



The Green Shed

The
Borders
Forest
trust

Rooted in the community

Winter 2015/16 Issue 35

Corehead in Winter image by Lynn Cassells

Director's Welcome Jane Rosegrant

Hello and welcome to the Winter edition of THE GREEN SHED. In the last six months we've welcomed two more staff members and have some exciting new projects on the go. Inside you'll find information on The Borders Tree Planting Grant and our new collaboration with Kew Gardens and the Millennium Seed Bank. There are also tales from Norway, notes from a wildwood diary and updates across our sites. Thank you for your continued support and we hope you enjoy this GREEN SHED.

Note from the Chair

Steve Sloan *Chairman*

I had cause recently to ask myself "what exactly was I doing 20 years ago?" It isn't quite 2016 when you receive this copy of *The Green Shed* but it soon will be and BFT will celebrate its 20th anniversary. What has happened for BFT in this period is a remarkable story, much has changed and yet the principles that established us; a wish to see wild places kept special in perpetuity, a belief that we do that by engaging with the community, these things have not changed, nor will they. As the years pass, so the original wisdom and foresight of those who established BFT is strengthened by experience, not challenged by it.

That isn't to say however that we have been free of challenges.

Far from it, as well as the practical aspects such as financial challenges, the balance between intervention on the land and leaving it to regenerate naturally is, and will be, a healthy debate that is at the heart of what we do.

We have of course grown as an organisation, certainly in terms of the area under our stewardship in recent years, but also in terms of the scope of our activities, the reach and influence of what we believe and communicate and the acceptance of BFT as a legitimate voice in the conservation of the South of Scotland.

People have come and gone and some returned. Someone said recently that BFT has an addictive quality! But there is something very comforting in continuity. So while I was delighted to see new membership of the Board of Trustees this August I was equally delighted to see Philip Ashmole, a founder of this organisation returning as a Trustee.

In the Scottish Parliament Building in March 2016, the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform will join us to celebrate BFT's 20th anniversary. Many partners and supporters will hear of what has been achieved and learn what is still on our agenda for the future.

Perhaps the most comforting feature of the last 20 years can be seen at Carrifran. What has been achieved there has rightly received international recognition. Those who are closely engaged at Carrifran will have seen gradual change, what I see is a signpost for the future. When I look at Corehead, Talla & Gameshope, and other areas of future potential I wonder what my successor in 2036 will be reporting?

One thing has never changed in those 20 years, and that is your support and commitment as members of BFT.

The Past, the Present, the Future whatever BFT achieves, is your achievement.

Staff Update

In April we welcomed our newest member of staff, Woodland Habitats Officer **Alasdair Fagan** onto the team. His time is shared between the **Borders Tree Planting Grant** (more about this on page 6), assisting with practical management of BFT's woodland sites and co-ordinating **The National Seed Collection** project across provenance zone 204 on behalf of Kew Gardens (more on this on page 3).

Before he started working for BFT Alasdair worked for Chester Zoo, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and RECORD as a Biodiversity Trainee and the North York Moors National Park Authority as an assistant to the woodland officer. Alasdair brings a real passion for woodlands and wild land to his work and is also a committed green woodworker in his spare time. It is fantastic to have his input to our work.



In August BFT was delighted to welcome a familiar face back onto the staff team. **Anna Craigen** has returned to a part time post as our Education and Community Officer. She will be leading on the implementation of our **All Things Green** project (more detail on page 12). Anna has a long track record of taking forward ground breaking



outdoor education and community projects and we are very lucky to have her back on board.

Above left Alasdair Fagan, Woodland Habitats Officer at Talla and Gameshope; *Above right* Anna Craigen, Education and Community Officer back on the team.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Corehead and Carrifran

We have regular groups at both Carrifran and Corehead and we're on the lookout for some new members. Our Carrifran team are out every Tuesday and our Corehead team are out on alternate Thursdays.

High Camps 2016

Sign up now for next year's high camps. A chance to enjoy a weekend of camping, fresh air, good company and some hard work in the hills!

Carrifran 16th/17th April:

Montane scrub planting in Little Firthhope.

Corehead 14th/15th May:

Montane scrub planting in Lochan Burn.

Email lynn@bordersforesttrust.org or telephone 01835 830750 for more info and to book.

Community woodlands

We have opportunities to volunteer in a variety of different Community Woodlands in the Borders. Make a difference, enjoy being outside and learn new skills such as tree planting, pruning and path creation.






For further details email anna@bordersforesttrust.org or telephone 01835 830750

BFT Supporter Promise

In light of the recent stories you might have seen in the media about the way some charities are raising money, we felt it was important to let you know how BFT ensure we fundraise responsibly and respectfully.

Our supporters make our pioneering work restoring wild land and lost habitats possible through membership subscriptions, donations and legacies. As such we are committed to ensuring the highest level of supporter care for all of our supporters.

The following standards clarify how we have worked over the last twenty years and the service you can continue to expect from us at all times in the future.

-  We will always keep your personal details safe.
-  We do not cold call or raise money using agencies in the street.
-  We will act with transparency and be honest about all the fundraising methods we use.
-  If you wish to be removed from our mailing list or to change your preferences you can do so at any time and we will respect your decision.
-  We have never, and will never, share your details with anyone else.

