



Evanton Community Wood News

No 1 ~ August 2012

We are now the proud owners of the beautiful Evanton Wood - it is satisfying to be able to say so 6 years after the first approach by Novar Estate! We would not have reached this position without the considerable input by many individuals and the generosity of a range of organisations, most notably the Heritage Lottery Fund. Community ownership will help to protect the wood, as well as encouraging access and biodiversity and will enable us to provide a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and interests.



Most people from in and around Evanton need no introduction to this much valued woodland, which is also appreciated by others from far and wide, including those interested in continuous cover forestry management, of which Evanton Wood is an example of good practice.

The Evanton community, through the community company, now own all but a small part of the wood to the south of the Allt Graad/Blackrock Gorge/River Glass. (Novar Estate is retaining a 10m. fringe along the river and a small toe at the east end of the wood - no additional fencing is proposed). The community purchase covers some 65 hectares (160 acres) and includes woods valued for insurance purposes at over half a million pounds. The wood is mainly of mixed conifers, planted from 1913 – these include the fine Scots Pine on the ridges. There are many fine specimens of douglas fir dating back to 1965, also swathes of beech dating to 1913 and birch, which is more recent, plus some other native species such as rowan and willow. Novar undertook a standard thinning operation over the winter months, improving some views from the ridges; they have recently landscaped the stacking yard area.

Last year volunteer work parties started on the removal of the invasive western hemlock (*tsuga heterophylla*) at the western end of the wood in order to allow other species to flourish. We have continued this process with our first volunteer day (*pictured overpage*) since community ownership.

Our first event was a **group walk** around the wood, with 20 walkers, including two 2 Year old newcomers to the village, Maisie and Niamh (*pictured*). The event served as the media launch day and good coverage was achieved in the local and national press, radio and BBC Alba (*Móran Taing Donnie!*).



We are pleased to announce that **Simon Harry** (pictured in yellow helmet) has now started as our Education and Outreach Coordinator on a part-time self-employed contract. We were very fortunate in the calibre of candidates for this position which is mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the length of the 5 Year project. Simon, who has an honours degree in environmental studies, is a lead trainer for forest schools, who has worked for 6 years at the Abriachan Community Woodland, and previously in forestry education and conservation in Grampian, New Zealand, Wales and Zambia. He is also a Bushcraft tutor and a mountain bike tutor. Welcome Simon!



Forthcoming Events

- Mon 27 Aug, 7.30pm. **Event Planning Meeting.** Cornerstone. All Welcome.
- Sat 15 Sept. **Family Launch Event.** 12 to 4pm. Mag's Wood (10-15 min walk from the Chapel). Activities, music and food for all. Helpers welcome.
- Sat 29 Sept, 10-1. **Volunteer Day.** Continue with western hemlock possibly other tasks. Meet at main intersection.
- Tues 2 Oct, 7.30pm. **AGM.** Diamond Jubilee Hall.

Membership

This is the time for renewal of annual membership. Full membership (£5) is open to all aged 18+ for those resident in the Evanton area; associate membership (£3) for other adults; youth membership is £1. It is proposed to introduce life membership at the AGM. (*Membership form below*).

Special Will Offer Mackenzie and Cormack solicitors of Tain, who have generously carried out the conveyancing process for us, have offered to draw up the Wills of members and supporters of Evanton Community Wood. They will do so for a donation only – to be made to ourselves (EWCC). Please contact: mail@tainlaw.co.uk; tel. 01862 892046. We are very grateful for this additional support.

Many thanks to our funders and supporters:



Garfield Weston Foundation Technip Isleburn/Global Mackenzie & Cormack C. Sharratt
& all our members and individual donors. Artwork by Kiltearn Pupils.

Published by **Evanton Wood Community Company** Ltd by guarantee no 332678; Charity Ref. SCO 042025.
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