

Churchwood Chronicle

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Life Among the Trees

During our 23-year tenure at Churchwood, trees have always been at centre stage. They help define our distinctive ecosystem, providing food and habitat for a multitude of wildlife and creating the tranquil atmosphere that is felt throughout the valley. Whether harbouring a colony of wild honey bees or providing a home for a family of tawny owls, trees are at the heart of what we do.

We are very lucky to have such a varied woodland, with a large number of mainly native species enjoying self-sustaining populations, both throughout the park and within our woodlands on either side. There are also some more notable specimens to be seen, such as the rare Lucombe oak, situated on the entrance driveway and a large veteran Sweet Chestnut, of around 250 years old, which can be seen from Middle Road.

Although beautiful to look at and invaluable for the environment, our trees do require a lot of hard work to maintain. We have surveys each year and are regularly trimming, pruning and removing trees when the need arises. Notably, we recently had to fell a very large beech tree which was over 200 years old, 100 feet tall and 4 feet across at the base. Although very beautiful, this tree was suffering from decay within the root system, deeming it unsafe.

While, unfortunately, we do have to remove some trees, we are very aware of replacing those that leave a gap in the canopy or the root network. Due to our natural woodland management, those replacements are often self-seeded saplings, already in situ; sometimes, however, intervention is required.



Tom Stansell (centre) and tree surgeon Charles Wilson discuss the felled beech while Tom's son Rowan listens from his perch on the trunk



Recently, we decided to fell two large non-native Monterey Pines for safety reasons, replacing these with native Hornbeam trees, which are absolutely thriving in this environment and can be seen on Church Walk. We have

Left: 'Owlivia' one of our tawny owl residents!

also planted some apple, pear and plum trees and some wildflower seeds in an area just below Middle Road that was disturbed by winter work earlier this year.

Our woodland is constantly changing and developing and with careful monitoring and the right decisions being implemented, this can continue to be a change for the better. For us here at Churchwood Valley, trees always have been and always will be a cornerstone to creating an environment that we hope you will appreciate and enjoy as much as we do. 🌲



Visit our web-site at: www.churchwoodvalley.com



Your fabulous Facebook photos

As ever, our Facebook page has been full of fabulous photos sent in by our talented guests. Thank you all for your lovely shots, please keep them coming. If you don't follow us on Facebook, you are missing a treat!



Ken Alexander



Linda Butler



Linda Butler



Christine Edmunds



Ken Alexander



Christine Edmunds

CHURCHWOOD VALLEY 2024 CALENDAR

At Churchwood Valley, we have wildlife, not nightlife. There are no discos, bars or cafes. Just rock pools, wildlife and breathtaking scenery. Churchwood Valley is a beautiful, natural wooded valley running down to the sea at Wembury Bay in South Devon. A haven of peace within an environmental paradise, Churchwood Valley is just a few minutes' walk from a safe family beach and the South West Coast Path.

Each holiday cabin has its own plot on the hillside surrounded by trees, flowering shrubs and hedges. Without leaving your armchair you'll see delightful displays of bird life and other wildlife visiting your private patio.

All the photos in this calendar are taken in and around Churchwood Valley and Wembury Parish. You can follow what's going on at Churchwood Valley, and see more inspiring photographs, on our Facebook page.

£1 from the sale of every calendar is donated to Wembury Marine Centre

Churchwood Valley - we have wildlife, not nightlife!

Churchwood Valley Ltd, Wembury Bn, Plymouth, South Devon PL9 6DZ
Tel: 01752 862382 www.churchwoodvalley.com email: info@churchwoodvalley.com

Enjoy the view all year round!

If you know anyone who is a Churchwood Valley fan, or who just likes a calendar full of gorgeous photos... then make sure you buy a copy of the 2024 Churchwood Valley Calendar!

If we say so ourselves, we think this is our best yet. The calendar features 12 glorious colour photos taken in and around Churchwood Valley and Wembury parish.

The calendar costs £5.50 for one copy or £10 for two with £1 from every calendar sold being donated to Wembury Marine Centre.

If you'd like us to post one to you, the postage is £2.25 first class and £1.85 for second class for one calendar. Call us on 01752 862382 or email info@churchwoodvalley.com to arrange. 📧

PS. Don't forget that the calendar makes a wonderful Christmas present for family, friends and all fans of Churchwood!

Amazing Autumn!

News from Churchwood Forest School
by Emma Draper, Forest School Leader

The light at this time of year is absolutely amazing. It's wonderful to sit listening to the birds chat back and forth while the smoke from the fire rises up through the sun's rays that stream in as the sun dips lower.

