



News

No. 2: Spring 2013

Work starts at Greenstreete



The Samatha Trust are the owners of Greenstreete, a beautiful 35 hectares of hills, woodlands and wetlands which provide a peaceful setting for Buddhist retreats. KTAT spent last year discussing the possibility of our managing a part of their woodlands. With a generous pre-project grant from Environment Wales we were able to employ Dr. Evelyn Over to write a feasibility study and draft management plan. These were extremely useful and helped us in our negotiations with the Samatha Trust.

On 8th January 2013 our two Trusts finally signed a 10 year agreement to manage what we are calling 'The Greenstreete



Larches'. This is a 2.74 hectare area of larch plantation. The mature 60 year old Japanese larch

(*L. kaempferi*) covers 80% of the plantation and the remaining 20% consists of a small planting of mature sweet chestnut, and a scattered broadleaf understorey including hazel coppice and ash regeneration.

The plantation is located on a steep, west facing slope at between 250-350m above sea level. We will gradually cut down the mature Larch (which is becoming vulnerable to windthrow and disease) and transform it into a native broadleaf woodland able to provide firewood and timber for both Trusts whilst increasing biodiversity.

KTAT has been granted its first felling license to cut the chestnut and start a coppicing rotation through regeneration and plantings. The first work day was held on 23rd February 2013 when 9 volunteers were provided with tools and shown by Brian Barker, woodland officer for the Shropshire Hills AONB, how to high prune, coppice, saw up fallen timber and fell some standing trees safely with hand tools.



The management work let in more light to encourage ground flora that will increase the biodiversity of the area as well as providing some fuelwood that will be processed and stacked to dry. The brash was left on site in piles to encourage nesting birds and small mammals, fungi and insects – an essential part of a healthy woodland ecosystem.

Continued overleaf...

Three Go To Llangattock

Llangattock Community Woodland project has been running for a number of years and three KTAT volunteers travelled to a workday in November 2012 to see how they did it and to compare notes. Like Knighton Tree Allotments Trust, they own no woodland but manage various woodlands for the benefit of both the owners and the community.



They have a great site, next to a canal, which means they can transport timber on a barge when necessary. They have a community wood store, tools and a trailer.



On the workday, after introductions and a health and safety talk, two people operated chainsaws while the rest of us sorted the wood into brush piles that would remain, and wood piles that would be moved at a later date.

The group was friendly and energetic and very welcoming to us. It was great to do the day with them and feel inspired about our own practical work which at the time had not quite started.

It's good to know we are part of a network of community woodland initiatives that are making sure we have woodlands for future generations that will provide food and habitats for other animals, and woodland products and recreation for humans.

Work starts at Greenstreete (continued from front cover)

The good work and learning process continued on 20th March, with 8 volunteers having another social and productive day in the woods. Last year, we began the flora and fauna surveys that are providing the data for a baseline species inventory which will be extended next year and

regularly repeated so we can monitor the impact of our management. We will be providing various opportunities in the coming year for volunteers to learn surveying techniques and skills by inviting people to join our bird, butterfly, moth and bat surveys.

Lightfoot advice on storing wood fuel

We noticed this article in an email newsletter from Lightfoot Energy Service and thought it so useful that we've got their permission to reproduce it here!

Quite a number of participants are either buying wood in as cordwood (that is in lengths uncut or split) or own your own woodland and are managing it for firewood supply.

I thought I would look at this a bit closer as a few recent visits have found that some of you were having difficulty with seasoning. This may be interesting for all of you as this applies to firewood logs as well. Here is a rough summary of issues surrounding firewood production and storage.

Any firewood in lengths or logged should always be raised off the ground. If not the contact with the ground draws moisture up through the pile. This can lead to moulds and fungi affecting the wood. When moulds etc. get in to the wood they draw in moisture from natural air humidity and therefore your wood will fail to season. Mould and fungi always affect the quality of the wood as they break it down, so again you will lose the full potential of the wood as a fuel.

Example: During a visit we looked at some wood that was felled two years ago but left lying in piles on the ground in a shady part of the woodland. The wood was then cut and chopped and placed in a woodstore for 4 months but had moulds and fungi forming. The average moisture came in at 52%, about the same as when they would have been felled.

Attempt to cut and chop your cordwood as soon as possible after delivery or felling and stack in a well ventilated store, preferably in a sunny aspect (not SW facing). As suggested before, the best diameter is 100 – 120mm or 4 -

4.75 inches. This will help the logs to season evenly and quickly but also mean that the logs will burn better. See http://www.lightfoot.org.uk/page/Wood_Stores/ for more info on designs or where to get them.



