



Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on Training

11 May 2009

In association with



The importance of skills in association with Lantra

Lantra Sector Skills Council aims to help businesses and individuals in 17 environmental and land-based industries, including environmental conservation, operate at world-class levels.

Businesses in these industries make a significant contribution to resolving global issues, such as climate change, energy security and food security. To do this effectively, they require skilled and motivated workers. Lantra helps the sector's 217,000 businesses, 1.1 million employees and half million volunteers improve their performance by working to maximise investment in high quality skills and business development.

Managing national and regional projects, Lantra enables businesses to access funding and support. For example, Women and Work aims to raise recruitment levels in environmental conservation, amongst other industries, where women are under-represented; increasing learning potential and aiding career progression through the identification of skill needs and provision of training grants.

To ensure workers have the right skills, Lantra works with industry to develop National Occupational Standards. These then form the units of learning which are brought together to form vocational qualifications, such as Diplomas, SVQs, awards and certificates. New uninitiated qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland are also being developed so people can choose a more flexible approach to learning that meets the skills, knowledge and understanding individuals need to carry out their work role. Lantra works with industry to regularly review these so they continue to reflect today's ever changing technology and modern practices.

Lantra developed the Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies in partnership with four other Sector Skills Councils and industry. Diplomas will help businesses reduce recruitment, training costs and staff turnover, as young people coming into the workforce will have a higher level of skills.

Lantra provides products and services which support skills and business development. Skills Manager is a on-line tool enabling employers to manage staff more effectively, by recognising and assessing employees training needs.

Once skills gaps have been identified, businesses can search for thousands of courses on www.lantracoursefinder.co.uk, and in Scotland www.lantraonestopshop.co.uk, to find the right training in the most convenient location.

Lantra also works to influence government policies and shape public investment in skills and business development. Sector specific research is published through the evaluation of workforce numbers, industry demographics and the assessment of current training provision. Lantra's research team also supports investigations into specific skills or workforce problems as identified by industry so targeted solutions can be sought.

To find out more about Lantra and how it can help you, visit www.lantra.co.uk or contact connect@lantra.co.uk.

Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry, Warwickshire CV8 2LG

0845 707 8007

connect@lantra.co.uk

www.lantra.co.uk

So you want a career change?

The increase in redundancies due to the current economic downturn is leading many people to take the opportunity to change careers. For those of you who are thinking of moving into countryside management and don't know what employers are looking for, here is a guide to boosting your rating against a typical person specification. Most organisations shortlist and appoint by assessing how well candidates meet the criteria contained in the person specification - so make sure you read it carefully. You might be surprised how valuable some experiences picked up in a completely different discipline may be. Criteria classed as "essential" are just that - but frequently allow a little room for interpretation. Provided you meet all the essential criteria, scoring well against those classed as "desirable" might just make the difference between you securing an interview or not.

Qualifications and training In recent years, employers have shifted away from an over-reliance on qualifications and some adopt a very liberal interpretation of what is relevant. Rushing off and doing a degree would not be top of my list for a career change – although it might come to that if you are weak in other areas

or the organisation you want to work for absolutely insists on it. Having a decent array of training under your belt is always valuable. You may already have some of these in your cupboard from previous careers but it's well worth forking out to secure the basic qualifications such as off-road driving, chain saw, brush cutter and first-aid.

Experience There may be some experiences that you will struggle to demonstrate, however, some others are very transferable such as supervision, managing budgets, dealing with human resource issues, project management, dealing with conflict situations, developing partnerships or dealing with the media. If you do decide to do some volunteering, don't concentrate solely on hedge-laying, coppicing and scrub bashing. They are good experiences to have but the other fifty candidates will have them too. Don't underestimate the value of other "non-countryside" experiences that you have to offer. One of the key weaknesses I often find with candidates who have only ever worked in countryside management at a basic level is their lack of experience at having to deal with difficult people and conflict situations. Often this is something that people making a career change can demonstrate to their advantage.

Skills and abilities Again, there may be some industry-specific skills that you will not be able to demonstrate but there will be others that are eminently transferable such as ICT, report writing, presentation skills, leadership, problem solving, negotiation skills, team working and time management. ICT and presentation skills are certainly worth improving if you are weak in this area – not least for completing the application form and, hopefully, preparing for an interview.

Application For goodness sake read the application pack, job description and person specification and complete the application form legibly! I still can't believe how many applications I receive that I can't read or where the candidate has not show how they meet the person specification. By all means set out the section where you are asked to outline your experiences as a number of headings based on the person specification criteria rather than a rambling chronology. Your gap year in Australia is of some interest but don't overdo it. It isn't a silver bullet that will kill off all the other candidates. Finally, don't assume that the reader knows exactly what the job of a plumber, police officer, barrister or director of HSBC entails. You need to spell out your experiences in their component parts.

Interview Please, please, please find out about the job and the organisation before-hand! Don't ask what the job entails at the interview – you should have already found out. By all means arrange a visit or at least a phone call to familiarise yourself with the key facts. There's no need to be secretive either. Most employers will see this as a positive feature of your application. During the interview give equal weighting to your previous experiences provided they're relevant – not just your countryside ones. A varied background is very appealing to many employers – particularly where you can demonstrate skills and experiences where many candidates are weaker eg project, people and performance management.

And finally... I've got some great people who work with me including ex firemen, lecturers, chocolate makers, IT consultants, administrators, surveyors, police officers and so on. Many of the skills and experiences they have brought to Worcestershire County Council they wouldn't have picked up from a straight countryside management career. When applying for a new job just remember to relate what you have to offer to the person specification and focus on improving your qualifications, training and experiences in key areas that really make a difference to perspective employers – don't just assume we're looking for someone who can dig a nice hole.

Andy Maginnis, Countryside Manager, Worcestershire County Council

Professional Bodies and other relevant organisations offering professional training:



For developing your knowledge of good practice and contacts why not join the **Countryside Management Association**.

We offer a range of free study days for members along with our magazine and e-group. We also offer a continual performance development framework with mentor support to help you along your developmental path. Please see our website for more details of what we do and how to join,

<http://countryside-management.org.uk> or contact us via
Writtle College 01245 424116 cma@writtle.ac.uk

The British Naturalists Association, founded in 1905, is run entirely by Volunteers. At National Conference volunteers learn about wildlife from leading Experts by attending numerous Field Workshops. Throughout the year BNA Branches have workshops and talks which they can attend. Specific Voluntary roles can be seen at www.bna-naturalists.org

Career Support and Guidance

For careers information and support, visit www.adultdirectionsonline.co.uk You can view information on a range of careers including Conservation Manager and Environmental Conservation Officer. These offer details on Further Study, Entry Routes and Training. For careers and skills matching visit www.cascaid.co.uk, email enquiry@cascaid.co.uk or ring 01509 226875.

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust is a leading wildlife research charity providing practical, science based training on game, fisheries, wildlife management and species recovery. The Trust's research is included in agri-environment schemes and training leading to a BASIS Certificate in farmland conservation management can be achieved. 01425 651013 or email: lferguson@gct.org.uk

Countryside Training on the Edge



Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust have recently recruited four trainee Countryside Rangers as part of a 3-year £1.8million HLF-funded project designed to rejuvenate Berry Head National Nature Reserve in Brixham, Devon and the way the people experience it.

The Berry Head On the Edge project includes work to improve the heritage and built-environment, increase biodiversity and extend public engagement.

Working alongside a Trainee Supervisor and other members of staff on site, the Trainee Countryside Rangers will gain a variety of worked-based experiences during their 12 months. They will experience practical habitat and estate management skills, botanical and wildlife surveying, working with volunteers and assisting with educational activities and school groups.

