



native woodlands
discussion group

newsletters 1-12

P.R. Quetch

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 1

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NATIVE PINEWOODS DISCUSSION GROUP

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Newsletter 1 Autumn 1974

1. Inverness Meeting, May 1974

Firstly our apologies for the late arrival of the newsletter but we had hoped to enclose the transcript of the tape recordings of the meeting, but typing difficulties eventually defeated us. However the transcript is now in the final stages of preparation and we should be able to send it out in the near future.

2. Symposium, May 1975

Following the enthusiastic response to the Group's first meeting, it is proposed that the next meeting be in the form of a symposium. The suggested title is 'The Ecology and Conservation of the Native Pinwoods of Scotland'. The aim of the symposium would be to discuss the past development of the pinewood resource in Scotland, its ecological characteristics and the prospects for its future protection, study, and management. Provisional arrangements have been made for the symposium at the Coylumbridge Hotel, Aviemore, from 19-23 May, 1975, under the joint sponsorship of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology and the Nature Conservancy Council.

It is hoped that members of the Group will be able to make a major contribution to the symposium and we are seeking your support at this early stage. The prospective programme is enclosed with this newsletter. It has been designed to reflect a wide range of interests, and to attract all who are involved in both the study and the management of the native pinewoods of Scotland. We would be grateful to hear your comments on the enclosed programme, and in particular, to hear if you would like to contribute to any of the sessions. The morning and afternoon sessions are expected to contain approximately 1-hour papers, with shorter papers in the evenings. General comments and suggested papers should be sent to Dr R G H Bunce by 14 October 1974. The address is:

Institute of Terrestrial Ecology
Merlewood Research Station
Grange-over-Sands
Cumbria. Tel: Grange-over-Sands 2264

We would also like to hear of your suggestions for speakers, topics or site visits which could be incorporated within the programme framework. Whilst the main theme of the symposium will concentrate on the Scottish pinewoods, contributions of international interest would also be welcome. It is hoped that a number of overseas workers will present papers at the symposium. The proceedings will subsequently be published although in what form has yet to be decided.

3. Questionnaire - Survey of responses

To date 63 people have joined the group and have returned the original questionnaire. This has already partly fulfilled its function in providing the basis on which the meeting in May was organised but at that meeting it was decided to present a summary of the responses. These give a broad picture of the interests of the members comprising the group. Where several alternatives were given, these were all included in order to represent the overall balance of interests - the total numbers are therefore usually in excess of the total group membership. Where no answers were given in some of the later questions, however, the numbers will be correspondingly lower.

Q.3 What is your interest in the Pinewoods?

Owner	6
Research	31
Conservationist	30
Wildlife manager	9
Teacher	7
Other	1
Forester	21
Recreation Manager	3

Planner	4
Naturalist	14
Historian	5
Artist	2

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The membership, as expected, is therefore largely composed of people with general occupations related to the pinewoods, with more peripheral interests only marginally represented. As has already been proposed therefore, an important role could be in the dissemination of information on the pinewoods to a larger audience.

Q.4 What are your particular topics of interest?

Botany	27
Geology	2
Zoology	8
Birds	7
Ferns	2
Lichens	5
Deer	11
Mammals	9
Forestry	36
Ecology	47
Soils	13
Flowering plants	7
Bryophytes	6
Veg. history	18
Land use history	22
Insects	4
Fungi	5

There is a heavy emphasis here on the botanical aspects, with a marked lack of specialist groups. There is also a marked interest in the historical aspects of the forests. A useful further function would therefore be to stimulate interest in specialists in different fields to those at present covered. Details of more particular studies will be produced in due course in the research and publications registers.

Size of group

10 - 20	13
30 - 50	28
50 - 100	2
unlimited	10

The group has therefore become slightly larger than the optimum size expressed by most respondents. However, as was pointed out by several people, it is unlikely that all people will attend each meeting and hence the numbers present at any particular meeting will probably be within the right range.

Formal or Informal

Virtually all respondents thought that the best procedure was to have a mixture - as was done in the first meeting.

Frequency of meetings

Once a year	41
Twice a year	13
One day	45
Two days	9

The conclusions from these figures have been taken into account in the planning of meetings.

Additional comments

Several additional objectives were suggested and these are outlined below:-

Formation of a special action committee to prevent felling at short notice.

To encourage the owner of each wood to manage it in such a way that its long term survival is assured.

Lesser known stands to be visited.

Publicity.

Dissemination of management advice.

To devise methods which will encourage expansion of the existing pinewoods and to allow others to develop.

To prepare a register of publications.

Periodic tours of pinewoods to illustrate the conservation problems and view development.

To monitor the relative success of management schemes aimed at strengthening the pinewoods ecological self-sufficiency.

The formation of an action group to induce preservation of the outlying populations by acquisition.

Total description of the Pinewood ecosystem.

Discussion of financial grants.

To take into account the amenity and recreation value of native pinewoods in accepting sound management.

All these points could be discussed at later meetings.

R G H BUNCE

ITE, Merlewood.

D Morris

NCC, Aviemore, Inverness.