

In this issue...



All about  
Woodworks!



Forest Shorts  
News from the  
Forest Centre &  
around Marston Vale



the Forest of  
Marston Vale

Creating the Forest of Marston Vale

# commentree

Issue 58 | Autumn 2011

[www.marstonvale.org/news](http://www.marstonvale.org/news)



## WOODWORKS!

the festival of wood, woodlands and wood products

All profits from  
Woodworks! are  
used to create  
the Forest of  
Marston Vale

## Bigger and better than ever

3 & 4 September, 11am - 5pm, at the Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine

For the first time in its nine year history, there will be more than 50 exhibitors at Woodworks! in 2011. Craftsmen, carvers, turners, arborists... the list is growing.

If trees or woodworking, old and new crafts and woodmanship are your kind of thing, you have to be there. There's lots on offer for everyone else too.

You'll need to sit down and rest your feet once you've seen everything. Have lunch, a pint of real ale and enjoy an amazing line up of brilliant musicians. This is the family day out you mustn't miss; read on to find out more or visit -

[www.marstonvale.org/woodworks](http://www.marstonvale.org/woodworks)

Prices – held at 2010 levels!

£6/adult and £4/child & concessions

Under 10s go free



## Live music at Woodworks!

If variety is the spice of life, music at Woodworks! 2011 will be hot! From Bedford to Gambia, we have a world class line up of talent on offer.

There will be well known artists with decades of experience as well as young stars in the ascendance – look inside for more details or visit [www.marstonvale.org/woodworks](http://www.marstonvale.org/woodworks)



Take the train to Woodworks! and get a £1 discount on show entry. Just show your ticket at the entry gate.

(One discount per person. Tickets must be valid for the day of your show entry)

## Exhibitors

Come and delight in some real expertise, amazing skill and knowledge. There will be tree growers and tree fellers, sawyers, woodsmen, wood carvers, turners, furniture and basket makers – more than can be listed here.

But Woodworks! isn't just about looking. It's a chance to chat, have a go and buy some fantastic things for your home and garden. Your shopping habits really can make a difference – buying products made from our British woodlands helps wildlife and the local economy as well as supporting important rural craft industries and reducing demand for tropical woods.



## Loads for kids to do

Many exhibitors will offer a chance to have a go at what they do – make a clay sculpture, do some pyrography, make a scarecrow, race a ferret, taste some honey...

## Amazing arena action

The macho muscle of the British Lumberjack Sports Association will thrill the crowds twice each day. It's usually almost too scary to watch – their trousers are almost as sharp as their axes! The Vikings of Wrygworm will skirmish each day and there may be a chance for the very brave to have a go themselves. The English School of Falconry and Woodworks! chainsaw carve up and auction complete the full line up.

## Food & drink

Local venison will be on sale at Woodworks! for the first time this year. There are few more natural and healthy ways to eat meat. Venison adds to a great array of refreshments on offer throughout the weekend – hog roast, beef burgers and hot dogs, great vegetarian alternatives and of course, great big slices of cake. Wash all of that down with a pint of real ale and you will be well set to catch some of the mellow sounds on the stage.

## Folk and Roots – Music Live!

### Saturday

#### 11.45am Stephen Jones

Bedford's own singer songwriter will open the day on the sound stage.

#### 12.45pm Faeries Wear Boots

From the darker side of the enchanted forest, FWB stamp their own big boot print on some of their favourite folk music from Britain and Ireland.

#### 2pm The Old Dance School

It's great to welcome back these stars of Woodworks!



2007, who are definitely on the way up. The Old Dance School, seven of the exciting young folk scene's finest musicians have toured extensively since then and theirs will be a set not to miss.

#### 3.30pm Chris Puleston's Half Moon Drum Circle

More local talent - the ever popular Half Moon Drum Circle led by irrepresible drum maestro, Chris Puleston. Here's a chance to make a whole lot of noise.

### Sunday

#### 11.45am Zoox

Opening Sunday's proceedings, this talented trio will serve up a cocktail of new melodies and traditional tunes with strings, wind, percussion and voices.

#### 12.2pm Hemlock Morris

A Morris side with attitude, dancing in and around the show site - so watch out!

#### 12.45pm Blair Dunlop

We are thrilled to welcome Blair to the stage fresh from the Sidmouth and Cropredy festivals. Blair's guitar and vocal talents have already brought him national attention.

#### 2pm Cathryn Craig and Brian Willoughby

Expect a classic combination of musical styles and two lifetime's experience as Cathryn and Brian take to the stage. With some heavy duty past collaborations (Righteous Brothers, Chet Atkins, Nanci Griffith) we are guaranteed first rate entertainment.

#### 3.30pm Xam Xam

Gambian, Miss M'Boob's band Xam Xam (pronounced Ham Ham) plays high energy, infectious music.

We are delighted to welcome Musa and his fantastic band to bring the weekend's music to a close – on a serious high!