We take the above promises to you very seriously and pride ourselves on working openly, honestly and respectfully.



Training day at Dundreggan Estate.

UK Tree Seed Project

Kew Botanic Gardens and the Millennium Seed Bank are coordinating the UK National Tree Seed Project. This ambitious project (funded by players of People's Postcode Lottery) aims to collect thousands of seeds from across the UK for long term conservation and research.

We've got on board to collect seeds in provenance ZONES 109 and 204 which covers part of Dumfriesshire, The Borders and East Lothian, stretching into Cumbria and Northumberland as well. Over the next three years we will be collecting thousands of seeds from 18 different species ranging from Honey Suckle to Yew.

We'll need volunteers, so please get in touch if you'd like to be part of this project. Email alasdair@bordersforesttrust.org or alison@bordersforesttrust.org.

If you are unhappy with anything we have done or do while fundraising please do let us know so we can put it right. Call us on 01835 830750 or email enquiries@bordersforesttrust.org.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support for our work.

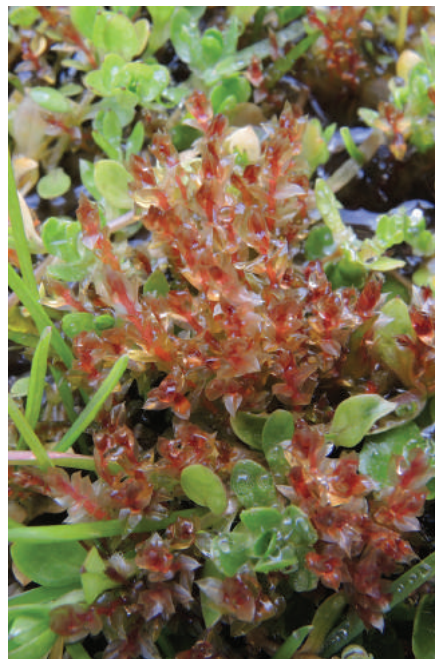
Bryologists **David Long** and **Liz Kungu** report their findings ...

In July 1907 Symers Macvicar, one of the greatest past Scottish bryologists, and author of the *Student's Handbook of British Hepatics*, visited Talla Linns and discovered that some of the oceanic liverworts common in his home territory on the west coast of Scotland, could also be found in the Southern Uplands. With Talla & Gameshope lying on the far western edge of the Scottish Borders and with the average annual rainfall in Tweedsmuir at 1135 mm, it is not really surprising that such species could be found. Talla Linns, just outside the area purchased by BFT, has very high

humidity due to good tree cover, whereas in T&G practically all the woody vegetation has been lost by centuries of grazing by sheep, and it was thought unlikely that such delicate leafy liverworts would have been able to survive such drastic deforestation. That was the big question facing our survey – could any oceanic liverworts have survived in T&G? A second question was - could certain alpine species be found on the rock outcrops and montane flushes at high elevation? Since October 2013 we have spent a total of 11 recording days in T&G, including a visit by the

Recording in Talla & Gameshope

One group which has been a focus this year are the mosses and liverworts, collectively known as bryophytes.



(left) *Hymenophyllum* in March Sike
(centre) *Bryum weigelii* in Donald's Cleuch (right) *Anastrepta orcadensis* in March Sike.

Scottish Borders Bryophyte Group, and have recorded a total of 254 different mosses and liverworts. The welcome news is that both the above questions have a positive outcome, in that all of Macvicar's oceanic discoveries from Talla Linns survive in the cleughs and crags of T&G, with some additional finds, and a good range of alpine species have also turned up on the higher ground. Perhaps the biggest surprise was not of a bryophyte at all but that the small oceanic Wilson's Filmy Fern (*Hymenophyllum wilsonii*) only known before in Peeblesshire from Talla Linns, is growing happily in four north-facing gullies on Garelet Hill and in the wonderful ravine of March Sike in Gameshope.

Of the oceanic liverworts, most welcome is the discovery that Orkney Notchwort (*Anastrepta orcadensis*) is found on Talla Craigs, Garelet Hill and quite

abundantly in March Sike. Other oceanic liverworts are Lesser Whipwort (*Bazzania tricrenata*), Western Frostwort (*Gymnomitrium crenulatum*), Pearl Pouncewort (*Lejeunea patens*), Pearson's Fingerwort (*Lepidozia pearsonii*), Taylors Flapwort (*Mylia taylorii*), Prickly Featherwort (*Plagiochila spinulosa*) and Western Earwort (*Scapania gracilis*).