On the heritage front, the trainees will be involved with the restoration of the Napoleonic forts – the site has some of the best preserved forts in the country - and learn stone masonry skills, such as repointing, from experts.

The trainees will work towards gaining an NVQ Level 2 in Environmental Conservation and an ECDL qualification. They also have a training allowance to spend on vocational courses, such as First Aid and Brush Cutter certificates. However, the main benefit for them will be their increased knowledge in the management of conservation sites and their work experiences, which will make them more attractive to prospective employers in the future.

Gemma Parsons is the new Trainee Supervisor appointed for the project and was herself a trainee with the Trust several years ago. She says that the competition for jobs in the conservation sector is tough at present and the majority of employers are looking for candidates with a good level of knowledge and experience. Full time volunteering is a great way to gain the experience and this programme has the added benefit of a training bursary of £125 a week to help the trainees with living expenses.

South Devon College is the training provider for the scheme for the NVQ qualification. This merges in with their existing apprenticeship scheme. Being able to be part of this established college framework was very cost-effective for Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust and this allowed the trainee programme to be extended by three months for each trainee cohort. It also means that the trainees are registered as students with the college, allowing them to access college facilities and other additional benefits.

The trainee Countryside Ranger scheme is open to people of all ages and backgrounds and the initial applicants ranged from people who needed practical experience to back up theoretical knowledge to those who wanted a complete career change or those who were just leaving school. The key qualities that the Trust looks for in trainees is a passion for wildlife and the heritage conservation sector and a real desire to pursue a career in this field.

Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust believe that the additional pairs of hands provided by the trainees out on site will be invaluable in delivering the On the Edge project objectives - the rejuvenation of the Berry Head National Nature Reserve. The new ideas, views and experiences of the trainees will also serve to enrich the existing team and provide a dynamic force for the future of the site.

To find out more contact Gemma Parsons at Berry Head National Nature Reserve on 01803 882619. Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust.



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Apprenticeships and Funded Training:

LandSkills NE

70% funded training for forestry skills to eligible people in the NE. NPTC Chainsaw Units, basic to advanced. Mock FMO assessments, preparing you and your machine for entering the Forest Machine Operators Certification Scheme. For more information www.northwoods.org.uk/training or contact John Farquhar, john@northwoods.org.uk, 01670 790 444

LANTRA – Women and Work - £450 Funding Available

This project has been designed to encourage the development and career aspirations of women in the environmental sector. The funding is aimed at women 19 plus in England to carry out any training activities to support their personal development plan. Contact Lantra@angelakimberley.co.uk for more information.

Under funding received from the European Social Fund **Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland** are in the position to offer their volunteers free training to aid them in their search for employment. From full NVQ'S to short courses such as chainsaw training, this is an opportunity not to be missed.

Contact G.Thompson@btcv.org.uk

Yorwoods can provide up to 70% funding for training courses for the Forestry and Woodlands sector in the Yorkshire & Humber region. If you work in a business, organisation or social enterprise dependant on forestry or woodland products, you could be eligible. Contact carrick@yorwoods.org.uk for more details



Getting into Ecological Consultancy

If you think you want to become an ecological consultant, what qualifications and skills do you need to have? Ideally you will need a relevant degree (e.g. biology, ecology or environmental science) and preferably an MSc or other higher level qualification. In this competitive field however, academic qualifications alone are rarely enough and you need to have some other experience and skills. You definitely need good computing skills and the

ability to write clear reports, often to tight deadlines, but the skill most often lacking in prospective employees is field survey skills. It would be great if degree courses put more emphasis on field survey skills, but few do. Most consultancies help to train up staff, but to personally improve your skills and employment prospects there are quite a few actions you can take. My consultancy, Direct Ecology Ltd (www.directecology.co.uk), specialises in protected species survey and mitigation work. This includes surveys for species or groups including bats, otters, badgers, birds, red squirrels and pine marten prior to a development taking place; plus recommending and implementing appropriate mitigation where necessary. Projects are wide ranging and include housing, industry, rail, hydro schemes, power lines and wind farms. I would be hoping for prospective employees to have some previous experience of surveying with one or more of these groups or species. There are a number of ways that you could begin to obtain this expertise, and a few examples are listed here. Being familiar with the background ecology of the species will also help with both surveying and report writing.

Learning to be a good ecological surveyor isn't something that can be achieved in a few days; it can take quite a few years to become fully competent with a range of species in different environments. Here are some of the things you could do to either get you started and to help improve your skills and knowledge.

- For bats, you could: join your local bat group http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/local_bat_groups.html; take part in the national bat monitoring programme <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/nbmp.html>; or attend a training course run by the Bat Conservation Trust

http://www.bats.org.uk/data/files/publications/509/BCT_Training_brochure_2009.pdf

- For other species, take part in any national or local surveys. For example, Scottish Badgers (www.scottishbadgers.org.uk) recently organised a Scottish Badger Distribution Survey and volunteers were given appropriate training before taking on a 1km square to survey. The Mammal Society runs quite a number of training courses <http://abdn.ac.uk/mammal/workshops.shtml>. The Field Studies Council (FSC) <http://www.field-studies-council.org/> also run a number of good courses. The University of Birmingham runs a University Certificate in Biological Recording and Species Identification <http://www.biosciences.bham.ac.uk/study/prodev/BiologRec/ucert.htm>, which includes attendance on a number of FSC courses.

- Becoming a member of the Institute of Ecology and Environment (IEEM) is also a good idea if you want to get into consultancy. They run quite a number of training courses, many on protected species <http://www.ieem.net/workshops.asp>.

For me, what makes a prospective candidate stand out is if they have put in the time and effort to do voluntary work and surveys, showing a clear enthusiasm for ecology and wildlife above and beyond any academic qualifications they might have.


Contact Details: Beccy Osborn, Director/Principal Ecologist, Direct Ecology Ltd
beccy.osborn@directecology.co.uk www.directecology.co.uk



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Providers of Short Courses (1-10 days in length):

Biocensus Training Professional Development Courses in Ecology.



We offer a selection of intensive one day courses led by experienced professional consultants who are experts in their field. The courses are suitable for professional ecologists, conservation workers, interested amateurs and those seeking employment in the environmental sector. Subjects covered include wildlife legislation, protected species, field identification skills, ecological surveying and management techniques. The courses involve a blend of classroom and practical sessions in a relaxed and interactive atmosphere, where discussion between trainees and tutors is actively encouraged. Further details are available at www.biocensus.co.uk, or contact us at enquiries@biocensus.co.uk or call 01453 790643.

Bishops Wood Environmental Education Centre
 Our new programme of training courses for 2009/10 is now available. For more information please contact Liz Branford on 01299 250513 or go to www.bishopswoodcentre.org.uk

HGBS Master Classes for Horticulturists: Veteran Trees Management, Taxonomy, Management Skills and more. One day practical training courses looking at a broad range of horticultural skills needed in the historic garden context. See the Historic & Botanic Garden Bursary Scheme website for more details and an application form: www.hgbgs.org.uk


Free moth training courses across the UK.
 There are 2 types of events: Public moth trapping events and training workshops covering a variety of moth-related topics. For list please see the Moths Count (National Moth Recording Scheme) website www.mothscount.org. Details and booking from nmrs@butterfly-conservation.org or 01929 406009.