**WOODWORKS!**  
the festival of wood, woodlands and wood products

## Special 3 in 1 offer

Cut out and complete the form below and leave it at either of the Woodworks! entry points, anytime during Woodworks! (before 5pm on Sunday 4 September) to:

- Be entered into the Woodworks! prize draw to win a beautiful, hand made, oak bench worth over £150.
- Receive a free family ticket to visit the Millennium Country Park's beautiful Wetland Trail
- Receive a personal invitation to our next tree planting event in early December.

Name: .....

Email Address: .....

Thanks to our sponsors... without whom no Woodworks! would be possible.



NFU Mutual is helping the Forest of Marston Vale to develop its friend scheme. Come find us at Woodworks! to find out more.



[www.fabnights.co.uk](http://www.fabnights.co.uk)  
[www.setupsценery.com](http://www.setupsценery.com)

## Forest shorts

For full details of these stories visit [www.marstonvale.org/news](http://www.marstonvale.org/news)

### Forest Centre's five star kitchen

We've always known that the Centre's Lakeside Café is a great place to eat and now it's official. Central Bedfordshire Council's Environmental Health Food Team awarded the café and kitchen the top, five stars earlier this year; a wonderful tribute to the hard work of the whole catering team. It's also an assurance for every visitor that the café and its kitchen are well managed and scrupulously clean.

### Biffaward Award finalists



The Trust's creation of Rectory Wood Phase 4 has been shortlisted for this prestigious award. One of six finalists in the Natural Environment category, we won't know the outcome until 3 November. We'll tell you if we win!



### Try ElliptiGO at Woodworks!

Fresh from California, this amazing "cross-training device" will be available for short trials during the Woodworks! weekend. Why not come and take a look? (Over 18s only) Here's what the web site says about it...

"Whatever your fitness goals may be no matter how humble, audacious, realistic or impossible they may seem training on the ElliptiGO will help you achieve them. And we want to help you get there". Say no more.



### Woburn wood chip

The Forest Centre's wood powered boiler is now running on woodchip sourced from the Woburn Estate. This is a big step forward towards our desire to make the Forest Centre carbon neutral.

### Battlefield LIVE

"An amazing and unique combat gaming experience" has been added to the list of attractions on offer at the Forest Centre. Battlefield Live "is like being part of your own movie except the plot is determined by you". From kids' parties to corporate events, this is something different and exciting for our visitors.

To find out more visit [www.battlefield-gaming.co.uk](http://www.battlefield-gaming.co.uk) or call 01234 262058

### Tree planting winter 2011/12

Winter may feel a while off yet but we already have two provisional dates for your diary. To experience the joy (yes really!) of putting a living tree in the ground, make a note now and keep an eye out for more information from the Forest Centre. Sunday 4 December at Top Farm, Lidlington & Sunday 12 February at Octagon Wood, Willington. Parking at the Forest Centre with buses to planting sites.

Sign up at [www.marstonvale.org/news](http://www.marstonvale.org/news) to make sure you don't miss details when they are confirmed.



### Pink Ladies Night, 30 November, 7pm

Last year this successful event raised £2600 for Cancer Research UK and we hope to build on that great start by inviting you to our second Pink Ladies Night. Enjoy a manicure, have your hair done, talk to a beautician, buy some jewellery or other craft. Come to the Forest Centre, enjoy yourself and do something special at the same time.

### Two to tandem

You can now hire a tandem from the Forest Centre. This addition to our fleet of high quality bikes offers something really different from your average cycling experience. If you've never ridden one; try it soon; it's great fun. All you need is a friend!



### Volunteers – keeping the Forest's wheels turning

There is a large group of people who care enough about the creation of the Forest to give up a little or a lot of time to help it happen.

Volunteers are involved in an amazingly wide range of the Team's work; they stuff envelopes, look after databases, cut scrub, take photographs, raise money, plant trees (of course)... actually the list is endless.

It is certain that without their commitment, far less progress would have been made so far.

To find out more about what Forest Volunteers do and how you could get involved, take a look at [www.marstonvale.org/news](http://www.marstonvale.org/news)

Sign up now!

Sign up with your email address and we will send you regular (not too regular) news updates. It saves us money and paper, and keeps you right up to date. [www.marstonvale.org/news](http://www.marstonvale.org/news)



## The Millennium Country Park is one of the best greenspaces in the country – and that's official!

On 25 July we received our fifth Green Flag Award, a sign to visitors that the Park is well-maintained and well-managed, with excellent facilities. Anna Charles, the Park's Head Ranger said "During the last year we've seen some really exciting developments in the Park. The biggest is probably the new wetland trail and interpretation, which gives easy access to our wonderful nature reserve".

The Park has become a popular venue for school groups and has attracted some quite exceptional wildlife – bitterns and bearded tits amongst them.

[www.greenflagaward.co.uk](http://www.greenflagaward.co.uk)



We are now using Facebook to tell people about stuff in the Forest. Follow us on **facebook**



# What's on at the Forest Centre

**Wedding Fayre** Sunday 16 October, 10am to 4pm Free. Virtually all your matrimonial requirements in one place. It's also a chance to talk to our staff about hiring the Forest Centre for your most important day.

