

# Woodland to Workshop Course

*"The ultimate course for those who want to meet and learn from the real experts!"*



*A unique three-day training course linking 'tree growers with wood users', to broaden horizons and raise awareness by educating participants from the forest through to the workshop and beyond....*

*Courses take place at Whitney Sawmill & Joinery Workshop Whitney-on-Wye, Herefordshire*

*Based in the woodland, sawmill, timber yard and joinery workshop.*

*Numbers will be restricted to enable a 'hands on' and highly interactive approach, ensuring a learning opportunity of enduring quality.*

*Subsidised places are available for deserving and committed individuals.*

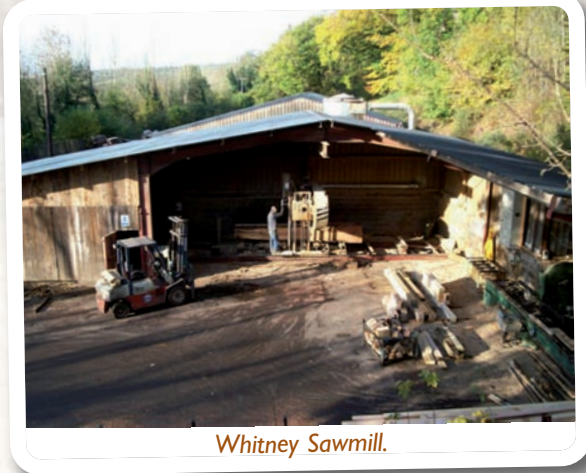


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# Introduction:

The first three-day Woodland Heritage Woodland to Workshop course was held in May 2008 at Whitney Sawmill near Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire. It gave an overview of forest management and the operations and problems involved in growing trees of high timber quality, the defects to which logs can be prone, measurement, sawing and storage of logs and sawn timber, and an opportunity to discuss the problems facing smaller wood-using enterprises.



*Whitney Sawmill.*

The course was the inspiration of Will Bullough, the owner of Whitney Sawmill, and Peter Goodwin, Chairman of Woodland Heritage. It was run for 12 participants, most of whom were wood users (e.g. furniture makers, sawmillers, timber buyers and a horse logger) rather than growers, though some of these were also present. The value of the interactions between this diverse student group provided the real 'added value'.

After an introduction by Susan Bell (Trustee of Woodland Heritage), Will Bullough and Gavin Munro set the scene and ran the course. Geraint Richards the Duchy of Cornwall's head forester and Graham Taylor of Pryor and Rickett Silviculture led the day in the field at Aconbury wood, owned by the Duchy. Two evening lectures were given by Peter Harper of the Centre for Alternative Technology and Roger Venables, a Woodland Heritage Trustee, on the 'Renaissance of European Oak'.



*Will Bullough in his woodland.*

# Woodland

During visits to Will Bullough's wood, adjoining the sawmill and a full day at Aconbury, topics covered, demonstrated and discussed included:



*Planting designs & squirrel damage limitation.*

- *Tree species selection.*
- *Planting designs in relation to tree competition and the landscape.*
- *Vegetation control.*
- *Pruning and cleaning.*
- *Thinning.*
- *Protection from grey squirrels and deer.*
- *The recognition of potentially valuable stems of oak.*
- *The importance and relevance of the British and Irish Hardwoods Improvement Programme's work.*



*Small clearing with lots of oak regeneration.*



*Gavin Munro with our students.*

# Workshop

The workshop discussions and demonstrations took place at Whitney Sawmill. Will Bullough outlined the problems faced by smaller sawmill enterprises operating within tight profit margins. He emphasised the desirability of woodland owners selling small parcels of broadleaves (hardwood) to provide them with the chance to bid successfully.



*Wood-Mizer portable band saw in operation.*

Topics covered included:

- *Distinguishing between normal drying splits and shakes.*
- *Minimising damage caused by ambrosia beetles.*
- *Practice at identifying various kinds of damage and undesirable features of logs, including woodpecker damage, spiral grain and blue stain fungi and wide sapwood.*
- *Likely markets for unusual logs including curved stems, “pippy” oak, and ripple-grained sycamore.*
- *The merits of a portable band saw (a Wood-Mizer).*
- *Practice at measuring and calculating timber volumes both in the forest and the sawmill. The importance of accuracy and reliability was emphasised. The losses incurred when converting a log to planks were also discussed.*
- *Air drying.*



*Woodpecker hole.*



*Measuring.*

There was agreement that the diversity of the students’ backgrounds contributed much to the course through their individual knowledge and experience. Both Gavin and Will were praised as being confident and interesting speakers, keen to impart their knowledge, encouraging student participation and questions in an informal and friendly atmosphere. Woodland Heritage will be running similar courses throughout the year.



