What's it all about at the IOL Bushcraft Special Events?

Bushcraft workshops

- a description of these well supported special events

A report from Nick Winder

The IOL Bushcraft SIG offers 2 day workshop events, 2 or 3 times a year at various locations around the UK, though so far only in England (various locations) and Scotland (once!)

The aim of these workshops is to teach practitioners skills that will empower them to use bushcraft in their programmes and sessions. Bushcraft is a vast subject and everyone has something to learn so the workshops also provide an opportunity for the sharing of ideas and the promotion of best practise.

The skills covered complement those that appear in the Bushcraft Competency Certificate.(BCC) Specifically those covered by the BCC are; fire by friction, fire by other means, safe knife and saw use, shelter building, producing safe water, basic tree and plant ID and basic all around knowledge. If you need to learn these skills you should attend one of the courses that are regularly advertised in Horizons and on the website.

The SIG offers these workshops at a very discounted rate to SIG members (£55), discounted rate to IOL members(£80), and a reasonable price to non members(£120). We see this as a way to give something to the membership and to increase the use of bushcraft, which we are all passion-ate about. All the SIG executive, who organise these events, and often instruct at them, believe in the power of learning in the wilds through the use of these ancient but relevant skills.

Who attends this events? Anyone who has an interest in bushcraft on any level, who wants to learn and network with like minded people. We get teachers, instructors, youth workers, students, bushcraft professionals, in short, anyone with a desire to discover new skills for their own interest or to empower their own instructional work..

The workshops run from 1100 on day 1 through to early afternoon of day 2. This allows six separate two hour workshops to be offered and the topics covered have been wide ranging, as befits such a massive subject area. Most topics are covered twice.

Workshop have included:

TRACKING - basic skills in animal and human tracking SPOON CARVING - take a green stick and create a spoon WILD FOODS - wild edible plants, fungi and fruits, and how to make tasty meals with them CAMP FURNITURE - chairs and tables, all made from natural materials <u>BOW MAKING - make</u> a serviceable bow and arrow from raw materials

CAMP BAKING - both damper breads and risen breads

CORDAGE MAKING - making string from a variety of wild materials DUTCH ARROWS AND SPEAR THROWERS - make them and learn to use them KNIFE SHARPENING - how to do it well and properly

USING POLE LATHES - a real traditional craft skill, lathe work without electricity

FLINT KNAPPING - making useable blades and tools from flint TIN STOVES - wood cooking stoves can be made from cast off tins

PREPARING GAME - how to skin and prepare rabbits, birds, etc for cooking

PUMP DRILLS - how to build a drill that will bore through stone and wood accurately

THROWING STICKS AND BULL ROARERS - make them and use them SPLITTING GREEN WOOD - how to do it well and use what you create ALTERNATIVE FIRE MAKING - there are many ways of generating fire MAKING WHISTLES FROM GREEN WOOD - can get noisy

 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{WEAVING}}\xspace$ BASKETS - weaving willow or brambles etc to create baskets or trays

MAKING GRASS MATS - create a kneeling or sleeping mat POT HANGERS - the kettle or pan needs to be suspended over the fire - how to

PREPARING FISH - descaling and gutting, and how to cook them HAND DRILL - making fire with hands and sticks and others!



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The instructors are very experienced in their those known to be able to deliver quality sessions, e.g. for flint knapping. The instructors will happily and hope that they engender a desire to master and use the skills taught. We derive our greatest pleasure when we hear that a topic has been used to involve youngsters in outdoor skills, which has happened on several occasions when attendees been told about youngsters making and shooting with bows they made themselves over an hour or so, and gaining greatly from the concentration required, safe knife use, and satisfaction of success.

There will generally be about eight different topics covered during one event, with most topics to fulfil such when we get them. People sign up for the topics they want and change after each two hour session.

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a kettle on a fire to provide brews during the e.g., try my home made sausage etc. If people want

on composting systems. If in doubt feel free to ask.

shelters, or bivvy sheets as they prefer and once creations and skills.

strives to do what its membership wants, and they regularly say they want more workshops, most attended and made the trip up worthwhile for all

I believe they offer superb value and achieve their aims and the feedback from members and Once again, I have been filled with inspiration and reenergised. The whole thing was well organised and the instructors very knowledgeable and skilful. Even better than June! Well Done.

Thank you for a well thought out and planned weekend. I enjoyed every aspect. Look forward to doing it again

I was quite apprehensive before coming – not sure if *I* had enough experience- but everyone has made me feel most welcome and I have achieved so much with the help of all the tutors!

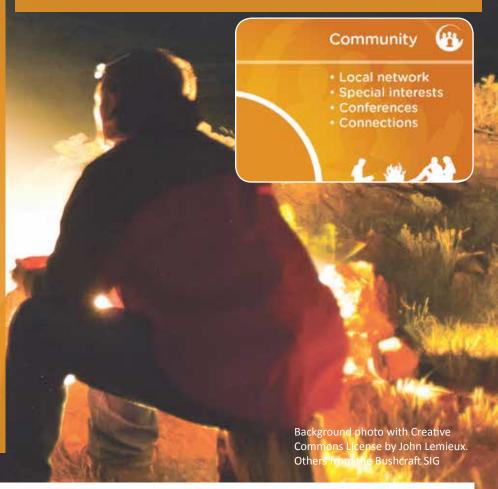
Set up, surroundings, tuition, banter excellent.

This is the first event of this type I have been to. I am a Forest School Leader and I will take away loads of great new ideas that I can use with my young participants.

Fantastic two days. Did not know what to expect but will go away with so many ideas. Please keep up the great work that you do.

Inspiring and enjoyable. Great to try things I have long been meaning to in a supportive and well taught format. A brilliant non threatening environment.

You can find out more, or book for events that are set, via the Bushcraft pages of the IOL website. Keep an eye on the website, in the newsletters and through invitations by email.



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