One KTAT Trustee's low-cost wood drying shed made from (mostly) recycled materials.

Example: I have recently found that after cutting and chopping the logs some people tend to store more casually in an unventilated store prior to bringing the logs to the purpose-made woodstore. Unfortunately, the logs in this first store, I found were not seasoning adequately, so even after two years they remained at 33% moisture content.

If you are unable to cut and chop your logs then look at stacking off the ground as mentioned. Furthermore, look at a well ventilated and sunny site on your woodland/land that is not exposed too much to the prevailing South Westerly weather. The ideal system would allow for a covered area like a barn open at two ends to aerate. Never completely cover the wood with a tarp. It will serve to trap the moisture that is escaping from the wood and will rot the wood rather than dry it. The moisture must be allowed to escape the pile.

Anyone interested in Lightfoot's Stove Project should contact them via the website: www.lightfoot.org.uk/page/wood_stove_project/

10 Tips on Running a Woodfuel Stove

Staying with Lightfoot Energy Service's Stove project, here are their 10 top tips on running a woodfuel stove. As many Knighton Tree Allotments Trust members use wood for at least some of their heating we thought that this was good advice on burning this precious resource as efficiently as possible.

1. Burn only seasoned wood - This is wood that has been cut, split to 100-120mm (4 - 4.75") diameter and stacked appropriately to dry to less than 25% moisture content. Burning wet wood will produce tar deposits and will not give an efficient heat output and can lead to chimney fires. Also try to have some logs stored in the house prior to burning; this will help as the logs will be drier again.

2. Store your wood correctly and use a moisture meter - Wherever possible, store your wood in a well ventilated purpose made woodstore and position it on a South to South East facing wall. This will ensure your wood seasons much better than in a shed. A moisture meter can be used to test how dry your wood is when purchasing or before burning.

3. When lighting your stove:

- **Be prepared** Always have a store of dry kindling and newspaper available near your stove (softwood such as pine or spruce is good for this).

- **Light at the base** of the fire and open all air vents and reduce the air accordingly as the wood starts to combust until finally the stove is up to its running temperature (see manufacturer's guidance).



4. Use a stove thermometer – most stoves need to be burning at a certain temperature to burn the fuel efficiently (e.g. a Clearview stove needs to burn at 260 degrees centigrade / 500 degrees Fahrenheit). Thermometers are relatively cheap and a useful guide to efficient wood burning. A good test is that there should be no visible smoke coming from the chimney when running properly.

5. **Do not slumber burn** – there should generally be visible flames in the firebox – the firebox should look clean with white-ish fire-brick and the glass on most stoves should be clear. The main reasons for this not happening are that your wood is not dry enough or the fire is not up to the right temperature before closing down the air flow.
6. **Firewood burns best on a bed of ash** - Never clean out your stove completely of ash, instead just remove the ash box below and empty that only.
7. **Understand your stove** - Find out how your air vent controls work. If you haven't got an operating manual for your stove they can often be found online.
8. **Do not overfill your stove with logs** - And make sure there is good spacing between the logs; this will help to burn the logs consistently and get more energy from the combustion.
9. **Overnight burning** - This can be more difficult than it seems. It is best achieved by fully loading the stove with well seasoned wood until the load is well alight then close down but leave the secondary air vent open about 8-10mm. However, most advice suggests that it is best to avoid as it may well lead to tarring of the flue and may result in your flue needing to be replaced. The best answer is to experiment - every situation, stove, and flue is different - but remain cautious. Always have a good supply of kindling at hand in the morning to relight.
10. **Chimney / Flue Maintenance** - Have your flue swept at least once a year, if you use your stove daily then twice a year would be advisable. The efficiency of the stove is dependent on effective draw so it must be clear of deposits. It will also prevent a build up of deposits that may lead to a chimney fire.

For further information about these tips please check out the dedicated webpages at:

http://www.lightfoot.org.uk/page/wood_stove_project/

For further information about advice on energy savings, or how you may contribute, contact Lightfoot Energy Services at:

Web: www.lightfoot.org.uk **Tel:** 01588 630683

We're Making Progress at Weir Cottage...

We are managing Weir cottage wood in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and have already been busy.



The owner, Marie Hall, has signed a ten year agreement attached to a management plan and seems to be happy to give us a fairly free reign. John Clayfield, a local naturalist, came and did a flora survey with us in July and we identified more than 50 species of plants and shrubs and 11 species of trees! We hope to do other surveys and repeat them at regular intervals to monitor the impact of our management.

