

Beyond the Grain

A day of timber craft and woodland wonders at North Eggardon

It's fair to say that very few materials possess the allure of wood. It has a unique appeal, both sensory and psychological—wood offers warmth, texture, comfort, and timeless beauty. Unlike steel or concrete, wood seems alive and organic. It ages gracefully, telling the story of time. These are some of the many reasons why a unique Woodland Day in July at North Eggardon near Powerstock is such a special event.

In addition to demonstrations of log splitting, horse logging, sawmilling, steam bending, and hurdle making, as well as many other activities and talks, there will be special woodland walks that organiser Victor Crutchley describes as offering a fascinating diversity of species and insight into methods of cultivating trees.

Students from the Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy and Hooke Park School of Architecture frequently visit the woodland surrounding North Eggardon near Powerstock, and many have already enjoyed a special walk among the mature trees and young conifers, including Douglas Fir, Western red cedar, coastal redwood, and Japanese cedar. 'This year the main walk will be into the lower part of Knowle' says Victor, 'where herb-paris and twayblade appear beneath the poplar and sycamore.'

The event also marks the 25th anniversary of the Carpenter's Fellowship, with activities planned before and during Woodland Day. 'They bring a lot of extra skills to show on the day, such as hewing a log into a beam, pit sawing, blacksmithing, and apparently, axe throwing,' says Victor. 'They are bringing a trebuchet they made which flings things—hopefully balloons of water rather than something smelly.' He says they are also making a horse gin, which later in the year might be used to crush apples, 'the power coming from the circle-walking horse (or a few minions) via a large wooden wheel and pinion gear to a shaft which spins, driving a machine like a scratter that pulps apples.'

Children can try their hand at peg making, shingle making, beam rolling, pole lathe turning, and older people can try cleaving with a froe and pit sawing.

This year, for the first time, there will be talks in the marquee, and Victor also promises 'plenty of choice from Henry's Beard to Yumlicious's stews.'

With opportunities to discover new hobbies, meet like-minded enthusiasts, and make lasting memories, the North Eggardon Woodland Day promises much to explore and experience. It will be open from 10 am to 5 pm on July 20th at North Eggardon Farm, DT6 3ST.

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