Brighton Permaculture Trust promotes greener lifestyles and sustainable development through design. It raises awareness and facilitates learning in supportive environments. We run a range of events and courses, from an introduction to permaculture to an advanced diploma course and specific courses/events on green architecture, gardening and fruit growing. <http://www.brightonpermaculture.co.uk>

Denmark Farm - Low Cost Conservation Training
 We are a long standing farmland restoration project in mid Wales offering field skills, species identification and habitat restoration courses. We combine our own low cost courses with subsidised training in partnership with the University of Aberystwyth. Contact 01570 493358 or <http://www.shared-earth-trust.org.uk/en/train.htm>

Promoting environmental awareness through education & training

WILDWISE



WildWise offer an exciting programme of cutting edge training courses to develop skills and resources and to inspire professionals working in the field of outdoor and environmental education, e.g. teachers, rangers, youth workers etc. 2009 courses include Fire-by-Friction, Emotional Literacy, Environmental Storytelling and Muir Trek Leadership Training. 01803 868269, www.wildwise.co.uk

British Deer Society (BDS): Lantra Deer Management Customised Award
 This 5 day British Deer Society Course focuses on deer management for industry decision makers. Subjects covered include: population census, cull planning, economics and forestry issues. Passing a course examination will give students a Lantra Certificate in Deer Management. Details 01425 655434 or www.bds.org.uk

Pass the DSA B+E test - 01625 433251 with Towing Solutions Limited
 The practical trailer driving course will bring you up to standard so you can pass the additional category B+E car & trailer DSA driving test. You will receive individual tuition in all the exercises and disciplines required to pass the test successfully. www.towing-solutions.co.uk

Losehill Hall is one of Europe's leading countryside and environmental training providers. Run by the Peak District National Park Authority, Losehill offers residential courses in the heart of the Peak District and tailor-made training at your workplace. For more details visit www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/training or email training.losehill@peakdistrict.gov.uk

Sylvan Environmental Enterprises Limited
 "SEE the wood through the trees"



"Working horses in forests and woodlands" Training in the use of horses as a method of low-impact timber extraction. 2 or 5 day courses available in Kent / Sussex learning the basic handling skills and safe working practice of working a horse to timber. For more information and course bookings, contact: Frankie Woodgate 01233 850418 frankie@sylvanenvironmental.com

Acorn Ecology runs field based courses that are led by practicing ecologists. Our short courses cover a range of ecological survey techniques and are open to anybody who feels that they lack the necessary field skills to succeed in an ecological job. For more information and on-line booking visit www.acornecology.co.uk

The Kingcombe Centre in rural West Dorset lies at the heart of a nationally acclaimed nature reserve, often referred to as 'the farm that time forgot'. We offer a variety of short courses on flora, fauna, ecology, environmental and conservation topics. Full details at www.kingcombecentre.org.uk, 01300 320684.

Capture your very own carbon.
 Courses in green woodwork and chairmaking over 3,6 or 9 days, held in a woodland workshop in Herefordshire with Mike Abbott, author of Green Woodwork and Living Wood. www.living-wood.co.uk 01531 640005

Suffolk Wildlife Trust invites you to explore the wealth of wildlife in the county. Wildlearning adult courses are supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund to help develop your skills and be inspired by the natural world. For a full course list go to www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org, call 01473 892430 or email wildlearning@suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Environmental education activities and events for all ages and abilities. **Career development courses** in protected species litigation such as water vole, badger, bat and barn owl ecology. Plus many more general interest courses. www.lincstrust.org.uk

Cotswold Woodland Crafts offers weekend courses in Green Woodworking. Learn traditional woodworking skills in a woodland setting and become an expert with an axe, froe, drawknife and pole-lathe. Visit our website for information on courses, demonstrations and services www.CotswoldWoodlandCrafts.co.uk

Outdoor First Aid for Outdoor Professionals.
 Nationally Recognised QCA qualification in Outdoor First Aid delivered by experienced, competent and friendly training team. Group courses and open dates available. See www.adventurefirstaid.co.uk for details

Environmental Conservation Workshop - 'What Will It Take? A Deeper Approach to Nature Conservation' If you care about nature and the environment - and if you want to help make a difference - this workshop will interest you. The workshop is free-of-charge. For details please phone Jonathan on 07906 697226 or 01273 748405.

Environment Skills Training based in Mid Wales, offers training courses in Chainsaws, Brushcutters, Quad Bikes, 1st Aid and Manual Handling to name but a few. If you have a suitable venue we will be happy to run the course on your site. Please visit our website www.environmentalskills.co.uk or telephone on Free Phone 0800 118 55 11.

C-N-Do Scotland: Navigation Award scheme, Walking Group Leader training / assessment, and Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme available on various dates throughout year and arranged to order. Delivered in a quality, safe, fun and sensitive fashion. Contact: admin@cndoscotland.com or 01786 445 703 or look at www.cndoscotland.com/pages/dates-and-prices/courses.shtml. Can be operated near you.

Lower Turley Farm Making traditional longbows in yew. 3 day courses by mutual arrangement. mwhiteman@ukonline.co.uk 01884 32234



Woodcraft School

We offer the only professional Level 3 NCFE Certificate in Bushcraft Leadership which starts in September '09 for 10 months. Interviewing May & July for 2009/10 instructor places. Many other shorter professional bushcraft and general interest courses are available in West Sussex. Please see website www.woodcraftschool.co.uk or call 01730 816299.

The Barn Owl Trust is a small national charity committed to conserving wild Barn Owls and their habitat. It provides one-day courses, Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys & Signs, at which attendees learn the essential skills and knowledge required to conduct Barn Owl surveys and compose appropriate mitigation strategies. Contact info@barnowltrust.org.uk

BTCV Scotland continue to offer high quality traditional environmental skills courses including Brushcutters & Trimmers (LANTRA), First Aid and Health & Safety. For more information call Helen Paul on 01786 479697 or email h.paul@btcv.org.uk or visit www.btcv.org.uk/shop

Kensey Training Short course training across Devon and Cornwall including Chainsaws, Brushcutters, Woodchippers, Knapsack Pesticides, Rural Crafts, Hedgelaying, Stone Walling, First Aid, Manual Handling and much more. Discounts available. Call for more info or see our website www.kenseytraining.co.uk

Assington Mill in Suffolk, offers short courses on many countryside crafts, at an introductory level. Topics covered include garden machinery maintenance, hedgerow basketry, hedgelaying, willow for the garden, coracle making, food for free, strawbale building, woodcarving & letter-cutting, cane & rush chair seating, badgers, fruit tree pruning and coppicing. 01787 229955 www.assingtonmill.com

Short Courses at Shuttleworth College

Pesticide Application - NPTC Units PA1, PA2 & PA6. Agricultural Machinery - Tractor Driving; Forklift; Abrasive Wheels; All Terrain Vehicles. Chainsaws & Related Operations – NPTC including CS30, CS31, CS32, CS38, CS39; Lantra including Chainsaw Maintenance & Crosscutting; Basic Felling Techniques; Stump Grinders; Wood Chippers; Strimmer & Brushcutters. www.shuttleworth.ac.uk 01767 626222 Maree.lloyd@shuttleworth.ac.uk

Weekend Dry Stone Walling courses are available throughout the spring, summer and autumn. Learn from very experienced and highly qualified wallers the art of Dry Stone Walling in the Derbyshire Dales at the National Stone Centre. More details on our website www.nationalstonecentre.org.uk. or phone 01629 824833.

Woodland Crafts and Green Woodwork with Dragonfly Creations. We run a variety of short courses, demonstrations and bespoke environmental wood and craft projects for individuals, groups or organisations. www.dragonflycreations.co.uk For further information contact Scott 07725894591 scott@dragonflycreations.co.uk

Don't look away, please read on ...

Mention risk assessment and within a couple of minutes you can see people's eyes glaze over as your audience start desperately looking for ways of changing the subject or start thinking about what's for dinner that evening!

