

Patrick

Cranleigh Community News

YOU WRITE IT, WE'LL PRINT IT - **GUARANTEED** Send your story to: communitynews@trinitysouth.co.uk



Woodland visitors inspired by tour

by Alan Golden

AN area of woodland between Shamley Green and Farley Heath was described as 'an example to all such wood owners' during a Royal Forestry Society (RFS) visit.

About 40 RFS South East division members and guests toured the Sandhurst Copse and Sheepwalk woodland as part of a regular monthly programme of visits.

The organisation, founded in 1882 and with nearly 4,000 members, is a national charity for the spread of knowledge of trees and forestry so

that Britain's woodland life may be conserved, expanded and improved.

Sandhurst Copse and Sheepwalk covers 32-hectares of broadleaf woodland, part of which is scheduled as ancient, and has been owned for the last 10 years by Patrick Mannix of Shamley Green, who hosted the visit.

The woodland is open to the public for walkers, by application, and is well known among local people for its chestnuts and bluebells.

The RFS group saw many impressive trees more than 200 years old. These will be

encouraged to develop to become veteran trees as they are 'amenity' trees well past their timber 'sell-by date', never to be cut down.

However, Mr Mannix said: "A wood also needs to generate revenue to support itself for long term survival."

Sweet chestnut coppice is now regularly harvested for post and rail fencing, tree stakes, firewood and timber for construction, the latter cut on a sawmill on the site. Overgrown hazel coppice is also being brought back into rotation and at the same time producing firewood.

The group also saw the

potential devastation caused by repeated defoliation of oaks by winter moth caterpillars over five to six years, for which there is no solution - nature will take its course.

Regional RFS chairman, Richard Coombs, said that the 'enthusiasm, dedication and willingness to learn as well as the equipment demonstrations should be an example to all such wood owners'.

The organisation's secretary, Neil Humphries, added: "It was a very stimulating and informative visit and an inspiration to other small woodland owners."