Everything is silent and then suddenly, CRASH! a sweet chestnut falls through the canopy and lands with a thud. The trees drop their multi-coloured leaves and the children love to make leaf piles and throw them up in the air. The wild craft tables suddenly fill with leaves as children make leaf art and rubbings with the fantastic variety of leaves in our forest.

With shorter, winter nights drawing in, we are preparing our hedgehog houses and bug hotel for new inhabitants.

The children love stuffing the hedgehog houses with straw, creating a warm cosy place for this year's lucky inhabitant, then leaving a trail of hedgehog food to entice them in.

Forest School doesn't stop in the winter, it just gets better. Welly walks are the way on wet and wild days. The Kindergarten children love exploring the maze of the holiday park, we never have a destination, we just stop off every now and then to climb on benches, feed the chickens or spot birds.

Autumn and winter Holiday Club days are when we really get to put the elaborate dens built in the summer to the test. Are they waterproof? Have they held up in the winds?

We are excited to welcome children back to Forest Holiday Club in the Christmas holidays. Sessions run 10am-4pm and are £30 per child. If you are staying at the Churchwood, we offer a discount. Please ask at Reception for the discount code.

To book, please go to: www.churchwoodforestschool.com/holidayclub 



Back to the Future

Our latest recruit is Tom Higgins, a Wembury boy, who is our new Deputy General Manager. This is the second time Tom has worked for Churchwood. The first was as a 'Saturday boy' back in 2000 when we bought Churchwood. Tom, and other local lads, would come in on Saturday and work with our head groundsman, blowing patios, cleaning windows and picnic tables and doing other outside jobs.

Tom went on to do a degree in business studies and then joined a local startup making curry sauces. He was a member of a team that created specific sauces from the basic ingredients, herbs and spices, and packaged them up for sale to restaurants and the general public. One of the tools they employed to get the large volumes of mixtures right was the accounting software package called Sage, which he had learnt to use when doing his degree.


He couldn't see a long term future in spices, however, and was

offered a job by an insurance broker where he worked for 13 years before deciding he needed to change tack again. After a spell doing odd jobs for local firms Tom Stansell offered him some work at Churchwood, backing up the outside team and helping with undergrounding our electrics. A willing and cheerful worker he soon became a regular member of staff and Shirley, Tom and John thought he could play a useful role in our management team, while also understudying others such as the maintenance manager and



Tom Higgins, our new Deputy General Manager

the leader of the outside group. We were delighted when Tom Higgins accepted our offer and started with us in August.

In a throwback to his first time at Churchwood, one of his first tasks was helping to dig up and replace a sewer pipe! 

Churchwood makes the art grow fonder!

This year we have experienced a larger than normal number of people who have expressed their delight at having found or returned to Churchwood and they tell us of their pleasure at the peace and quiet, the beauty of the landscape and our conservation ethic. It has also seemingly stirred those with an artistic eye to transfer their feelings onto paper.

For example Robbie Horsepool sent us an e-mail attaching this sketch (below) with the comment "We very much enjoyed our stay. A lovely spot. So many lovely walks and great beach for swimming. Our cabin was very nice with a lovely outlook which tempted me to do a quick sketch." I asked him if he'd done any more and he said he had done one but it was a bit naughty!



Anton Pain, who painted a version of our logo on his wall (right), said "I just find the whole area relaxing and an ideal place to spend time at. The whole atmosphere of being on the coastal path and the quietness and nature inspired me to replicate a scene onto my house wall. During the winter months I look out of my living room window and see not only my garden but a view of Wembury, with the sea, the Mewstone Island and sunsets." What a fabulous mural!



And finally, Jan Welsman painted delightful images of the Churchwood chickens which we have used in postcards we sell in the shop and we share with you below. 🐔



Mewstone Mutts

Chloe O'Donnell's business Mewstone Mutts, is taking over from Cara Pitcher as our local dogwalker and minder for the 2024 season. Cara has recently moved house and is also due to become a Mum at about Christmas time so she feels she might have enough to do for the time being!

Chloe O'Donnell



Chloe offers dog walks of varying lengths of time either solo or group walks, depending on the dogs' temperaments. She also offers pop in pet visits and a pet sitting service.

She is fully insured, has completed a Canine First Aid course and has an up-to-date DBS check that she brings with her to show owners at the first meeting with them and their pets. Her working hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 to 17:00 and she can do weekend and evenings.

Her price list is shown below.

Price List

Solo Dog Walk (60mins)	£16
Solo Dog Walk (30mins)	£12
Pet Visit (30mins)	£12
Group Dog Walk (60mins)	£14

To contact Chloe please call her on 07472984730 or e-mail her at info@mewstonemutts.co.uk 🐔