However people working in the countryside have a high rate of fatal and major injury which is 60 times higher than the national average. Statistically, forestry workers have the highest number of fatalities and the highest number of serious and major injuries. Some 11% of agriculture fatalities are tree work related. Falls are the second highest cause of death in agriculture – every year at least eight people die falling from a height. Those who survive suffer broken bones and worse. Falls often happen from roofs, lofts, ladders, vehicles, bale stacks, and unsuitable access.

Most injuries can be avoided. Having a robust risk assessment process in place can make all the difference. Recently a colleague of mine was delivering a Chainsaw training course in a very remote area within Lancashire when a delegate collapsed. A routine risk assessment had been completed and therefore details of the person's next of kin, grid reference for the site and nearest A&E hospital had been recorded. This was invaluable as the tutor was able to give the air ambulance the exact location from the grid reference, contact the next of kin and advise them of the situation and also the details of the hospital the person would be taken to. The completion of a 5 minutes risk assessment without a doubt saved the day.

So what is required.....? A HSE myth is that the risk assessment needs to be a mountain of complex paperwork with procedures and processes documented.

In reality the most effective risk assessments are usually 1 page and are focused on the real potential risks and hazards plus some emergency information, so in the unfortunate event of an accident immediate action can be taken. Risk assessments can even be verbal as long as you can be sure that all involved have a good and common understanding of the potential dangers.

However to comply with legislation requirements i.e. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, people must be equipped with the skills to be able to carry out risk assessments.

In other words, although the risk assessment can be a simple document you need to ensure that the person responsible for completion of the risk assessment has had training and is therefore a "competent person".

This can easily be achieved with a ½ day training course which is suitable for anyone who is responsible for risk assessment and managing the day to day operation of projects. This is particularly relevant to those who

work in changing environments, work with machinery or those who complete manual tasks. So realistically this criteria probably applies to anyone who works in the countryside.

Arrangements can also be made to extend the training to cover site visits to help you identify specific risks within your work place and also develop a robust risk assessment. The training carries an HSE recognised certificate and satisfies the proof of competency.

The statistics speak for themselves and the 4hrs invested in training and 5 minutes routine risk assessment each day can without doubt help to drastically reduce the fatalities and serious injuries in our industry. Robust risk assessment can save your life!

If you would like any more advice on risk assessment or any other health and safety training please visit us at www.millhousetraining.co.uk

millhouse 



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Bespoke and tailored training providers and specialists:

A M Lane Ltd (Trees & Safety) We offer a wide range of tree related courses for organisations to include; tree surveying and inspection, tree & woodland management, tree risk assessment, trees and development, tree planting, trees and the law. Courses include the LANTRA Basic Tree Inspection course as well as a wide range of bespoke courses.
lanerowe@aol.com 01884 840386

Earthed are artists and builders specialising in cob, roundpole timber framing, lime, and stonework. Our educational workshops provide hands on learning experiences which enable people to access their own creativity and bring about positive change in their own lives, communities and environment. Please visit www.earthedworld.co.uk for more info or mob: 07917361580.

Southern First Aid Supplies have the ability and expertise to train your staff in varying aspects of First Aid. As qualified First Aiders your staff will possess the skills to deal with any situation, from minor slips and trips to serious incidents. For more information on training, please go to our website. www.s-f-a-s.co.uk

D2E TRAINING

Down 2 Earth Training can offer you these services to work with your organisation in its training and development delivery.

- Customised training for staff on or off site
- One or two day workshops – examples include Using Psychology to Get Ahead, an Introduction to Project Management and Planning, Communication Skills, Stress and Time Management
- Assistance planning, running and delivering training events, or Training the Trainer
- Identification of training needs and how to meet them
- Organisation of conferences, study tours and away days

Down 2 Earth Training has recently been set up by Janice Burley, a qualified and experienced trainer and facilitator. (MSc, PGCE (FE), BSc (Hons), Losehill Hall, Community Spaces, CMA, for example)
Telephone: Janice Burley on 01629 583913
Email: Janice.d2e@googlemail.com

Based in the Midlands, Train-a-Lift Ltd provides the highest standard of excellence in fork lift training and other mechanical handling equipment safety training. We now operate a large independent Fork Lift Training Centre and offer both operator and instructor courses. Other courses can be held nationally on customers premises. www.train-a-lift.co.uk 02476 469027

Bison Bushcraft are an eleven year established school offering training in bushcraft, wilderness survival skills and crafts. We also offer a complete outfitting service for your back country adventures. 0845 8387062 www.bisonbushcraft.co.uk

Naturewise Interested in learning more about Permaculture, Forest Gardens and Food Growing? You are welcome to volunteer at our forest garden and permaculture allotment in North London, or join one of the many courses. londoncourses@naturewise.org.uk

Flora Locale workshops offer an opportunity to learn practical conservation in the design, management and restoration of landscapes and biodiversity from experienced conservationists and include an opportunity to see projects "on the ground". Further details and fees are available from our website at www.floralocale.org; email info@floralocale.org or phone 01672 515723

Training in Arboriculture and Forestry. Tony Darbyshire Training for all your chainsaw related qualifications, I can help you gain nationally recognised certificates in chainsaw use, with over 20 years experience of Arboricultural training. I can organise a site, deliver the training and organise the assessment and relevant registration. More details at www.sawpod.co.uk

Professional development training with Countryside Management Services (UK) Ltd. Courses this year: Community consultation, Visitor surveys, Interpreting environmental heritage, Managing broadleaved woodland, Tree identification, Project management. Acorn to Oak training courses originally established in partnership with BTCV Durham in 2000 www.cms-ne.co.uk for more details

Wildlife photography training by professionally qualified photographer. Make your pictures stand out from the rest. Group and individual tuition available. chas@spradbery.com 07801 067457



Coleg Powys provides a wide range of educational opportunities for the whole community, which includes hundreds of courses from a wide spectrum of areas. There are full-time and part-time courses, with flexibility built in to meet

individual needs. For further information visit our website at www.coleg-powys.ac.uk or telephone 0845 4086200.

Somerset Environmental Record Centre

Ecological training and experience for graduates seeking a career in the environmental sector. This training scheme is recognised as providing the relevant experience employers require. Success rate in getting trainees into paid jobs in ecology and conservation nearly 100%. Key skills provided in botanical survey, GIS mapping and habitat assessment
info@somerc.com 01823 664450

Traditional Woodcraft Training at our country workshop within the grounds of Beamish Museum, Co. Durham. Courses include Green Woodworking - An introduction, Bowl Carving, Spoon Carving / Bowl Turning, Tool Sharpening, Build Your Own Pole Lathe. See website for further details
http://mpwoodsmith.co.uk/woodcraft_training.html

Whether you are looking to find a **woodland-related training course**, want to go to a woodland event, looking for volunteering opportunities, or just want to get more involved in your local woodland, the Coed Lleol website will give you the information and contacts relevant to Wales. www.coedlleol.org.uk

Hazel Hill is a 70 acre conservation woodland and retreat centre near Salisbury. It has some important wildlife habitat, and offers a range of programmes including wilderness skills. We need additional volunteers to help with conservation, and have some scope to pay professionals for these weekends.
data@workingvision.com 07976 602787

Hands on Environmental Education specialises in providing education programmes and environmental awareness activities. With over 15 years experience the company is happy to provide training days such as Techniques for group work, Environmental activities, Session planning and Building education programmes. For further information contact Elspeth English on 01324 825942, Elspeth@englishe.freeserve.co.uk

International Centre for Birds of Prey as well as being open to the public runs various courses for people interested in just an experience with birds of prey, or wanting to get more involved. Just browse through the website www.icbp.org for all the information you will need, or phone us on 01531 820286

Trackways is a Wilderness Survival School, teaching a wide range of skills: Wild craft Survival, Tracking, Nature Awareness and Wilderness Spirit work. Through teaching physical survival and spiritual skills, we seek to share a vision that reconnects people to a sense of passion and purpose, learning how to exist sustainably on the land. Thomas 01273 480 429 or 07801 492 482 www.trackways.co.uk

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a world-renowned institution and a fantastic place to study horticulture, botany, herbal medicine and plant conservation. We run a wide range of one-day, weekend and longer courses for qualifications or pleasure. Contact www.rbge.org.uk/education or 0131 248 2937 for more information.