We started by putting a path into the woodland to improve access for Marie and family and ourselves so we can work in the wood with minimum impact. This involved building a number of steps as you can see from the photos of our hard working volunteers. As we go to press we haven't finished the path but one of our members has taken down a few trees - 8 in all, mostly dead elm. We hope to have a day



finishing off the path and processing the wood in the spring.

We are trying to set up a model tree allotment at this site to demonstrate how we wish to manage our woodlands. We will use the woodland and any funding we get to increase our experience, skills and knowledge. We have spoken to and are hoping to work with the Parish Council on how we can be part of a sustainable way forward for the Parish. The Llanfair Waterdine Parish Charities Trust is keen to work with us. Their remit is to promote the education of the youngsters in the Parish so we hope to run some woodland courses together.

If you become a member you can join in our work parties there. It is only 1 mile from Knighton!



What is the Knighton Tree Allotments Trust?

(continued from back cover)

2. Become a Member. When you become a member you get a say in how the Trust is run; you can help decide policies that guide how we operate. You'll also become part of an active community of like-minded people who share our values. And that's not all. You can attend members' meetings, such as our AGM, where you can raise issues that are important to you and find out more about how the Trust is doing. Plus, you can vote for someone to represent your views as a Trustee. And if you fancy it, you can even stand for election yourself as a Trustee – it's a great chance to represent your fellow members. Membership costs just £10 a year.

3. Become a Working Member. Once you are a Member (see above) you might like to

consider becoming a Working Member and contributing to the varied work that enables the Trust to run. The volunteer hours contributed on qualifying activities will be logged and in exchange you will be able to get a proportion of free woodland products and/or reduced prices. The qualifying activities that you can contribute to range from administrative work, to leading flora and fauna surveys or practical woodland management.

4. Become a Friend of Knighton Tree Allotments Trust. If you support our aims but are perhaps too far away to play an active role then you can become a Friend of the Trust. In return for your donation you will receive regular updates on the Trust's work and be invited to our Open Days and events.

For more information about KTAT, or to enquire about becoming a member, please fill in the slip on the back cover, see our website: www.tveg.org.uk/wordpress/what-we-do/woodland-project, or ring our Secretary on 01547 520929.

This set of pictures is the response from one of our volunteers to a workday at Greenstreete Larches!



USA VS. RUSSIA



USA VS. JULIE-ANN

What is the Knighton Tree Allotments Trust?

Knighton Tree Allotments Trust manages woodlands to allow its members access to affordable woodland products such as firewood and timber. In coming together and sharing and learning woodland skills we aim to manage woodland sustainably and for the benefit of wildlife as well as our members.

In sustainably growing firewood and other woodland products we can meet some of our fuel and food needs as well as reducing our carbon footprints. At the same time we are joining co-operatively with other local people to enjoy, conserve and enrich our local environment.

It is a common misconception that unmanaged woodland is best for wildlife. In fact, by managing the woodland through traditional practices such as coppicing, we increase the variety of habitats and increase the richness of wildlife. In ensuring that the trees that we fell for fuel or timber are replaced with new plants,

we are creating a sustainable supply of woodland products.

There are four different ways in which you can support the Knighton Tree Allotments Trust:

1. Volunteer. We are always looking for people who would like to learn about woodland management and ecology. Volunteering with those who are as passionate about a cause as you are is a great way to meet like-minded people. You can get plenty of fresh air and exercise and learn new skills. We need help with administrative tasks and hands-on woodland management as well as regular flora and fauna surveys - ranging from simple 'walk over' surveys to more detailed plant, bird, invertebrate, bat, butterfly and moth surveys. If you are interested in also receiving woodland products from the Trust, such as logs and timber, then you could become a Working Member.

Continued inside back cover...

For more information about KTAT, or to enquire about becoming a member, please fill in this slip and post it to: 6 Church St, Knighton, LD7 1AG. Alternatively, please see our website: www.tveg.org.uk/wordpress/what-we-do/woodland-project, or ring our Secretary on 01547 520929.

Name: _____ Telephone number: _____

Address: _____

_____ Email address: _____

(please note that we prefer to communicate via email where possible).



Knighton Tree Allotments Trust is supported by Environment Wales, Keep Wales Tidy and Shropshire Hills AONB. KTAT is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee (Company No 7416851) established for the benefit of local people in and around Knighton and the upper Teme Valley. Registered Office: 6 Church St., Knighton, Powys, LD7 1AG.