



Forestry England

# Bedgebury Apprentice Blog

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By Ella



Moving from winter to spring, Bedgebury has had yet another diverse and productive working month. It is the time of year when we prune all our willows and dogwoods across the site. The tree team, as well as some of the Visitor Centre staff, have been kept very busy doing so. At the beginning of the month, I was based down at Marshal's Lake pruning not just the willow and dogwoods, but also a mixture of alder and birch from around the edge of the lake, as well as on and around the island, to tidy up all the regrowth. To get around the lake we used our trusty boat, fondly referred to as 'HMS Bedgebury' by the tree team. This was a task I was particularly excited about. Previously I did not have much pruning experience, but it's safe to say that I now do!

Between pruning by the lakes and at the Visitor Centre, I had my first experience with a hedge cutter. In the cark park in particular, but also elsewhere around the site, it was time for the pampas grass to be cut. I really enjoyed this task; it was satisfying learning to use a new machine, in preparation for our chainsaw course next month. As you can see in the photo to your right, it was a gorgeous morning with blue skies; it really did feel like a summer's day.





Back to Marshal's Lake, we had done everything we could using 'HMS Bedgebury' and it was now time to get wading. We had to figure out a way of getting all the brush from the island to our trailer to transport it all to the yard. We decided that the most effective and efficient way of doing this was to wade to and from the island, using the boat to transport the brush from the island to the side of the lake. It must be said that Sarah and I had a great laugh doing this, despite the water going over my waders at one point and the fact that we were doing this task in the rain. There is a goose

currently nesting on the island, so we kept a couple of stalls of alder around her to give her some cover from the elements. At first, understandably, she was not particularly keen on us being on her island, but in the end she understood we were there to cause no harm and her nest remained undisturbed.

Whilst the site has been very busy this month with different contractors coming and going, we have just received a brand new timber crane. Julian will be spending a lot of time using it all around the site collecting up all the timber we have felled over the past winter. This particular timber crane is operated using remote control; there has been an interesting discussion about whether it could be used from your sofa at home! Just wishful thinking perhaps...



Mulching the specimens has continued throughout this month, both in the beds near the Visitor Centre and around the base of each cherry tree in the avenue. I found it really interesting to learn that the great white cherry (*Prunus 'Tai Haku'*), planted all along the path leading up to the play area, had been lost in its homeland, Japan, until it was later re-discovered and re-introduced back to Japan by Collingwood Ingram (known as 'Cherry Ingram'). Amazingly, it was found growing in the garden of his home, The Grange, in Benenden. Keep an eye out for the cherry blossom which should appear over the next couple of weeks. I have yet to see it but have been told by many that it really is stunning and well worth a visit.