Quality training in chainsaw skills. From the occasional user, to the aspiring arborist. Visit www.treeschool.co.uk or call 07974715099 for more information and to discuss your needs.

The Devon Rural Skills Trust is a charity which aims to preserve the traditional skills, such as dry stone walling and hedge laying, which have been practised in the county for centuries. It offers one day courses and a training scheme. For more information on courses go to www.devonruralskillstrust.co.uk

Good Practice Stakeholder Participation... focusing on the environment.

A highly valued course run by Diana Pound of Dialogue Matters and based on years of experience designing and facilitating real environmental decisions. Our courses will help participants: Explore the benefits/challenges of involving stakeholders in decisions about the environment; Understand the principles and concepts of stakeholder participation; Learn practical facilitation skills and to design participation processes.

We run three-day, open training courses throughout the year in Wye, Kent, SE England and can also provide in-house or bespoke training courses.

Email training@dialoguematters.co.uk, tel 01233 813875 or download the latest flier/application form at www.dialoguematters.co.uk/training.htm

Rippledown House.

Sustainable building training. Learn how to use straw bales, lime, cob and larch to build sustainable buildings. Taught by a local Kentish expert our courses have been used by building professionals to build their businesses and those looking to self-build an eco-home. Contact us at www.rippledown.com or call 01304 364854

Yellow Wood based near Hay in Herefordshire, we facilitate learning about woodlands in a 30 acre ancient semi-natural woodland. We teach bushcraft, woodland crafts, treeclimbing and chainsaw use. We have a campsite for visitors, and are developing an arboretum and nursery. www.yellowwood.co.uk
info@yellowwood.co.uk

Wildeye run a number of courses, workshops and training expeditions for aspiring wildlife and conservation film-makers and enthusiastic amateurs. If you are just starting out we suggest you start with the Introduction to Wildlife Film-making weekend in Norfolk. Explore the website for the range of training opportunities: www.wildeye.co.uk

Wildlife Video & Edit Courses Cornwall

You don't need expensive equipment to make exciting wildlife films. Learn the skills of video camera work, editing and story creation first. Share a camera with a friend if you like. For the absolute beginner to the semi pro. Courses in association with Cornwall Wildlife Trust. www.jeffgoodman.co.uk

TheUKlandscape Landscape & Nature Photography Workshops on the Norfolk Coast, Norfolk Broads and Suffolk Coast. info@theuklandscape.com 01603 460825

Moelyci provides a wide range of conservation/ecology/identification courses, based at their 350 acre farm near Bangor, Gwynedd. The farm is a community-owned not-for-profit resource which manages over 200 acres of SSSI and SAC heathland. For course details, go to www.moelyci.org

The Web Site www.deerland.co.uk provides further information. The training includes safe and efficient use of firearms and specialised ammunition which is used for culling UK Deer and Game, as well as the recognition of wild animal health including meat inspection procedures, disease identification and modern hygiene standards required by law .

AJS Crafts: Rural Craft Training. Training available in a wide range of rural crafts & land management including: Coppicing, Woodland Conservation & Management, Green Woodworking, Sculpture, Environmental Art, Weaving, Corn Dollies etc. Other courses are available by request. I can also tailor make any course(s) to your specific requirements. Contact: info@ajscrafts.co.uk www.ajscrafts.co.uk

Basic Wildfire Fighting: Introduces wildfire behaviour and suppression techniques, allowing the trainee to safely and effectively assist with managed burning and wildfire suppression operations. Advanced Wildfire Fighting: Explores advanced concepts of wildfire behaviour and suppression techniques, wildfire prediction and incident management. Contact Ethan Bigelow: Ethan.Bigelow@ruraldevelopment.org.uk or phone 01670 790 444

Millhouse Training Services
We provide professional accredited training courses suitable for everyone working in Land based industries Please visit us at www.millhousetraining.co.uk

Natures Craft Bushcraft and Wilderness Living Training. Learn the skills of our ancestors in a quiet and peaceful setting in East Wiltshire. For more information please see www.naturescraft.co.uk

Aulino Wann & Associates is an ecological consultancy based in Northern Ireland offering a wide range of services (e.g. ecological impact assessment, biodiversity training, and invasive species control plans) to government, the private and voluntary sectors. We wish to form partnerships with other consultancies (engineering, architectural, planning, etc.). Contact: info@aulinowann.com www.aulinowann.com 0044-28-93378250.

WoodNet Training at the Woodland Enterprise Centre near Flimwell, East Sussex and at the Netherfield Centre, near Battle, East Sussex. Courses and events on woodland management, wood products and countryside skills. Subjects include biodiversity, archaeology, coppice products, wood fuel, timber construction, charcoal making, chainsaw use, hedgelaying. More information at www.woodnet.org.uk

Simply The Best Training Consultancy Ltd
Landbased, Business, Management & Personal Development Training. We offer a large selection of Lantra Awards Training Courses: Chainsaws, Brushcutters, Hedge Trimmers, ATVs, Trailers, Mowers, Pesticides, Dry Stone Walls, Welfare of Animals in Transport, plus loads more! For details - 01443 670267 office@simplythebesttc.co.uk www.simplythebesttc.co.uk

Do degrees deliver?

"I'm sure it was a weekend course that started it!" laughs Alice Fenton, from her desk at West Berkshire Council, where she works as a habitat surveyor for the Thames Valley Environmental Records Office. "It gave me a thirst to find out more about plants." She now organises a local flora group, recording in her spare time. When asked if her MSc helped secure her job, she enthuses that it was crucial. But I am already wondering how much of her career success is due to qualifications, and how much to her blatant passion for plants.

As someone working with students, I am often asked whether a degree is necessary for an ecology career, and whether an MSc is worth the investment of time and expense. There is no simple answer. But I thought I'd explore this issue by talking to some ecology and conservation sector employers.

I asked Emily Brennan, Conservation Director of London Wildlife Trust, about the Trust's attitude to vocational qualifications: "We usually ask for either a degree or vocational qualification with an equivalent level of experience" she explains.

By contrast, many commercial consultancies do require applicants to have a degree.

"But you risk missing out on some good applicants" comments Des Callaghan, of Ecostudy, "while I was responsible for recruitment in a previous job, I found that a lot of highly qualified candidates were not suitable for consultancy; so we would look at people with vocational qualifications and certainly consider interviewing them." When asked about whether there is any gap in the skills offered by junior candidates, Des is quick to stress, "the lack of field skills is chronic."

The emerging picture is that if you can offer some sought-after field skills or other experience, a degree is not a prerequisite to a career in either consultancy or the conservation sector. However, lack of recognition of a vocational qualification was a problem when Des decided to do a PhD: "I did an excellent practical, field based HND in Conservation Management, that led to a research career at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, yet later I struggled to find a university that would register my PhD."

Des has a point: society does seem to still value degrees over vocational qualifications, yet often the skills that employers are crying out for are, frankly, entirely vocational. Emily at LWT again: "Our work increasingly involves local community projects, so people skills are essential". Most degrees are simply not designed to

foster the negotiation, mediation and facilitation skills and tact needed to work effectively with disadvantaged and other communities, so LWT now runs a skills-based graduate training scheme.