Of the montane bryophytes recorded in T&G about half are found in the flushes which are wet areas where lime-rich water wells up from the underlying Silurian rocks. They are found in many places, but those in the headwaters of Donald's Cleugh are particularly rich and include two Nationally Scarce (NS) mosses, Duval's Thread-moss (*Bryum weigelii*) and Rugged Collar-moss (*Splachnum vasculosum*). Elsewhere, two other NS flush species are Slender Cow-horn Bog-moss (*Sphagnum subsecundum*) in Crunklie Moss, and River Thyme-moss (*Pseudobryum cinclidioides*) beside Gameshope Loch at 565 metres. On the high-altitude crags such as Talla Craigs are several local montane species, notably White Frostwort (*Gymnomitrium obtusum*), River Thread-moss (*Bryum riparium*) (NS) and Long-fruited Thread-moss (*Pohlia elongate*), while on loose stones in high-level screes are Spruce's Rustwort (*Marsupella sprucei*), Bristle-leaf (*Brachydontium trichodes*) (NS) and Blytt's Fork-moss (*Kiaeria blyttii*). A few of the crags have some outcrops rich in lime, where a number of calcicolous bryophytes grow, notable being Lesser Rough Earwort (*Scapania aequiloba*) (NS) and Upright Brown (*Grimmia Schistidium strictum*) on Garelet Hill.

In all we have recorded eleven bryophytes new to Peeblesshire, re-found a further six not seen for over 50 years, and found new sites for seven Nationally Scarce species. Our recording efforts are still not complete, with several crags and gullies awaiting exploration, but we know enough to say that Talla & Gameshope are a bryological hotspot in the Scottish Borders and contribute a great deal to the biodiversity of the 'Wild Heart of Southern Scotland'.

UK Fungus Day

On the 11th of October it was UK Fungus Day! When it comes to woodland regeneration we owe a lot to fungi and to celebrate we held an event in Moffat town hall which over 70 people attended. The day before the Clyde and Argyll fungus group visited Carrifran Wildwood to record the fungi on site. Roy Watling, an expert mycologist who was involved in surveys of Carrifran when the project first started, looks back on how the fungi have changed over time and the important role they play.

As told by Roy Watling



Tinder Fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*) can be made into beautiful hats!

As excited about the Carrifran project as the conservationists are the mycologists. This project is a natural experiment in fungal colonisation, as a former hill pasture gradually converts to woodland. Why? Because most plants require a fungus to assist them in obtaining as much nutrient from often extremely poor substrates.

There are two main types of this relationship – termed mycorrhizal (meaning fungus root). The first is the ectomycorrhizas; where the body of the fungus or mycelium grows mostly on the root surface, penetrating the root between the cells. Most tree species adopt this kind and the ectomycorrhizal fungi produce colourful, prominent and sometimes bizarre fruiting bodies, such as the Chanterelle and the Fly Agaric.

The Second is termed endomycorrhizal from the fact that the fungus grows into the cells of the roots (endo-). This type of association is predominately found in herbaceous plants and some of our trees such as Ash and Sycamore. We rarely see the fruiting bodies of these fungi as they are microscopic.

It is hard to know which fungi associate with the trees planted and recording fungi fruiting bodies gives

important information. One fungi we are almost certain to find fruiting is The Deceiver (*Laccaria laccata*). It is a pioneer and is found in exposed areas as well as colonising some of the first trees planted at Carrifran. On the hills above the woodland the Dwarf Willow (*Salix herbacea*) supports specialist Russula's fruiting alongside. But where did these fungi come from in the first place? From germinating dormant spores, spores brought in on the wind from close-by or even further afield, or on the roots of the trees planted, translocated from the nursery plots?

The first visits to Carrifran yielded fungi of a typical hill-pasture community, with fungi growing directly on sheep droppings such as the Dung Roundhead (*Stropharia*) and on dung rich soil such as the Liberty Cap (*Psilocybe*) and several acid-marsh species such as the two species of Brownie (*Hypholoma*) found. A few years into the project and we recorded twenty species of Waxcap (*Hygrocybe*), 12 pink gills (*Entoloma*) and 4 fairy clubs (*Clavariaceae*). This suite of fungi is indicative of unimproved grassland and marks the site as one of national importance for these fungi. One of the exciting finds along the trail was that of the puffball, (*Lycoperdon pedicellatum*), named from the long stalk on the spores. This sighting was the second time for Scotland. So where did it come from? Anyone can guess!

There were few ectomycorrhizal fungi found in the early days, but the foray on the 11th October this year yielded more diversity, with a variety of Milkcaps (*Lactarius*), Webcaps (*Cortinarius*), Poison Pies (*Hebeloma*), Knights (*Tricholoma*) and of course our trusty deceiver (*Laccaria laccata*).

We look forward to watching the fungi diversity continue to change as the woodland develops.

The BFT AGM

Tim Frost *Woodland Site Manager*

If you missed the BFT AGM this year you missed a treat – some may think AGMs are to be avoided and one only goes to avoid being elected to a committee in your absence! BFT's AGMs are in that category where you can (normally) safely come along, hear about some of BFT's work over the past year and then after coffee and shortbread, settle down to listen to a good speaker for the next 45 minutes or so. This year we invited **Duncan Stone**, SNH's Land Use Policy and Advice Manager from Inverness, to come and talk. He did just that and really threw down the gauntlet to BFT staff and members, to question what we are doing when it comes to woodland creation in today's rapidly changing environment.