*Learning how to convert and stick.*



*The practice of sticking.*

## Comments from some of our Students

### Andy, Shropshire

*Heartwoods Project officer, regional woodland initiative for W. Midlands*

*The friendly and realistic nature of the course was a wonderful contrast to the formulaic and 'dry' training that dominates in all professions these days.*

### Ian, Yorkshire

*Woodland manager and owner*

*Wow! The enthusiasm and sheer passion of Gavin and Will, Geraint and Graham was fantastic. This was a fantastic learning opportunity and I thoroughly enjoyed it!*

### Alistair, Oxford

*Director of Forestry/Sustainable Forestry Foundation. Researching & promoting sustainable woodland management in Oxfordshire and beyond.*

*All in all I found the course exceptionally well organised, highly informative and light hearted. Personally the course provided me with the essential information on the processes between woodland management and useable timber. I realise that this section of the wood chain should perhaps be of second nature to the forester, however most of my experience has focussed on the science of woodland management and policy. To find individuals like Will, Gavin and Peter who are willing to give their knowledge and time is quite exceptional and hard to come by.*

### Sharon, Cumbria

*Student – BSc Hons Forestry/woodland management, Newton Rigg*  
*A mix of students vital as everyone learns from each other. Hands-on brilliant!*

### Nick & Katie, Essex

*Partners in own business, furniture makers and woodland owners*  
*Judging possible defects in standing trees was a very useful introduction for Day Two, and the little leaflet explaining timber measurement was admirable. Roger Venables' lecture was fascinating and his images beautiful. I could have watched all evening.*

### Colin, Cornwall

*Land management, woodlands, horse logging, timber framing and furniture maker.*

*I feel that a greater understanding must be achieved between foresters – saw millers – makers and end users before things will change. Small courses like this one are vital and a great start.*

### Martin, Herefordshire

*College lecturer, Herefordshire*

*Very good course, most interesting all round. Very good lecturers with excellent grasp of subjects and very good presentational skills with great enthusiasm for subject.*

### Richard, Suffolk

*Self employed woodsman and greenwood worker*

*As a whole I can look back and truly say that I can't really fault what was delivered and that it was very informative, whilst also being enjoyable. I think that the course has a lot to offer, and it would be good to replicate in other regions.*

### Eoin, Scottish Borders

*ASHS/Woodschool Ltd – Sawmilling, seasoning, machining, furniture making & training*

*I have been around the block in my short (35 years) association with woodlands. This course was very stimulating and for an old cynic like me to learn something new every hour was extraordinary. God knows what was jettisoned from the grey matter to make way for all the new information I had to take on board. I obviously didn't need the other stuff that was in there cluttering it up.*

*I thought that the pace, style, delivery and genuine engagement of Gavin, Will, Geraint, Graham and Ben was commendable. For a first attempt there wasn't much missing. The knowledge transfer was awesome. If it didn't go in first time, there was no reluctance or irritation to go over something again. These guys should be in every forest school classroom in Britain. Gavin is a national treasure.*

### Doug, Herefordshire

*Forestry consultant, horse logging, woodland management, timber processing, end user*

*Excellent value. Tutors excellent in terms of theory, practice and experience. Very enjoyable and informative.*

### Rob, Anglesey

*Forestry student, recent graduate from University of Wales, Bangor*

*The main benefit from the course is that I am now able to identify and grade standing timber that would be of interest to the sawyer, as well as having an appreciation of the expectations from the grower. I would recommend this well organised course to anyone interested in improving their knowledge of the British Hardwood industry and as a way of de-mystifying the roles each part of the supply chain plays.*

*Please note: The wide geographical spread of our students – from Suffolk to Cumbria and from Scotland to Cornwall. We have the perfect setting in Herefordshire, which encourages applicants for our courses.*



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