In the consultancy sector, recent graduates have voiced concern in IEEM's newsletter In Practice that employers are demanding too much of degrees, which are necessarily general and academic. Sue Bell, formerly of the global environmental consultancy Scott Wilson, responded: "We don't expect junior staff to hold a complete skills set" and added "I prefer candidates who demonstrate enthusiasm, commitment, common sense, flexibility to cope with the (often demanding) job, and a basic understanding of ecology principles, and of conservation law and policy".

However, an IEEM survey of 60 employers found that 80% had experienced recruitment difficulties, so even getting this basic level of experience from applicants may be a challenge. Echoing Sue's comments, knowledge of wildlife law and policy was particularly highlighted as vital or desirable by 97.8% of respondents. IEEM is currently researching this issue further as part of its Skills Gap Project.

Arguably, the full range of skills sought by employers is unlikely to be delivered by any single course – vocational or academic – or even by a specialist MSc, as Alice found, "it's a steep learning curve from doing surveying on a course to doing it for real. A course equips you with your driving license; you need more practise before you can enter a grand prix!"


Clare O'Reilly is running a 2-day Wildlife Law Workshop in November 2009.

Details from: enquiries@ptyxis.com 01434 321199.



Clare is a freelance ecologist and qualified teacher, and was previously an environmental lawyer. She also sits on IEEM's Steering Group for the Skills Gap Project.

Longer courses, NVQ to MSc and beyond:



Perth College
Creating the University of the Highlands and Islands

Get hands-on and classroom-based learning on Perth College UHI's Countryside Management HNC and HND courses. Study ecology, habitat management and interpretation, biodiversity and identification. We also offer work experience opportunities. Learn to take better care of the environment and get the essential careers skills you need. Get more at www.perth.ac.uk

Glasgow Caledonian University's School of the Built & Natural Environment is the largest of its kind in Scotland, with an excellent reputation in delivering undergraduate and postgraduate environmental courses. All programmes are offered on a full and part-time basis and are accredited by relevant professional bodies. Visit www.gcal.ac.uk/bne

BTCV in the South West is offering NVQ Level 2 Environmental Conservation (also Level 1 Horticulture in some locations) FREE to people who can volunteer for around 2 days a week. These practical courses run throughout the year. Contact Zoe Richards on 0117 929 8488 / z.richards@btcv.org.uk for more information



Birkbeck
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Our MSc Environmental Management offers students the opportunity to acquire and develop the broad understanding and competence necessary to manage protected areas (eg nature reserves) and the wider countryside. European focus. Part-time over two years, with occasional weekend meetings (Fri/Sat). Birkbeck, University of London. For more details email: environment@FLL.bbk.ac.uk

BTCV in the West Midlands is offering NVQ Level 2 Environmental Conservation FREE to people who can volunteer for around 2 days a week. This practical course runs throughout the year in the Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Black Country/Birmingham areas. Contact Zoe Richards, 0117 9298488 / z.richards@btcv.org.uk, for more information.

MSc in the Conservation of Historic Gardens and Cultural Landscapes with University of Bath
This is a unique Masters programme being the only one in the UK to provide analytical and practical skills in the theory and practice of garden and cultural landscape conservation and management. For more information <http://www.bath.ac.uk/ace/MSc-Conservation-Gdms/>



Bournemouth University

Check out the environmental postgraduate courses at the Centre for Conservation Ecology & Environmental Change, Bournemouth University. You can choose between flexible study modes combining research, professional placements, field, lecture, and independent study to gain an MSc in Biodiversity Conservation, Environmental Management, Geoinformatics or Environmental Informatics. Contact Dr Kathy Hodder, CCEEC Postgraduate framework coordinator khodder@bournemouth.ac.uk

Newcastle University: Marine Masters Programmes
Marine and coastal areas around the world now face unprecedented pressures – are you looking for a challenge? Open up diverse career opportunities in the UK and around the world with one of our successful marine masters programmes. Apply now for 'International Marine Environmental Consultancy' www.ncl.ac.uk/marine/postgrad/taught/IMEC.htm or 'Tropical Coastal Management' www.ncl.ac.uk/marine/postgrad/taught/tropical.htm

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

Warwick HRI is at the forefront of research and teaching in plant and environmental sciences. We offer a range of taught and research degrees: BSc Environmental Biology, MSc Environmental Bioscience in a Changing Climate, MSc Enterprise in Horticulture, MSc Plant Bioscience for Crop Production, MSc by Research in Plant and Environmental Sciences, PhD in Plant and Environmental Sciences. For more information please visit: www.warwickhri.ac.uk, email whri.msc@warwick.ac.uk or call 024 7657 4455.

Imperial College London MSc courses include a five-month project in Conservation and Forest Protection; Conservation Science; Ecological Applications; Ecology, Evolution and Conservation (MRes also); Entomology (MRes also); Integrated Pest Management; MRes Integrated Crop Pest and Disease Management includes two five-month projects. Contact Janet Phipps, j.phipps@imperial.ac.uk

PGC Greening Outdoor Practice. Starts October 09 full or part time.

This course offers environmental educators the skills and knowledge to design courses that meet the growing concern about climate change and environmental sustainability and develop the potential of outdoor practice to make a real difference to these issues. www.cumbria.ac.uk/outdoorstudies +44(0) 15394 30330 heather.jones@cumbria.ac.uk

Forum for the Future - Masters in Leadership for Sustainable Development. Our unique postgraduate degree programme is accredited by Middlesex University. We take 12 students a year and immerse them in sustainability in a variety of contexts. Contact: Carol Edwards Tel: 020 7324 3674 Email: c.edwards@forumforthefuture.org web: www.forumforthefuture.org/masters-course

MA Sustainable Development Advocacy

Want the skills to get a job you can believe in? Our unique, experiential programme offers practical, real-life learning. Study with and learn from people from a wide range of backgrounds who share your passion for sustainability - and get fast-track entry into our networks. <http://www.advocatingchange.org.uk> Jane Roberts 07770 644270

University of Glamorgan have vacancies for Sept 09 - BSc Outdoor Learning and Sustainability - course addresses concerns in elements of sustainability: environmental, social, cultural and economic, preparing you for a career in a variety of areas such as sustainable development community regeneration, youth work etc Further details 0800 716 925 or visit www.glam.ac.uk

The University of Cumbria offers courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and further education level, in a range of subject areas that includes agriculture, conservation, environment and sustainability, and woodland management. Its Newton Rigg campus near Penrith is home to the National School of Forestry. For more information, please visit the website at www.cumbria.ac.uk

Easton College offers vocational Foundation Degrees in Agricultural Management, Sustainable Engineering and Ecology and Conservation, also, Access to Land-based Studies (1 Year), NVQ L2 General Fencing, First and National Diplomas in Agriculture, Countryside and Game-keeping, L2 & L3 Apprenticeships - contact 01603731232 for information, or info@easton.ac.uk or www.easton.ac.uk

Countryside and Environment courses at SAC

SAC delivers Degree and HN courses from its campuses in Aberdeen, Ayr and Edinburgh and a distance learning HNC is also available.