Duncan's talk was entitled '**Preparing conservation woodlands for a changing environment – why we can't agree and what should we do about it**', an issue that Duncan has spent many years working on at SNH. Duncan started off by showing a picture of the Governor of Pennsylvania at a tree planting ceremony holding an Eastern Hemlock seedling (the State Tree of Pennsylvania) he was about to plant. Ironically, that tree will be unlikely to make it to maturity, due to a pest called the *Wooley Adelgid*, a tiny insect that is devastating Eastern Hemlock

populations right across Pennsylvania and the eastern US. Despite this, Eastern Hemlock is still planted at ceremonial plantings because it's the State Tree and that's what you should plant. Or should you?

Duncan challenged us to question the concept of 'native' and how these species may fare, given that the number of tree pests and diseases in the last 30 years have escalated exponentially. He shared a photo of a small new woodland in southern England where a mix-up in the tree nursery had meant that stands of both our native Ash and also White Ash had been planted within this woodland. Making the point that we should view these events as opportunities to question and explore – the native Ash had fallen victim to *Ash dieback* but the White Ash was generally healthy as it is not as susceptible to *Ash dieback*, yet it fills a similar niche. Should we consider planting species that provide a similar function in the ecosystem as our accepted natives and that can survive the pests and diseases we have here in the UK? When you add climate change into the mix it becomes very difficult to predict what we could be looking at in 50 years. Not even Mystic Meg could answer that one!

It was a very thought provoking talk that has many people discussing if our current model of woodland regeneration is the way forward, when we take into account such uncertainty. Will we have resilient forests for the future? Should we adapt how we develop and design new woodlands or continue with the ethos we currently follow? Discuss.

Borders Tree Planting Grant

Alasdair Fagan *Woodland Habitats Officer*



Launch of the grant with the first tree plantings.

Would you like to plant a new native woodland up to 0.25 hectares in size in the Scottish Borders?

If so the Borders Tree Planting Grant could help:

- 🌳 Funding new woodlands of up to 0.25 hectares (this can include some fencing)
- 🌳 Up to £1000 a year per applicant is available
- 🌳 Funding is available for 3 years.

Launched in May this year it is designed to

help increase the number and diversity of trees and shrubs across the Scottish Borders. An ambition which has become particularly important given the number of tree pests and diseases (such as Ash dieback), that have hit Scotland and the rest of the UK in the recent past, many which have the potential to greatly reduce the numbers of trees across the Borders.

The grant is available to farmers, private land owners, community groups and schools that have a suitable site for a small woodland planting project that will enhance the landscape for both biodiversity and amenity. Trees to be planted within hedgerows are eligible although please note that funding is not available for hedging.

Applications have already been received and approved for this

planting season and work is underway at sites across the Scottish Borders to create a series of small woodlands. There is still time during this planting season for applications to be approved for work to begin before the warmer weather arrives in spring.

The Borders Tree Planting Grant project is part funded by Forestry Commission Scotland, Woodland Trust Scotland, Scottish Borders Council and Fallago Environment Fund and is administered by myself here at the Borders Forest Trust and my colleagues at Tweed Forum.

For more information on the grant, a list of some appropriate tree species and application forms please refer to our website.

If you have any questions or queries please contact me at alsadair@bordersforesttrust.org.

The NORWEGIAN Adventure

Lynn Cassells *Site Officer*

In May this year Tim Frost and I were very lucky to be part of a Scottish contingent travelling out to Norway. We were joined by colleagues from Trees for Life, Forestry Commission, Montane Scrub Action Group, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and Cairngorms National Park Authority and the aim was to learn about woodland regeneration and montane scrub in a mixture of areas similar to some of our Scottish sites.



hill. We had a brief stop mid-way to look at the impressive Månafossen, (LEFT) a large waterfall throwing a torrent of water down a steep rock face (the seventh best in Norway apparently!). We continued on until we were greeted with a view of the beautiful mountain lodge we would be staying in. Now owned by the local hikers association, it was previously a farmhouse at 300m above sea level.

The next day we set out on a 6km hike up the valley to Blafjellenden. We were walking through an area which Duncan explained would most likely have been ancient pine wood. Now following periods of deforestation, grazing and subsequent removal of grazing, an early successional woodland had established. We had an enjoyable day with some challenging terrain to cross including a large moraine (BOTTOM LEFT). We were beginning to make some interesting observations. The main species regenerating were Birch, Rowan, Juniper and Aspen. All of these we plant at BFT sites, but Aspen not currently in large numbers. We discovered plants like Alpine Blue Sow Thistle (*Cicerbita alpina*) and May Lily (*Mianthemum bifolium*) which were common in Norway but rare in Scotland, perhaps due to the high grazing pressure. A heart-warming observation was how most of these trees were just growing on rock, something which struck a chord with the ground conditions we often plant in back home!

We flew out to Stavanger which is on the west coast (roughly the same latitude as Kirkwall) and met with Duncan Halley from the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research who was to be our guide for the week.

We had a short drive inland to Fidjadalen and met with Auden, our guide for the day, who works for the Rogalund Department of the Environment. Auden emphasised that much of the landscape today is post-farming; what has regenerated following the removal of stock and managed field systems.

