



C.V.C.W.T.

Winter 2005/6

Woodland habitats from "source to sea"

Issue 6

Woodland Updates

Knockman Wood is the latest addition to the woodlands under CVCWT management. Knockman is a large area of upland oak woodland owned by FCS. On the doorstep of Newton Stewart it has long been used by local walkers who have enjoyed its tranquillity,



wildlife and archaeological sites.

Work has started to improve the area for visitors and wildlife. Over 500 metres of paths have been upgraded and drains added to improve access. The new path will eventually merge into the woodland as it becomes colonised by mosses and grasses. Sycamore trees have been thinned and a number left standing following chemical treatment to produce standing dead timber. Deadwood has become a rare feature in woodlands, it is being restored to attract a range of beetles and bird species.

Knockman is an ancient semi-natural woodland formerly dominated by oak and hazel. During

the 19th century the woodland was underplanted with beech and sycamore, both introduced species. Recent management by CVCWT has involved the removal of seedlings and young growth of these species. Mature trees of these species have become important landscape features and have been left.

Knockman became a deer park in 1824 after General Sir William Stewart constructed the deer dyke, now an impressive archaeological feature! During the 1980's the new owners, the Forestry Commission, now FCS, recognised the considerable damage being done to trees by the high numbers of grazing fallow deer. The Forestry Commission excluded these "mobile mowing machines" from the old woodlands by erecting two large deer fenced areas. In 2005, CVCWT acknowledged that the fences having done their job should be taken down and removed. The regeneration of hazel and rowan is now prolific and both roe and fallow deer are roaming the woodlands. The deer hopefully will graze the rampant brambles but, unfortunately they avoid the seedling beech. A temporary deer fence, to the east of the main woodland path, has been constructed to encourage the natural regeneration of hazel and rowan beneath the open oak woodland.

During December 2005 slip gates were installed in this new deer fence to allow public access. The gates were recently found lying on the ground allowing access by the deer. Four stiles have now been built at the corners of the deer fence to allow access but the gates will remain locked to allow only controlled access for management. Boxes to support breeding bats and birds have been installed by volunteers.

A project to expose the outline of the medieval villages by removing the bracken has been started. Bracken covered areas within the woodlands are also to be managed to improve the habitat for small pearl bordered fritillary butterfly populations. The Sitka spruce and Norway spruce plantations within Knockman wood are in the process of being felled. This will result in exposing some of the old farmstead walls and old oak trees. At Clauchrie, the Douglas fir is to be thinned, enhancing the area as a wildlife site.



The upgraded car parking area is signposted at Boreland Cottage, off the main Minnigaff to Wood of Cree road and is approximately 200metres along the forest track.

New signs for the woodland access points are in the process of being constructed together with a number of attractive wildlife interpretation boards. These signs will be installed once the forestry operations have been completed. This tranquil woodland will be back to its former glory for walkers, bird migrants and butterflies by the Spring. We hope you enjoy the woodland as it recovers from its make-over.

Desirable accommodation

New wooden bird boxes constructed by CVCWT volunteers at the Kirroughtree classroom, together with woodcrete boxes (a mixture of sawdust and cement) purchased with grant support from the Aggregate fund, have been installed by volunteers at the Glentool Oakwoods of Caldons, Buchan and Glenhead, also at Camer and Knockman.

Other woodland work

A 10m wide strip of dangerous trees overhanging houses and public amenity areas has been removed from both Duncree and Doonhill Woods

Volunteers

In a joint effort with FCS, we now have a solid base of volunteers to help with various woodland management tasks. Volunteers have a variety of reasons for helping the project including a desire for healthy exercise, meeting new friends & developing an interest in wildlife.



To date, the volunteers have removed tree protectors from planted trees at Brighton, made wooden bird boxes and installed these at Caldons, put up woodcrete boxes at various woodlands, carried out wildlife recording at Kirroughtree and High Camer, carried out some wetland clearance at Kirroughtree pond, made habitat piles at Kirroughtree and High Camer. Volunteers have had illustrated talks from specialist speakers on Wigtown Local Nature Reserve, Red Kites and on the Cree Valley woodlands.

Volunteer Events Jan/Feb

All events are on a Wednesday, 10am-3pm, unless stated otherwise.

11th Jan. Wooden bird box construction at Kirroughtree

18th Jan. Siting of woodcrete boxes at Knockman

25th Jan. Tree planting, Brighton

8th Feb. Tree planting, Brighton

15th Feb. Siting of wooden bird boxes at Kirroughtree

22nd Feb. Siting of bird boxes at Camer.

28th Feb. 7.30pm-9pm. Volunteers meeting, Kirroughtree, including a guest speaker.

Further events planned include tree planting, creation of habitat piles, butterfly & wildflower recording, litter picking.

If you have some spare time, enjoy being out in the countryside and want to contribute positively to your environment, why not join us. All equipment is supplied, you just need appropriate weatherproof clothing/walking boots, a packed lunch and maybe your binoculars.

Walks in 2006

1. Saturday 16th April 1.30pm to 4.30pm Creetown Shore Walk, part of the Wildlife Festival fortnight.

2. Sunday 18th June 2pm to 4pm Woodland Birds, RSPB Wood of Cree. Meet at the RSPB car park on back road from Minnigaff to Bargrennan. (NX381708).

3. Sunday 25th June 2pm to 4pm Butterflies, High Camer. Meet at picnic site on back road from Minnigaff to Bargrennan. (NX366732).

4. Wednesday 12th July, 11am to 3pm Archaeology, Knockman



Wood. Meet at Knockman car park, on back road from Minnigaff to Bargrennan. (NX408673)

5. Wednesday 19th July 1pm to 4pm Wildlife in the Woodlands, Knockman Wood. Meet at Knockman car park on back road from Minnigaff to Bargrennan. (NX408673).

6. Sunday 8th October 1pm to 4.30pm Woodland & Riverside Walk, Brighton. Meet at Water of Minnoch. Parking area next to bridge near Brighton on back road from Minnigaff to Bargrennan (NX361750).

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