These courses have been running for 20 years and are highly regarded. For more information contact 0800 269453 or www.sac.ac.uk/learning

Countryside Management BTEC National Award at Shipley College. Gain skills and knowledge relevant to environmental and countryside projects through this one day a week course. Units studied include Principles of Ecology, Habitat Management, Sustainable Development and an Individual Project. Admission by interview. Telephone 01274 327281 or email SYates@shipley.ac.uk

Develop a career in Countryside Management, Conservation, Horticulture or Agriculture. Nottingham Trent University offers BTEC National Programmes, Foundation, BSc (Hons) degrees that will equip you with the skills and knowledge for land-based industries. Based on a 200 hectare farm and woodland estate you will benefit from hands-on learning in a beautiful environment. Visit us on an open day! Call 01636 817099 or visit www.ntu.ac.uk/ares

School of Biosciences, University of Exeter

World leading research in each of our research groups (RAE 2008). £25 million investment in state-of-the-art facilities. £12 million funding in Research Council grants; top six UK university for successful NERC awards. High quality research supervision develops and nurtures the scientific potential of all graduates. www.exeter.ac.uk/biosciences

The North Highland College is renowned for its courses in Equine Studies, Gamekeeping, Golf Management and Veterinary Nursing. These may be full time but we offer a wide range of flexible study courses and work based qualifications. Admissions, The North Highland College, Main Campus, Ormlie Road, Thurso KW14 7EE 01847 889250 info@northhighland.ac.uk

Belfast Metropolitan College is the largest Further and Higher Education College in Northern Ireland. Providing a wide range of full-time and part-time courses. We also offer a wide choice of higher level qualifications with include Foundation Degrees and Degrees. Contact Course Hotline Tele 028 90 265265 or www.belfastmet.ac.uk

Craven College Centre for Rural & Equine Studies is located at the heart of the Sipton Auction Mart. The Centre offers a range of course from Agricultural, Rural and Equine to Foundation Degree in Environmental Conservation. Visit www.craven-college.ac.uk for more information or call 01756 708008

Coleg Gwent, Usk Campus, The Rhadyr, Monmouthshire. Full time, part time and professional training courses in all aspects of Landbased studies. Subjects include Agriculture, Animal Care, Horticulture, Equine, Forestry, and Gamekeeping. Also Sport, Public Services, Outdoor Activities, and Fitness Training. Residential facilities available. Telephone 01495 333639 info@coleggwent.ac.uk – www.coleggwent.ac.uk

Elmwood College delivers a range of specialist countryside management qualifications in an impressive rural setting. We offer NC Conservation and Countryside Recreation, HNC Countryside Management and HND Countryside Management. We also have a variety of Horse Studies, Gamekeeping and Agriculture courses. We are recognised specialists in land-based education. 01334 658800 www.elmwood.ac.uk

Distance Learning:

Compass Education Ltd is a widely approved distance learning college privately providing education at all levels and in a wide range of subjects related to animals and animal behaviour. Courses cater for those undergoing career development and those satisfying a personal interest. Contact www.compass-education.co.uk or telephone 0845 4585981

Learning Curve Distance learning courses leading to RHS Horticulture certificates, RFS Arboriculture, Level 2, and a range of other gardening and conservation courses, including: Introduction to Conservation, Healing Garden and our well-regarded Garden Design Diploma. <http://www.learningcurve-uk.com> or 01896 860661

MSc Aquatic Biology and Resource Management at University of Exeter

Designed in consultation with multiple external bodies, including Cefas, the Environment Agency and Natural England, to ensure excellent, relevant training that maximises employability. Covers: marine and freshwater systems; biodiversity; environmental law; wildlife and ecosystem management; aquaculture; and ecotoxicology. Includes a unique field experience aboard the Cefas research vessel Endeavour. www.exeter.ac.uk/biosciences/postgraduate

Writtle College has the largest School of Horticulture in the UK, offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in various subjects, including Social and Therapeutic Horticulture, Tree Management and Green Space Management. To attend one of our Open Days, or for more information please visit www.writtle.ac.uk

Writtle College
A partner of the University of Essex

Learning at Home

Visit our website www.learning-at-home.co.uk to see our range of paper-based and online distance learning conservation, ecology and environmental courses. All leading to nationally recognised qualifications.

Survey:

Butterfly Conservation is launching the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) this year to monitor the status of common species across the UK. The survey requires just 2 visits to a random 1km square. Get in touch to take part and help us reach our 1000 square target in 2009. 01929 406036 survey@butterfly-conservation.org www.ukbms.org/wcbs.htm Deadline: end August 2009

ABBOTTS LIVING WOOD

Six Months in the Woods
by Tom Ball

TOM'S CHAIRS

Having lived in London for the better part of a decade and no longer able to ignore the nagging feeling that there was a rural side to life I was missing out on, I was thrilled when Mike Abbott accepted me as his assistant. My first project was a sweet chestnut folding barrier for the much-admired timber-framed compost toilet. Without much practical experience I just made it up as I went along. I soon discovered this was a productive way to go about things. 'Bodging', now often used in a pejorative sense, is a mark of pride amongst green wood chairmakers.

Teaching and working began after breakfast and went right on through towards dinner time, pausing for tea breaks and lunch. With no electricity at the workshop, keeping the fires burning and kettles boiling is no easy task on days when numerous sets of chair legs and back slats were fed into a medieval (in looks, but probably not far from being that old) steam-bending contraption. Keeping up with Mike's ever-evolving methods kept us on our toes. No sooner had you learnt one way to do something, then out the window it went and you had to grapple with another. This certainly gave me a thorough education in a short space of time.

Having many years' experience making chairs and playing a major part in the green woodwork revival, Mike must watch with bemusement as the rest of the world slowly catches up with him. He likes to joke that he bypassed the twentieth century and went straight from the nineteenth to the twenty-first.

Given current environmental concerns, green woodwork commends itself for many reasons. The lack of machinery keeps fossil fuel use down, waste can simply be thrown on the fire for heating and cooking, and there are no harmful bi-products or pollution. Woodland workshops and camps, easily dismantled, are low-impact and mobile. Using native wood is good for conservation. There's no need for imported tropical timber with oak and ash in abundance. Bodging can also be seen as part of the trend towards self-sufficiency: don't go to Ikea, make it yourself.

Working with an elemental material like wood, in the raw, outdoors in vibrant green woods filled with birdsong, with like-minded people simply makes you happy. The therapeutic and meditative benefits shouldn't be underestimated, and making chairs from trees cultivates an appreciation of design and beauty. A respect for the past is inherent in using old techniques, and not just a past preserved in aspic or museum reconstruction. Rather it's a living continuation and in some cases improvement of the folk practices of the past.

For all these reasons – health and wellbeing, environmental, social – I think green woodwork has a rosy future. It's perhaps not too fanciful to see green woodworking's increasing popularity as part of the search in industrialised countries for simplicity. As society gets ever faster and ever more throwaway, so a growing minority are nudging in the opposite direction.

Mike is eager to send as many fresh greenwood recruits out into the world as he can and I'm immensely grateful to him for sharing his vast experience, and setting me on a path of exploration in the craft of chair-making.

mugginsear@yahoo.co.uk,
www.tomschairs.com www.living-wood.co.uk



photo online

Short Courses, 1-10 days in length:

Free wildlife survey taster sessions highlighting monitoring undertaken for species in Denbighshire, North Wales and encourage volunteer involvement. Places must be booked, contact Kate Taylor, Biodiversity Officer: 01824 708234 / kate.taylor@denbighshire.gov.uk. 14 May Natterjack Toad, 2 June Nightjar, 16 July water vole, 13 August bats, 18 September moths, 6 October Dormice. 2009.

20/7/09 Endangered Species Recovery course

A 21 day course for anyone with an active interest in animal conservation and a desire to learn how species can be saved.