After loading up with two days' worth of food for the group, we began the hike up a steep rocky

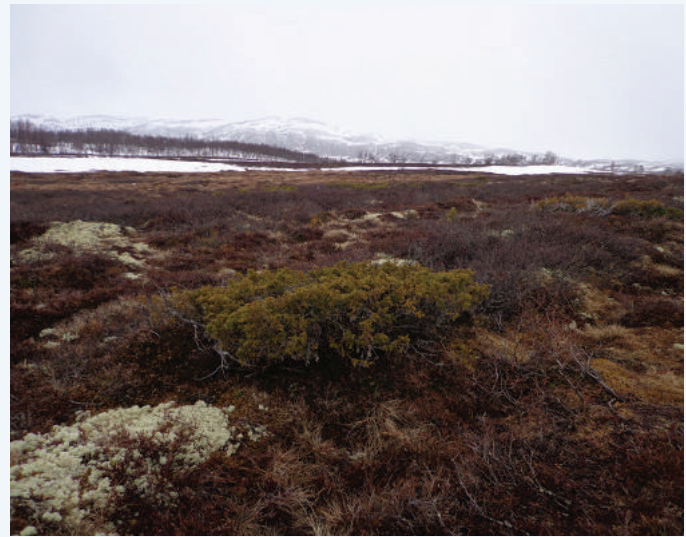




The next days involved higher altitudes at Sloaros (over 1000m a.s.l.) where we looked at some montane scrub (TOP RIGHT). As it had been a harsh winter, many of the plants were still covered in snow and were without leaf, making identification of species quite tricky, but we were able to pick out large areas of Dwarf Birch, Willow and Juniper, all of which were the dominant species at this altitude.

We then went to Berdalen and took a long hike up to a Norwegian cabin. It involved a walk through regenerating woodland right up to mountain tops. We walked through old farms with fields once managed for hay which were now full of trees and disturbed a few female Capercaillie while looking at moose prints. We trudged through the snow up to the cabin (ABOVE RIGHT) and after a much needed hot drink we split into a few groups to climb up to the mountain tops. We were able to climb above the tree line (although the transition was not abrupt) into the montane scrub zone where the ground was again covered in Dwarf Birch, Willow and Juniper.

We found some high altitude pines at nearly 1,200m a.s.l. and were distracted watching two Golden Eagles flying above some nearby mountain tops. After a long walk back to the vehicles we all agreed that this day was a real highlight of the trip so far.



Our last few days brought us to the Norwegian coastline where we met representatives from the local councils and farmers. We visited Ånuglo Island, a designated Nature reserve, and saw an interesting project involving the removal of large blocks of non-native conifers such as Sitka Spruce, Western Hemlock, Larch and Grand Fir. The aim is to improve the overall biodiversity value of the island and we had interesting discussions about the pressure of deer in Norway, which with lower numbers than in Scotland were not currently perceived to be a threat to the regenerating woodland.

Our final day took us to Bømlo where we visited some very different sites including an area of coastal heath which is a Norwegian priority habitat. Tim and I were the envy of the group that day as we were lucky enough to get up close to a Sea Eagle that was being fed by the pilot of our boat.

(opposite page, from top) Månafossen; group preparing for the day hike; crossing the moraine.
(this page, from top left) Tim taking notes on the high altitude pines; montane scrub at Sloaros; cabin above Berdalen.



(left) coastal moorland (above) group gathered for a briefing about the island.

To find out more about our work or if you would like to support us, please visit www.bordersforesttrust.org or telephone 01835 830 750.

So what did we learn from our trip?

1. Norway has a lot more trees than Scotland

Since the large scale reduction of grazing and farming around 100-150 years ago, the trees have shot up. And they grow everywhere.... flat ground, on rock, on ledges, in crevices, in bogs. Across some of our sites we plant in some pretty rocky, exposed and unforgiving ground and it was brilliant to see trees growing in similar situations that were actually trees!

2. Don't forget the.....

Aspen and the montane scrub. We've been planting a whole mix of different species across our sites but if we are to take our cue from Norway, there are a few trees/shrubs we could do with planting more of.

3. We need to plant

In Norway, woodland regeneration has come from natural regeneration. There was enough of an existing seed source in terms of viable trees to get things going again. That, along with suitable growing conditions, has resulted in some lovely new early successional woodland. However, the situation in Southern Scotland is different. It is questionable whether we have enough trees left to kick start things off and the overall conditions for growth aren't as good as Norway. Our soil has really suffered from more intense, prolonged grazing leading to a serious

lack of important mycorrhizal fungi and nutrient leaching. Therefore we agreed that in many places we do need to intervene to get things going.

4. No deer?

One of our biggest battles in tree establishment is dealing with the threat from deer. In Norway this doesn't seem to be the case. At present there is little concern around deer management and culling. It does appear that the population is on the rise and it was something that the group universally stressed to our Norwegian counterparts to tackle in the near rather than distant future.

5. The hills are alive with the sound of birdsong

As we strolled through many upland woodlands we were constantly distracted by the variety of bird life, a good indication of a healthy or at least recovering ecosystem. From Bluethroats and Redstarts singing to nearly tripping over two Capercaillie, it was always a race to see who could identify the bird first. When walking through similar elevations in the Scottish hills, we are really missing that.

