



News

No. 4: Spring 2015

Learning, Planting and Building

Welcome to the fourth edition of News from Knighton Tree Allotments Trust (KTAT). In this newsletter you can find out about the Trust and what we have been doing over the last year.

First of all, we would like to thank all our Trustees, Members, Volunteers and Friends for all their hard work, enthusiasm and company. KTAT is an entirely voluntary organisation where *everything* we achieve is due to good people giving up their time to support the aims of the organisation, so **thank you**.

It has been another busy year as we made use of what we have taken out of our woodlands and started to put more back in. It has been a year of learning, building and planting.

The Larch Plantation at Greenstreete, Llangunllo, has continued to be the focus of a lot of work and we now have the infrastructure in place to help our work there in the future.



Planting native broadleaf trees at Greenstreete



Cleaving chestnut

We have built a woodstore and a composting bio-toilet and re-planted the coupe where we had Japanese Larch trees felled last year.

Weir Cottage woodland has benefited from an updated management plan and had the first of

five coupes coppiced and re-planted. We have also been processing the firewood that has come out of both woodlands.

Members and volunteers have enjoyed another year of training opportunities and skills development - a key aim of KTAT. We are now much more self-sufficient than when we started and so are beginning to realise how much we still have to learn!

Full details of all of our exciting developments over the last year can be found inside, and details about the Trust and how you can get involved are on the back page of this newsletter.

The past year has been a very important one for KTAT with regard to training. We now have a good knowledge and skills base as an organisation, allowing us to approach theoretical and practical aspects of woodland management with some confidence.

Members and volunteers have received both informal and formal training in woodland management with some volunteers now achieving industry-recognised qualifications. This allows us to write woodland management plans to a standard recognised by organisations such as the Forestry Commission. This kind of approach is the key to good woodland management and is essential in unlocking potential funding streams as funders, quite reasonably, expect us to have a good-quality management plan in place. It also means that as we take on new woodlands we are not reliant on external expertise to decide on a management approach.

Just as importantly we have received a lot of practical skills training. We have now built a composting bio-toilet and a woodstore at the Larch Plantation. Both of these construction projects were used as training workshops so that next time we need to build we will have the skills within KTAT to do it ourselves. As you can see from the photos on these pages the results are

very impressive. Our wood store is designed to have good air circulation throughout to help the wood season well.



Axes used in the handtool training course

We also received training in how to process firewood using handtools. This complements our previous chainsaw training, meaning that we can now cut cordwood (longer lengths of wood, usually 4 to 5 feet long) into logs quickly and easily.



One volunteer was particularly pleased to learn how to cut large 'rounds' of wood using an axe; he reported that it was "much, much easier" than the hammer and splitting wedges that he had been using for years.

Splitting large 'rounds' on the handtool training course

We have now utilised all of the wood from the first felling of Japanese Larch at Greenstreete: larger logs were milled into lumber and used for our new buildings and a new meditation hut for the Samatha Trust; smaller tops, side-branches and offcuts have been processed into firewood. Our new woodstore is now full of firewood – a very satisfying result. At Weir Cottage the wood from the first felled coupe has been processed into cordwood, stacked and covered with a tarpaulin. One quarter of this wood has been given to the owner as 'rent' in accordance with our management agreement.



The new composting bio-toilet under construction (right) and finished (above).



Perhaps most importantly we have been re-planting in the woodlands we manage. In Weir Cottage wood we planted a selection of aspen, sweet chestnut, rowan, birch, alder, hornbeam, wild service, hazel, field maple, wych elm, crab apple and beech at the end of last winter. These were planted in the area of the first felled coupe at the east end of the wood. Through the summer we cleared around these newly planted trees regularly to stop them being swamped by



Planting trees at Greenstreete

brambles and bindweed (convolvulus). Four new trees did not survive the summer and were replaced. We have also started filling the gaps in the roadside hedge - planting holly and beech whips as the hedge is quite shaded.

local nursery and were purchased using a grant from Environment Wales. A further 105 trees were planted in November 2014 on the upper slopes - 30 rowan, 15 silver birch, 15 wild cherry, 15 common oak, 15 grey willow, and 15 field maple. These trees came as a free "Working Wood Pack" generously supplied by The Woodland Trust. This has completed the first stage in our plan to transform this non-native species monoculture into a native-species broadleaf woodland. The last year has given KTAT a good foundation for



Clearing a fallen tree from the path

its future development and the management of other woodlands. We are having discussions with The Samatha Trust, owners of Greenstreete, about taking on the management of Greenstreete Wood; a mixed, native-species broad-leaved woodland near the Larch Plantation. This will present us with a whole new set of opportunities and challenges to keep us busy over the next year and beyond!

We have replanted where we previously felled 62 Japanese Larch trees at Greenstreete. In March 2014, 53 trees were planted on the lower slopes as soon as the brash was cleared - 20 sessile oak, 9 rowan, 8 small leaved lime, 6 wild cherry, 6 downy birch, 4 sweet chestnut. These trees were from a



Building the woodstore and filling it with firewood

Woodland Conservation Volunteering

Knighton Tree Allotments Trust is a voluntary, not-for-profit group that manages woodlands. In coming together and sharing and learning woodland skills we aim to sustainably manage woodland for the benefit of wildlife and our members.

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.

In sustainably growing firewood and other woodland products we can meet some of our fuel and timber 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. There are three 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 hands-on woodland management such as tree planting and firewood processing, regular flora and fauna surveys and administrative tasks.

If you are interested in also having access to woodland products from the Trust, such as logs and timber, then you could become a Member Volunteer (see below).

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 are working towards sustainable development. 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 Member Volunteer Why not combine volunteering with membership and become a Member Volunteer? It's a great way to actively support the Trust's woodland management activities whilst also having your say in how it is run. Member Volunteers of the Trust can also access the woodland products – such as firewood and timber – generated by our activities.

4. Become a Friend of Knighton Tree Allotments Trust. If you support our aims but are perhaps too busy or 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 ring our Secretary on 01547 520929 or see our website: www.tveg.org.uk/wordpress/what-we-do/woodland-project



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.