



The Log Cabin Classroom at the Woodland Education Centre

The Offwell Woodland & Wildlife Trust runs the Woodland Education Centre in partnership with the Forestry Commission. The Centre is one of the leading environmental education centres in the south-west of England. The Trust also has one of the largest websites about the British Countryside. The website is part of the National Grid for Learning and features over 60,000 keywords and topics. Every year, the award winning site gets millions of hits from more than 100 countries.

The Woodland Education Centre is in the East Devon AONB near Honiton. The 50 acre site is set in a steep-sided wooded valley. It is unique, not only because of the great diversity of restored habitats which are all within easy access of each other, but also for the way they are used for education.

Work on restoring the Centre began in 1986. Since then, the Trust has been removing and controlling invasive Rhododendron, while at the same time, restoring a great variety of native habitats. The removal of the Rhododendron has allowed an amazing array of native plants to recolonize the area together with their attendant animal species. As a result, the Centre is now an area of great conservation value and has been designated a County Wildlife Site.



The restored aquatic habitats at the Centre have become a vital amphibian spawning ground. In the early spring, thousands of toads and frogs congregate in the Centre's lake, ponds and wetlands. This is a spectacle which has been shown many times on both regional and national television.



A sufficient number of dragonfly species have been recorded at the Centre to render it eligible for designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Amongst these is the Ruddy Darter Dragonfly, which is known to breed at only two other sites in the whole of Devon.



Kingfishers breed on site together with many other animals including Dormice, one of England's most endangered mammals. Otters also pass through to the delight of visitors to the area.



The Centre is extensively used for environmental education by all sectors of the community. In the field work season, a class or group visits every day to explore a variety of habitats through hands-on practical activities. Complementing this educational activity, the Trust also runs an extensive website. This provides follow-up information and resources for visiting groups. The website provides an enormous variety of information for people throughout Britain and even further afield, who are unable to take advantage of the Centre itself.

The website (www.offwell.info) features a whole range of resources, catering for a full spectrum of users. Visitors can access the largest quantity of information available on the internet on Lowland Heaths, alongside image libraries, movie clips, wildlife webcams, interactive quizzes and puzzles, ecological surveys, habitat restoration details (including civil engineer's plans), articles and general interest information on a wide variety of British habitats and wildlife. The website is updated weekly and new material is being continually added.

Future developments and partnerships will be of particular value to those who cannot easily access natural habitats.



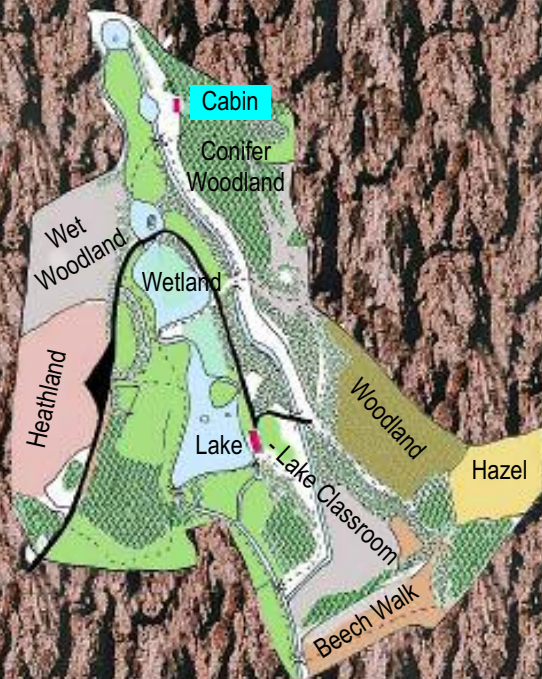
The Woodland Education Centre

Honiton, Devon EX14 9SW

Set in a steep-sided wooded, southern facing valley, the 50 acre Woodland Education Centre is managed by the Offwell Woodland & Wildlife Trust in partnership with the Forestry Commission.

The Centre has two classrooms and trained staff who are available, year round, to take schools, colleges, universities and all types of community groups.

Booking is essential. Please telephone 01404 831373 to discuss your visit or visit www.offwell.info for charges and further information.



The Woodland Education Centre features many types of woodland and freshwater habitats as well as regenerating lowland heath.

OFFWELL WOODLAND & WILDLIFE TRUST

Conservation & Education



Offwell, Honiton, Devon EX14 9SW
Tel. 01404 831373, email offwell1@aol.com
Website www.offwell.info Reg Ch No. 1000198