

Blarbuie Woodland Project

at Argyll and Bute Hospital, Lochgilphead, Argyll



Third Progress Report Trunks, Seeds and Tracks

November 2006

Since early Summer we have continued to work with the all the material resulting from the thinning of the woods – the trunks and branches of the mostly very large trees felled for reasons of safety, access and biodiversity. Since earlier use and construction, including raised beds in our tree nursery and huge compost bins, the wood we have gathered in heaps and stacks – with Duncan and his big machines, and Angus and tractor, and many hands - is now mostly going out as firewood or as slabs and planks of quality timber of types not suited to outdoor construction. The peak of this activity was in early October, a day of selling our excess for necessary funds, to get it out of our way, and a day of contact and networking and promotion.



We had on site Dino and milling machine, Andy and John helping out, Patrick and Hugh dealing with enquiries and orders,



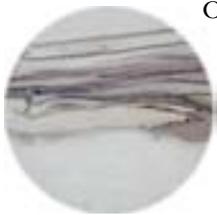
and Rob Sandler with pole-lathe finishing off the beautiful and functional mallets we had been working on with Steve Hunter, using our own beech and ash. A lot of people attended the day, and we took



partners in green wellbeing: the Blarbuie Woodland Project



the sawn timber accumulates in the yard



orders for huge quantities of firewood, and people bought pieces of beautifully-grained cherry and elm and holly and other timbers.



Since then Iain and Stephen have been putting in huge efforts assisting Hugh and Dino to get the deliveries out to people across Mid-Argyll and Kintyre.

Customers seem very happy with prices and quality; the cash raised becomes part of the funding package with Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, West Highland Leader, Robertson Trust, Allen Lane Foundation, Scottish Executive, and now the Scottish Community Foundation, whose funding will pay for machines working in the High Wood sorting out issues of safety and drainage up there.



Dino & dog do deliveries

We continue to gather pictures and details of the plants and creatures of the woods. We have discovered many bird nests, and signs of stoat and wood-mouse and fox. We have encountered frogs and toads, and spiders and fungi of many kinds. As the season progressed the trees began bearing seed and fruit, and we went a-gathering. In the tree nursery we have sown birch, elm, cherry, hazel, rowan and whitebeam.

Interpretation of the place and trees and plants and creatures has continued to develop. Andy Parsons came back on site to help us with design of interpretive panels. Andy is making the main panels, and with various participants – John, Angus, Iain and others - we have made the



Iain finds a nest - perhaps a crow's'



a mouse hole . .



off to Toad Hall . .



early morning dew reveals the web . .



A hedgehog mushroom . .

smaller panels that will bear the names and images of the various tree species. Our Crispin back in Fife is as usual correlating masses of data.

The Garden Project – after a long hot summer mostly taken up with caring for and distributing their plant stock and contracting all over the place – have

been back on site working like the labourers on the Great Pacific Railroad, forging ahead across the continent. The main all-abilities path

route is now meandering its way far into the woods, edged mostly

with Douglas Fir provided by Argyll Green Woodworkers from the sawmill at Ormsary, with pegs cut on site. AGWA members, including Peter and Sid and Sean and Eck, and Gordon of course, continue to be vital and involved, along with all the Garden Project team, and Patrick and everyone else.

And Oliver and Duke of Edinburgh team, who made our first bench, at the place of the cuckoo. And not forgetting Lochgilphead Resource Centre and ASET, and several Hospital patients, who worked so hard sifting and sorting the lying bulks of the felled trees, and working with us to ensure their off-spring.



collecting hawthorn seed . .



sowing seeds at the tree nursery . .



John is working on signage with Hugh . .

Importantly, we have kept abreast of what is going on locally and nationally – through Reforesting Scotland, the Dalriada Project, developments in Forestry and Health. We had a presence at A Positive Vision for Scotland seminar in Edinburgh, and several other events. We continue to look to the wider world and the future, but it is wonderful seeing what is happening on the ground day by day. Our project participant Robert – now living elsewhere but still in touch – said: ‘I learned a lot about woodlands, about working with others, I experienced peace and loved learning new things about animals and insects and trees, and really loved being in this environment and would recommend it to others.’

Hugh Fife

forest delicacies at Blarbuie - a chanterelle



Stephen operating log splitter . .



rowan berries stored for germination . . some of our lovely planks . .



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Woods for All is an award winning Reforesting Scotland project that works towards access and inclusion. Reforesting Scotland is a Scottish charity dedicated to environmental and social regeneration through reforestation. Reforesting Scotland Journal is free to members, also available at many good bookshops.

dtp crispin hayes

words & photos hugh fife

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