



For immediate release

June 2016

WOODLAND AREA WILL EXPAND FOR 2016 KENT COUNTY SHOW

Murrain Wood at the Kent Showground will see more activities, exhibits and demonstrations for the 2016 Kent County Show taking place on 8th, 9th and 10th July.

The woodland area has been looked after by a dedicated Committee since the Showground was acquired in 1964. Through decades of hard work and woodland management the area between Entrances 2 and 3 is beautifully peaceful, with a large number of interesting activities, displays and demonstrations.

This year for the first time the Woodland Area will host its own ring, sponsored by Belmont Estate. Belmont House and Estate, based in Faversham, is not only a visitor attraction but sells quality seasoned firewood logs. Belmont Estate has an in-house team of foresters maintaining the 670 acres of traditional coppiced woodland on the Estate. The Country Estate will also have stand in the Woodland Area promoting their Belmont 'Woodfest' and Country Fair event on the 10th and 11th September.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager said, "The Woodland Committee works really hard each year to maintain the stunning woodland area and during Show days it is a real haven of peace and tranquillity. We are fortunate to have a large number of interesting and exciting stands. The Kent Scouts and Girlguiding Kent have a brilliant area inside Murrain Wood which always draws the crowds".

Visitors to the Belmont Estate Woodland Ring during Show days will be able to watch Chainsaw Sculpture or Speed Carving at 10.00am each morning and then repeated at midday and again for a third slot in the afternoon. Sally May, a former tree-surgeon, will

be showcasing the incredible skills involved in chainsaw sculpture will be demonstrating on Friday and Sunday. Sally is based in Norfolk and has gained a reputation for creating stunning pieces, particularly birds and animals. Chris Keeler, the current Chairman of the Show's Woodland Committee and also a speed carver will be demonstrating the intense accuracy needed to create his art. Chris will be demonstrating in the Belmont Estate Woodland Ring on all three days.

For the budding Bear Grylls amongst our visitors, the Badger Bushcraft team will be putting on a display every day at 10.30am and then again at 3.00pm. Based in Ashford, Badger Bushcraft was founded by Phil Brown in 2008, he will be talking to visitors about basic and advanced bushcraft skills, wilderness survival training, primitive technology, wild foods and foraging. Each year the interest in being more in tune with nature becomes greater with an ever increasing number of television programmes and series about survival.

For something a little bit different and definitely alternative, the ring will be hosting the 'Nerdy Birdies' every day at 11.30am, 1.00pm and 3.30pm. The audience will join four enthusiastic and energetic ornithologists on a flighty journey through everything avian with their very own 'Bird Cabaret'. Expect a murmuration of madness, a dabble of dance and some flocking good fun with this ensemble dance and street theatre display.

At 12.30pm each day the area will host a series of talks, on Friday, Dr. Joe Burman, Senior Lecturer, School of Human and Life Sciences, Christchurch University and on Saturday Dr Chris Harvey from the same department. On Sunday, Phil Buckley will be talking to visitors about the wonderful British Dormouse.

Each year at the Kent County Show a number of Forestry Awards are presented, this year the Society are delighted that they have received a record number of nominations for the three trophies that are awarded; the Sir Edward Hardy Trophy, the CLA Trophy and the new Woodreave Trophy.

The Edward Hardy Trophy is awarded to an individual or group of people in recognition of outstanding service to the forestry and woodland industry in Kent. This year the

standard of applications was so high that the committee decided to jointly award the Edward Hardy Trophy to brothers Jim and Tom Doy from Canterbury and the Valley Conservation Group based just outside of Maidstone.

Jim and Tom Doy have been coppicing Church Wood and other woods in Blean for in excess of forty years. They are always happy and eager to explain woodland management and the benefits of the practice of coppicing to the dozens of visitors who walk through large parts of the Blean every day. The Valley Conservation Society, started in 2000, is formed of a group of volunteers who undertake the practical work within the Loose Valley Conservation Area. The area includes woodland, grassland, historic mill ponds and a newly purchased piece of scrubland which they will be converting back to grass and lowland wet meadow. The Valley Conservation Society also work with the local community, schools and colleges and encourage the general public to visit the area in this beautiful part of Maidstone.

The CLA Trophy is awarded to an individual in recognition of outstanding service to forestry and land management in Kent over many years. The 2016 award has been given to Rick Vallis from Silva Woodland Management Ltd. Rick has a wealth of experience formed over 25 years of advising on woodland management for both private and public sector landowners. Rick's experience enables him to offer advice on a wide range of operations within the woodland sector including consultancy, survey, mapping, timber harvesting and marketing and is seen as a 'go to' person. The committee felt Rick was a worthy award winner for the CLA Trophy.

The final award is the Woodreave Trophy. Introduced this year to award a young individual based in Kent for outstanding achievements within their learning and study of woodland and forestry related subjects. Applications were received for brothers, Joshua and Kieran Gorman and the committee felt that due to their similar learning paths that the award should be jointly awarded to them. Both are now completing woodland apprenticeships at Kent Woodland Employment Scheme, having finished an extensive range of woodland courses and qualifications.

All three awards will be presented on Friday 8th July on the CLA Stand at the Kent County Show.

This year the woodland area will also host the return of the Palemaking Competition on Saturday 9th July. It's been over 15 years since the competition has been held at the Kent County Show and the re-introduction has been kindly supported and sponsored by Torry Hill Chestnut Fencing. Competitors will have 40 minutes to make as many bundles of fencing pales as they can with points being awarded for the quality of the workmanship. The winning presentations will be made at 4.00pm in the Belmont Estate Woodland Ring.

The online ticket system is now open to purchase discounted tickets for the 2016 Kent County Show. A family ticket will cost £43.20 in advance or £48 when bought at the gate. The family ticket entitles 2 adults and 2 children aged between 5 and 15 a full day entrance. Children under 5 go free and parking is free. Adult tickets are £19.80 in advance and £22 on the gate, a child ticket is £5.40 in advance and £6 on the gate. Multiday tickets cost £50 and are only available in advance.

The Kent County Show starts at 8am and stays open until 6pm although there is no rush to leave as some of the food stands stay open later. The Show has over 140 different activities, workshops, displays and competitions which run throughout the day and are often repeated daily.

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For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager
lucy@kentshowground.co.uk 01622 630975.

Kent County Show – 8,9,10 July 2016

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