding to enable the creation of a local provenance tree nursery. An acre of dyke-enclosed land has been identified on the Barclay side of the RSPB Wood of Cree (*shown here in the photo*). Community volunteers will be involved in putting up a polytunnel and creating raised nursery beds.

This is an important step forward for the project as it addresses a serious shortfall in the availability of local provenance broadleaved trees, which are vital for our designated semi-natural woodlands. Community volunteers will be involved in collecting seeds and seedlings from specialist areas of our woodlands for growing in the polytunnel and raised beds. It is anticipated that local schools and community groups will also be involved in growing seedlings. The resulting trees will be used in CVCWT woodlands.



Wildlife Whistlestop!

Whether out in the Cree Valley woods or in your own back garden this winter, you will often encounter a tit feeding party. Great, Blue, Coal and Long-tailed Tit, and often other species such as Wren and Treecreeper, gather together to form groups of birds which move systematically through the trees and bushes searching for food. It makes good sense for small birds to feed together as many pairs of eyes are more likely to spot a predator such as a Sparrowhawk, and an insect disturbed by one bird may be caught by another. Listen out for the incessant high-pitched



sri-sri-sri call of the Long-tailed Tit often the first sign of these feeding parties. This call helps to keep the family groups of this species together. The different species avoid competition by feeding in different parts of the tree, and by feeding on different things. Oak trees are particularly important to all in winter.

The larger, less nimble Great Tit will spend a good amount of time feeding on the ground, often turning over leaves to find invertebrate prey as well as nuts and acorns which it breaks open whilst holding them

with its

feet. The Blue and Coal Tit both mainly feed in the tree branches but the Coal Tit has a more delicate bill and can take smaller prey than the Blue Tit. The Long-tailed Tit is probably the most acrobatic, feeding on the finer twigs, often hanging upside down to locate hidden prey. The Long-tailed Tit is predominantly insectivorous, whereas the others will eat more seeds and buds.

(Photos by Gavin Chambers)



Alien Plants in the Woodlands!

What to do with your garden waste can be a tricky problem to which there are many "green" solutions. Discarding it in the woodlands is not a "green" solution with the result that alien species such as Laurel, Himalayan honeysuckle and even bamboo start to grow and spread. If not checked, some species would eventually take over and change the structure of the woodland, choking the natural ground flora and depriving it of light. So, may we make a plea on behalf of the trees and the wildlife in these woods, not to discard garden waste but to dispose of it safely. Grass cuttings, prunings, dead plants and kitchen waste (fruit, vegetables, tea bags and egg shells) put in a compost bin will rot down into compost, which can be put back into the garden to enrich the soil.



Please pass this newsletter on to a friend when you have finished with it.

Volunteer Events

Volunteer events over the last year have included planting, weeding of conifer seedlings, fence removal, creating a montane scrub demonstration garden, putting up & monitoring of bat and bird boxes and cleaning of boxes.



Why not give volunteering a try!

All events are on a Wednesday 10am-3pm, unless stated otherwise and there is no obligation to be there every week—just come when you feel like some fresh air and outdoor exercise.

Walks in 2010

Tues 13th April 9.30am-1pm Wildlife Recording Day, Blairmount Park. Join CVCWT & Dumfries & Galloway Environmental Records Centre (DGERC) staff for the Wildlife Festival event, in a hunt to find and record the many different species found in and around the Park. Meet: Blairmount Car Park, Newton Stewart (NX403657).

Fri 21st May 2-4pm: Bluebells & Birds at Camer. Meet at High Camer picnic site (NX366732).

Fri 11th June 2-4pm: Plants of Glentool Oakwoods. Meet at Bruce's Stone car park (NX415804).

Fri 2nd July 2-4pm: Butterflies, Dragonflies & Birds, Glenhead Wood. Meet at Bruce's Stone car park (NX415804).

Fri 6th Aug 2-4pm: Riverside Wildlife, Caldons. Meet at Caldons car park (NX397792).

Fri 3rd Sept 2-4pm: Archaeology of Knockman Wood. Meet at Knockman Wood car park (NX410679).

Fri 8th Oct 2-4pm: Lichens & Fungi at Caldons Wood. Meet at Caldons car park (NX397792).

Project Funding

CVCWT would like to extend thanks to the following organisations for their financial support during the year: Freshfield Foundation, The Tubney Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, LEADER, The Robertson Trust, The Hugh Fraser Foundation.

If there are any issues you wish to raise, or would simply like to know more about what we do, please contact either Pete or Linda at C.V.C.W.T. Daltamie, Palnure, Newton Stewart, DG8 7BE

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