6. We need time

Woodland regeneration takes time and thinking in terms of hundreds of years and outside of our own lifespan for the bigger picture is essential. Trees at lower elevations will shoot up, higher up they will stay low, but both are key parts of our future woodland ecosystem.

THE DEN

Borders Forest
Trust's kids corner.
No grown ups!

TRACKS IN THE SNOW

If you're lucky enough to wake up to a snowy day this winter, discover who roams at night by looking for animal tracks in the snow.

Why not have a go at drawing them? Or take a photo and see if you can figure out who they belong to.

(a) Hare (b) Cat (c) Robin



(a)



(b)



(c)

HOT OFF THE PRESS We just had a new grant application approved for some small scale works to be done on some exposed peat at Talla. We'll be using some more geo-jute and doing some manual re-profiling of hags.



Peat Works

We took a trip up to Little Firthhope earlier this year with our Peatland Action Project Officer Emily Taylor. We wanted to set up a proper monitoring programme for the works that we did last year. Firstly we had a look around at how the jute, coir logs and sisal fared over the winter. The first two have been really effective

with the jute giving enough stabilisation to allow vegetation such as cotton grass to recolonise and the coir logs holding pools of water. We weren't as convinced with the sisal; its heavy weight and tight weave means it doesn't allow much to grow through.

We will continue to monitor progress.

BFT is working on a wide variety of woodland culture projects across Southern Scotland.

Woodland Culture

'All Things Green': making positive outdoor learning easier and accessible for all!

Anna Craigen Community and Education Officer

After a two year break in our Woodland Education project work in the Borders, we have developed a new all singing and dancing project which aims to work with individual schools to promote and encourage increased outdoor learning opportunities. During the break in our project work we carried out a Borders wide outdoor education audit to ascertain the current status of outdoor learning provision, and the needs, demands and aspirations of our local schools. The findings of this audit helped us to design this programme.

We plan to develop a full, school specific package that we hope will be embedded into the school's learning ethos and programmes for many years to come. This package will include: improvements to the school grounds, a training programme to develop staff skills and confidence, and development of stronger working relationships between schools, local community groups, sites and projects.

One aspect of this project is to produce school specific 'All Things Green' resource packs that will contain everything necessary to make outdoor learning simple, whilst ensuring links with the School Improvement Plan, Eco-School Program work and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The pack will include:

- Seasonal on-site and local activities linked to CfE experiences and outcomes
- Local wildlife I.D. keys that the pupils will create, following a series of seasonal Bio-Blitz activities to discover what lives in their school grounds, nearby green areas, woodlands and parks. (NB: All biological records will be sent to the local Records Centre)
- Craft section to make the most of available local resources
- Risk assessment tips and pro-formas
- Global environmental concerns – for instance carbon reduction
- Links to national initiatives (e.g. RSPB - Big School's Bird Watch/Spring watch) and other useful online resources.

In all, we hope we have thought of everything with this one! Learning for Sustainability is now a core part of the General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standards for all practitioners and school leaders. This project links perfectly with many aspects of this new national agenda: outdoor learning, contact with nature, creativity, community partnerships, co-operative collaborative and active learning, school linking, protecting biodiversity, growing food, improving attainment and achievement..... to name but a few!

All Things Green is made possible by part funding from Forestry Commission Scotland, the Robertson Trust and the Ernest Cook Trust.

(top) School visit (bottom) pupils collecting samples from the stream (opposite page, top) Junior Rangers (bottom) pupils from Moffat Primary School.



Corehead Farm

The new Junior Ranger project is going strong and we'll be giving out Junior Ranger awards to participants this December. Junior Rangers will have attended up to 13 sessions and covered a range of activities from tree planting, to greenwood work to navigation skills. We've also continued our rural skills programme and run family activities in the school holidays. Local schools continue to benefit from projects at Corehead and this summer 52 pupils completed their John Muir Awards.

Community Woodlands

The Woodland Volunteers are back together and are as always, enthusiastically grafting away in our local CW sites. The team is steadily attracting new members, and we have a full programme of autumn and winter tasks this year. Some of our planned activities include: large scale birch thinning at Glenkinnon Woodland (does anyone have a use for freshly cut birch stems?) and building a hexagonal fruit cage at Drygrange Community Orchard, plus much more.



Branching Out

During 2015 Borders Forest Trust was chosen to run two 13-week sessions of the Forestry Commission's Branching Out programme. One session was held in Gordon Community Woodland and the second one is taking place at a Forestry Commission site named Hell's Hole. This project takes a group of around 8 people who use mental health services and provides a weekly programme of outings. The activities are tailored to each site and group but usually include conservation activities, tai chi, outdoor art and bush craft.

Corehead High Camp: Protecting the Trees



This year we held our first ever Corehead High Camp. Despite the rain doing its best to get in the way, the sun came out and we had 8 people join us for some work up on our march and enclosure fences.

We hiked up from the barn through Tweedhope, stopping every now and again to have a look at the trees we planted that in general are looking really good. We set our tents up on Whitehope Knowe and then split into 3 teams to tackle the weekend's tasks. Over the weekend we managed to repair a long stretch of enclosure fence as well as starting repairs to our march fence. The latter is a large project that we will have to work on over time but it was great to get it started.