**Marston Vale Trust Annual General Meeting** Wednesday 14 December, 5.30 for 6pm. Everyone welcome but as space is limited, please call 01234 762601 or email [tony.talbot@marstonvale.org](mailto:tony.talbot@marstonvale.org)

**Pink Ladies Night** Wednesday 30 November, 7pm (Details elsewhere)

**Public tree planting events.** Sunday 4 December and Sunday 12 February. See inside for more information

**Christmas lunches** from 5 Dec. 2 courses £12.95. Booking only on 01234 762613

## Stuff for kids

Fun, fact and craft holiday activities  
4 Sessions: 10am, 11am and 1pm and 2pm - 25 children per session. Events aimed at 4-10 year olds. All materials provided.

All children to be accompanied by an adult. £2.50 per child. When booking please specify names and ages of children, name of adult attending and contact phone number. Ring 01234 767037 or email [info@marstonvale.org](mailto:info@marstonvale.org)

**Making bird feeders** Friday 28 October

**Making festive wreaths** Monday 19 December

**Fancy dress Halloween party** Thursday 27 October, 5-7pm. For children aged 3-10 years. Fancy dress disco with food boxes for every child. Bookings only, 01234 762613. £10 per ticket

**Christmas disco party** Saturday 3 December. For children aged 3-10 years. Meet Santa, food box lunch for all children. Woburn Sands Ensemble 12.30-1.30pm Party 1.30-4pm Bookings only, 01234 762613. £10 per ticket

## Volunteer conservation work

in the Country Park. A range of practical projects. Everyone welcome. No need to book.



Wear old clothes and bring lunch. Under 16s must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Training, tools, tea and biscuits provided. Meet at the Forest Centre, 10.15am. Finishes around 4.15pm.

Please contact us to let us know if you plan to attend. [anna.charles@marstonvale.org](mailto:anna.charles@marstonvale.org) or 01234 762614.

**Dead hedging** Saturday 24 September  
Help us cut back overgrown footpaths to improve visibility for walkers and cyclists

**Island clearance** Saturday 22 October  
Jump in a boat out to the Wetlands islands to carry out some much needed clearance work. Limited places so please let us know if you want to come.

**Hedge laying** Saturday 19 November  
Come and try your hand at the traditional craft of hedge laying

**Scrub clearance** Sunday 11 December  
All the cut scrub is burnt on a bonfire which should keep us warm on a chilly winter day.

## Guided walks

**Meet the Ranger** Sunday 16 October  
Join one of the Country Park's Rangers to learn about the Park and the Ranger's role.

Walk lasts 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Some rough paths and gradients of over 1:6 Book in advance. £3 Adults, £2 children. 01234 767037

## Bird Walks

Allow our expert Forest Volunteers show you the Park's birds and other wildlife.

No experience necessary. Bring binoculars if you have them (not essential). Some rough paths and short lengths of gradient over 1:6. Walks start at 8am and last 3 hours. £3/adult, £2/child. £1 reduction for Volunteers and Friends. Book in advance; pay leader on the day - 01234 767037

**Autumn migrants** Saturday 10 September  
Summer's done and birds are on the move. Check out the arrivals ahead of the frost.

**Winter thrushes** Saturday 12 November  
The arrival of redwings and fieldfares heralds the start of winter; but they won't be alone.

**Bank holiday birds** Tuesday 27 December  
Shake off Christmas excess and find out how birds fare at this time of year.

**Feathers in the freezer** Saturday 4 February  
Life's tough at this time of year and there's always a chance of rarities in the Park

## Sunday Strolls

Gentle walks on the first Sunday of every month. Hear how the Park was set up and a little about the surrounding area.

Walks will keep to hard surfaced tracks in the Park. Mostly level, some short sections of gradient up to 1:9.

£1 payable on the day - no need to book. Meet at reception. Walks last approximately 2 hours.

## National Trust walking festival

Sunday 23rd October  
Activities at Willington - more information [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/gonewalking](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/gonewalking)

## Address

The Forest Centre, Station Road,  
Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire,  
MK43 0PR

Phone: 01234 767037  
Email: [info@marstonvale.org](mailto:info@marstonvale.org)  
Registered Charity No 1069229.

## How to find us

- By train - an enjoyable train ride (to Millbrook or Stewartby on the Bedford to Bletchley line) and a lovely 20 minute walk through the Park.  
Call 0845 602 4277 or visit [www.londonmidland.com](http://www.londonmidland.com)
- By bus - call Traveline 0871 200 22 33 or visit [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)
- By cycle - Route 51 takes you direct to the Forest Centre.
- By car - follow the brown signs from the A421 at Marston Moretaine. The entrance is off Station Road.
- Satnav - best postcode to reach the Centre's entrance drive MK43 0PS

## Opening Times

The Country Park is open all the time. However the Centre and car park are open 7 days per week 10am - 6pm, until 30 October, then 10am - 5pm.

For cycle hire opening times, please call 01234 767037 or visit [www.marstonvale.org/countrypark/cycling.html](http://www.marstonvale.org/countrypark/cycling.html)

From October, bikes should be booked 24 hours in advance. Call 07773 254627.



[www.lets-go.org.uk](http://www.lets-go.org.uk) for routes and sites throughout Beds