Lectures will be given by world class conservationists. Practical activities and behind the scenes experiences in Durrell's animal collection will provide participants with first-hand exposure to the realities of endangered species recovery. On completion participants will be equipped with a fuller appreciation of the complexities of animal conservation and an ability to develop their personal or professional interests in the field. 01534 860037 Catherine.Burrows@durrell.org www.durrell.org

Coppicewood College **Roundwood Timber Framing course** in Cilgerran woodland, Monday 25th May 2009 (£180) for 4 days go to www.coppicewoodcollege.co.uk/woodland-skills-short-courses.html or contact bslark@aol.com Or 01239 881394 for details and application form. OCN accreditation is £30 extra, course qualifies for Farming Connect funding.



June: Green woodworking; Timber framing; Sustainable buildings and renewable energy & July: Strawbale building; Chairmaking plus more courses throughout the year!!! Residential options available in our ecohostel, yurts, tipis or on our campsite. For a brochure or more info please ring Raina on 01730 823166 or email: courses@sustainability-centre.org http://www.sustainability-centre.org/html/adult_courses.html

28/5/09 Forest Schools and wandering Wherryman's Way! A presentation and practical session on the Forest School programme run at Whitlingham CP, followed by an afternoon walk along part of Wherryman's Way, a promoted route, discussing topics such as Access; Events; Heritage interpretation & promoting local tourism. CMA Members FREE. Non members £35. 01245 424116 www.countrysidemanagement.org.uk



Reptile survey skills. Professional training course, Bournemouth, Dorset. Introduction to six native species, identification, sexing,

ecology, distribution, habitat assessment, survey design, visual search, spotting skills, artificial refugia, detectability, capture, handling, biometrics, photography, recording, interpretation. Beginners and intermediates. Mon 8 June 2009. Cost £80. Contact Chris Glead-Owen chris@cgoecology.com, 07846 137346, www.cgoecology.com.

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust 30/5/09 Spring & Summer Wildlife Identification Course – "Bugs to Bogs" at Cors Dyfi or Glaslyn from 11am. 10/10/09 Autumn & Winter Wildlife Identification Course - "Harvest to Hibernation" at Dolforwyn Woods or Dolydd Hafren from 10am. Join our Conservation Team to learn how to identify the season's best wildlife! www.montwt.co.uk

Traditional Molecatcher, would you like to train to become one? Then look no further go to www.britishmolecatchers.co.uk This website will give you all the information you need to apply, 1 days course available June 13th, last one before September.



Mountain Leadership Courses
Widehorizons is offering the following courses: Mountain Leader Training: 24-30 October 2009, 3-9 April 2010; ML Assessment: 24th–29th October 2009, 3rd-9th April 2010; Walking Group Leader Training: 21st-24th July 2009, 3rd-6th April 2010. Contact tynyberth@widehorizons.org.uk or call 01654 761678 for details. www.widehorizons.org.uk/tyb

Full Permaculture Design Course for Sustainable living with Keveral Permaculture Group 8th - 23rd August at Keveral Community Farm, Seaton East Cornwall. Residential or day attendance, WEA funded. For more information on this and other courses see www.klaudia.co.uk or www.permaculture.org.uk

5/9/09 I've Bought a Woodland, What do I do now? A course to answer a question Ben Law is often asked. This course will include answers to planning in woodlands and will be tailored to participants needs. www.ben-law.co.uk 01730 823 311 tony@permaculture.co.uk

Greenskills Unique chance to be a Bodger and wild camp in SSSI woodland near Bristol - September 8th - 13th - 1 day to 4 days. Green woodwork training and more in the Bristol area. See - www.green-skills.co.uk, phone 0117 9024056 or email info@green-skills.co.uk

Malvern Coppicing The two day coppicing courses I run at Ravenshill woodland reserve in Worcestershire are an introduction to coppicing for people who have little or no experience of coppicing but would like to gain more knowledge. The next course is on 12th-13th September 2009 and costs £95. Contact www.malverncoppicing.co.uk

Starting 25/6/09 Upland Agriculture & Ecosystem Services at Newton Rigg campus, University of Cumbria Two three day blocks 25 to 27 June followed by 23 to 25 July. Accredited MSc module focusing on how upland agriculture can provide 'new' environmental goods and services. Dr Lois Mansfield 01768-893567 lois.mansfield@cumbria.ac.uk
<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/Courses/Courses2009bylevel/Postgraduate2009/SportandLand/SustainableUps.aspx>

Events:

'Vanishing Meadows' Exhibition:
Open 1 May – 4 October 2009 hosted by The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, at Wakehurst Place. This display developed in partnership by the Weald Meadows Group, focuses on the beauty, special qualities and requirements of our diverse yet fragile grasslands. For more information visit:
www.highweald.org/uploads/Meadows_ExhLeaflet

Wales Biodiversity Week is an annual week of wildlife-themed events that takes place all over Wales; this year's events run from the 6th to 14th June. Join thousands of people across Wales and celebrate our amazing variety of wildlife! For more information visit www.biodiversitywales.org.uk

The **International Ranger Federation** is holding its 6th World Ranger Congress in Bolivia from 1st to 7th November 2009. Full details including the programme topics and call for papers/posters can be found on the congress website <http://www.worldrangercongress.org> and earlybird registration is extended to 15 May.

4/6/09 Sustainable Uplands - Rural Economy and Society with University of Cumbria
2 x 3 days to complete a stand alone module as part of the MSc in Sustainable Uplands. Looks at the changing nature of upland rural society and its links with countryside management and countryside assets such as public goods. Cost £330.
<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/AboutUs/Faculties/FacultyofScienceandNaturalResources>

19/9/09 Woodlands & Permaculture The course with Ben Law, offers you the opportunity to learn the skills you need to add value to woodland produce and non-timber produce. Learn about permaculture in relation to woodland and cover planning and design. www.ben-law.co.uk 01730 823 311 tony@permaculture.co.uk

18 – 19/7 Edinburgh Treefest & Woodmarket 2009
Inverleith Park, Arboretum Place, Edinburgh EH3 11am – 5pm free entrance
Interactive crafts, stalls, displays, games, North American Indian exhibition, demonstrations, axe throwing, chainsaw carving, horse logging, saw milling, skate ramp, renewable energy, mountain biking display, entertainment, refreshments, beer tent, information and much much more.... www.edinburghtreefest.org.uk

The Wilderness Gathering held on 20th to 23rd August 2009 in Wiltshire is the premier festival of bushcraft and wilderness skills, with various schools and equipment trade stands in attendance. 01963 23468 or www.wildernessgathering.co.uk

www.countryside-jobs.com has an extensive range of information and adverts all training related. Click on Training in the menu or on the home page.

If you require certification in practical skills such as chainsaw use, need to learn how to identify dragonflies, or want to find out the best way to get the community involved in your project then have a look at the online Training Section. We include brief details of many professional courses in the online rolling programme. There are also pages for longer courses, training centres and other events (eg conferences). Sometimes you need that extra qualification or require some suggestions from someone with more experience than you. And - if you are running an event and want to tell the world or just the countryside sector then don't forget our website.

What you'll find:

Short Courses: professional training events of one to ten days in length on all subjects from NVC to ranger training, community involvement to how to build your own wind turbine. At the time of going to press there were over 1100 different short courses listed from around 100 different providers.

Long courses: as short courses but of longer duration. This section includes adverts for MSc and degree courses also day release or for courses which are run intermittently eg one day per week for three weeks.

Distance Learning: Sometimes it is just not possible or practical to commit to a longer course, distance learning can provide the answer by allowing you to study in your own time at home.

Events: these are professional events which are not necessarily training focused such as an annual conference or fayre.

Training Centres and Providers: contact details for training and event providers.

Surveys and Fieldwork, Opportunities to gain skills whilst helping with data gathering.

The CJS team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication.

The next edition will be **CJS Focus on Urban Greenspace** and will be published in August 2009.