Carrifran High camp: Planting the trees

This year's High Camp was great fun with 14 attendees and beautiful spring weather. Volunteer Sue Thomason, wrote a wonderful entry in her *Notes from a Wildwood Diary*; below is an extract.



Saturday's walk-in started through young birches and willows. Primroses studded the grass, and tadpoles wriggled in puddles. This might have been how the valley looked soon after the glaciers left. During a rest-break, a young lizard sunned itself on someone's doffed rucksack. A pair of buzzards floated over the brow of Raven Craig, harassed by a pair of peregrines. Our task leader pointed out the bare scars of a couple of avalanche tracks. "We wondered about replanting, but the management decision was to leave them. We have some horizontal trees that are doing very well." By now we were walking through waist-high birches, knee-high oaks. Crossing the burn for the last time, we climbed steeply to the high cup of Firth Hope. Here, walking on last year's un-compacted dry grass felt like walking on soft-crusting snow. We picked up planting spears, sets of young trees, and chocolate biscuits, and set to work. I found myself wishing each new-planted tree good luck.

After supper, we walked to the summit of White Coomb, with an amazing view of the roll-backed uplands greying into dusk. The silence was huge: no wind, no birds, no sheep. On the way back, we inspected a trial site for peat erosion control using rope dams and what looked like giant dishcloths. It was working; grass blades poked through the dishcloths, and tiny cushions of moss studded the ropes.

Sunday was overcast and damp. We'd planted all our trees, so we spent the morning pulling up vole guards. We found some dead or missing trees, but many more survivors. I felt hopeful. On the walk out, I was amused by my changed perception - trees that had yesterday seemed small and twisted, now looked well-grown and sturdy. We drove home for a welcome bath.

You can read Sue's full diary entry on our blog page www.bordersforesttrust.org/blog archived in 'June 2015'. A huge thank you to all those attending the high camps. Please email lynn@bordersforesttrust.org to sign up for next year's camps at Carrifran and Corehead!

Future thinking at Corehead

We're coming to the end of our current five year management plan at Corehead and one of the things under debate as we look ahead, is the future of the shelterbelts.



So what are shelterbelts?

A shelterbelt is a group of trees often planted to give (you guessed it) shelter! On farms it is often a place where stock can gather for shelter.

We have 4 main shelter belts at Corehead; Boundary Wood (it's on our boundary), Tweedhope (at the bottom of our native broadleaf planting), Shelterbelt 210 (on a map this is where the 210 contour line crosses) and In-Bye wood (which runs along the Annandale Way in the in-bye). The vast majority of trees in these shelterbelts are a mixture of non-native conifers. They vary in age and condition with some having good stands of straight trees while others are a 'Jenga game' of windblown trees. Here are some of the questions we are trying to address at the minute.

Why do anything with the shelterbelts?

There are some benefits of the shelterbelts and it is a good place to start by asking if we need to do anything at all. As tall trees they provide perches and nesting opportunities for birds. When they fall they provide important decaying wood habitat which we have very little of at Corehead (and won't have for many years until our native woodlands establish). At least one of our shelterbelts has an active badger sett and there are lichens and fungi growing within these woods that aren't found elsewhere on site.

There are also some cons. At Corehead we are looking to have a landscape of broadleaf woodlands, with grazed areas, wetland and heath. The plantations don't fit in with our long

(from top left)
windblow in shelterbelt;
drystone dyke at Shelterbelt 210;
old materials to clear in In-bye wood; aerial shot of all 4 shelterbelts.



term landscape vision and this space could be used to extend the area of native woodland on the lower slopes. The shelterbelts are currently unsafe with many hanging trees and provide a seed source which means we have to pull out Larch and Sitka seedlings in our neighbouring native broadleaf plantations.

So if we decide to do something, the next question is what.

What could we do with the shelterbelts?

There are a variety of felling options. We could clear fell all four shelterbelts. This would mean all the trees would come down in one go. We could do this phased over four years (one shelter belt per year) or all of them in one year. The other option would be to selectively fell trees each winter. We could look to sell the wood we fell as either timber or for firewood.

Once felled there are many ideas of what we could do. We could replant with native species to form a future woodland or opt for a 'parkland'

approach with just a few trees. We could re-stock with coppice crops of Hazel or even use the space in Shelterbelt 210 to put in a polytunnel and make our own BFT tree nursery! The opportunities could be endless. However with many of these things, ideas can be the easy part. So it's trying to figure out what is realistic considering the challenges we may face. And there certainly are one or two....

What are the challenges facing us?

1. Access

This is a big one for us at Corehead, both onsite and to the woods themselves. We recently felled some Larch in Boundary Wood and discovered that due to steep slopes, without a new track, we could only work in between 50-75% of the wood itself. There is also the damage to the site to consider. Our recent works took their toll and with access to two of the shelterbelts going across a Scheduled Ancient Monument, it's definitely something we have to factor in.

