

BBC Radio Newcastle interview – Jonathan Pounder

Friday 12th December 2013

10.30am

BBC Newcastle, Barrack Road, Newcastle, NE99 1RN

Meeting Simon Logan for the pre-recorded interview focusing on coppicing and why it is so important to preserve this ancient rural skill

Background

Coppicing is on the comeback in Kirknewton. The Sill and Bedale based Heritage Craft Alliance have been hosting a series of trial taster days, for people to try their hand at ancient rural skills which have played such a big part in the development of the Northumbrian countryside.

The recent coppicing course which took place over a two-day period in Kirknewton was oversubscribed and proved to be a real success. BBC reporter, Simon Logan, would like a practical overview of what's involved in coppicing and what it takes to learn this skill.

As a form of forestry based on the harvesting of woodland, this Defra-supported practical course has helped to preserve an important rural habitat in Northumberland National Park, opening up the dense canopy to support many species of wildlife. It also offered a special training opportunity to enable people from all walks of life to develop knowledge and understanding of some of the oldest rural skills.

Please can you also stress the importance of the preservation of rural skills and the fact that as part of Northumberland National Park and YHA's vision to create The Sill landscape discovery centre, these skills and rural training opportunities will be made available to a wide range of people.

The line of questioning by BBC Radio Newcastle will be along the lines of the following:

- Coppicing in Kirknewton – how did this all come about?
- Tell us a bit about the course itself, what was involved?
- What is coppicing and how long has it been in existence?
- What tools do you need to coppice? Talk me through how a typical training session might go?
- What are the benefits of coppicing?

- You've been working in partnership with The Sill at Northumberland National Park – tell us a bit more about what's been involved?
- Why is it so important to preserve these rural skills?
- How did you become a 'coppicer' and why did this appeal to you?
- Will people be able to try out coppicing or other rural skills again?

Key messages

- Northumberland National Park Authority and Heritage Craft Alliance are committed to the preservation of rural skills in the community
- The Sill will provide increased training opportunities to enhance the rural economy and open up heritage to a wider audience
- Preserving the skills of the past is vital in helping to shape the rural landscape of the future
- The Northumberland countryside is a rich tapestry of history and heritage and it's vital for the preservation of our infrastructure that these aspects are conserved and brought into the modern age
- Coppicing is a valuable technique which can impact on forestry for generations
- Coppicing provides many benefits to the rural community, including the provision of sustainable timber
- The Sill will become a training hub for the provision of rural skills for people in rural and urban areas, working with partners such as Heritage Craft Alliance to make this a reality
- The recent coppicing course was supported by Defra funding, which allowed the team to offer it at a heavily discounted rate
- Activities like the recent coppicing course are a great way of encouraging people to explore the whole of Northumberland National Park
- Rural training is about enjoyment and having fun – the people at the recent coppicing course made new friends, learnt a new skill and enjoyed getting out into the great outdoors
- Courses such as this appeal to a wide range of people – the group at the recent coppicing course was representative of people from all walks of life and show just how diverse an audience heritage skills training appeals to.
- Check out The Sill website www.thesill.org.uk to find out more about upcoming events.