2. Condition of the shelterbelts

This again varies from one to the next. In terms of age they are all roughly the same and are getting to the stage where they would be felled in a commercial context. The species mix (and thus use of timber) varies and includes Larch, Sitka spruce and Pine. The 'condition' of some of the trees is not great. For example in Boundary Wood, many of the Larch trees are kinked and bent making them unsuitable for anything other than wood pulp or firewood.

There are trees that have blown down in strong winds, something that commonly happens to conifer plantations as they mature. Shelterbelt 210 is the best example of this where it seems like there are more trees blown over than standing. This means that the processing of any timber in there becomes a lot more tricky and hazardous.

Then there are the left over materials from previous uses of the shelterbelts. For instance, In-Bye wood contains old pheasant pens which will need to be removed before felling could take place.

Lastly there's the threat of Phytophthora ramorum infecting the larch, which would add a whole new slant to 'condition' that we need to factor in.

3. Finance

Advice from forestry experts is that the cost of felling, extraction and transport exceeds the amount we would get in timber sales. Therefore we need to look at all options and try to find a way that is affordable and carried out in a sensitive way that matches with our vision for Corehead. That may include being a bit entrepreneurial and looking at different ways of selling the wood.

4. Wildlife considerations

Before we begin any operations, the local wildlife must be considered. We want to ensure that any works have minimal impact and that any subsequent projects will only serve to improve conditions for the future. That will mean full surveys of the shelterbelts and mitigating where we can against disturbance.

The future

In summary we have a lot to consider. It needs some careful thought, exploration and planning but it's quite exciting and ultimately will help Corehead become a better place for wildlife and people to live and enjoy.

Borders Forest Trust Membership/Donation Form

If you're reading this and you're not a BFT member, why not sign up and make a lasting contribution to our work? If you are a member, please pass on to a friend!

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Type of Membership (please tick)

- | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Individual | £20 per annum (overseas £25) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unwaged | £7 per annum | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family | £30 per annum (overseas £35) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Group | £50 per annum | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Corporate | £250 per annum | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Life | £500 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can recover the tax you have paid on any donation from the Inland Revenue, greatly increasing its value, at no cost to you. We can currently reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that you donate.

Please sign the declaration below:

I would like Borders Forest Trust to treat all donations I make from the date of this declaration (until I notify you otherwise) as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I have paid or will pay Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year that is at least equal to the amount that all charities I donate to will reclaim in Gift Aid on my donations for that year.

Signature:

Date:

For more information about our forthcoming events please visit
www.bordersforesttrust.org/news-events

or contact us

☎ 01835 830 750

✉ enquiries@bordersforesttrust.org

we also post details

📘 www.facebook.com/BordersForestTrust

📍 @BordersForest

Borders Forest Trust Membership/Donation Form

Method of Payment

Paying by Standing Order reduces our administration costs, helping us to plant more trees.

I authorise you to send this Standing Order request to my bank of building society

To (bank/ building society).....

Address

.....

..... Postcode

Sort code A/C No

Account Name

Please pay Borders Forest Trust the sum of £

Monthly/annually (delete as applicable) starting on

Signature Date

Or

I enclose a cheque for £ in respect of my/our membership subscription.
(Cheques should be made payable to Borders Forest Trust)

I enclose a cheque for £ as a donation.

Or

Please debit my credit card with the sum of £

Credit Card number

(Visa, Mastercard, Euro, Delta, CAF)

Name on Card Expiry Date

Signature Date

The Borders Forest Trust... rooted in the community

Registered Office & Mailing Address:

Monteviot Nurseries, Ancrum,
Jedburgh, TD8 6TU

Borders Forest Trust is a Company
Limited by Guarantee

Registered in Scotland
No.SC162581

Scottish Charity No. SC024358

Tel: 01835 830 750

www.bordersforesttrust.org
enquiries@bordersforesttrust.org

The views expressed in this
newsletter are not necessarily
the views of Borders Forest Trust

Published by Borders Forest Trust
November 2015

Staff

Director:

Jane Rosegrant

Programme Manager:

Nicola Hunt

Woodland Site Manager:

Tim Frost

Corehead Community & Education Officer:

Alison Murfitt

BFT Site Officer:

Lynn Cassells

Finance Officer:

Sandra Smith-Maxwell

Woodland Habitats Officer

Alasdair Fagan

Community & Education Officer:

Anna Craigen

Patron

Rory Bremner

Trustees

Steve Sloan

Hugh Chalmers

Rosalind Grant-Robertson

David Long

Donald McPhillimy

Brenda Robertson

Martin Tilstone

Hans Waltl

Stephanie Young

Philip Ashmole

John Thomas

Sarah Eno

Newsletter

Editor: Ali Murfitt

Design: Vivid Design Consultancy

Thank you to our funders, who include:



FALLAGO ENVIRONMENT FUND



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



LOTTERY FUNDED



Scottish Natural Heritage
All of nature for all of Scotland



The Scottish
Government



Scottish
Borders
COUNCIL



sfgs
Scottish Forestry
Grants Scheme
Delivering The Scottish Forestry Strategy



Royal Botanic Gardens
Kew



Forestry Commission
Scotland



ERNEST COOK TRUST
Learning from the land



WOODLAND
TRUST SCOTLAND



THE
ROBERTSON
TRUST