

MFT Workshop manger's report for MFT 09/10 Annual Review

MJ 13 Jan 2011

Workshop Activities

As in previous years we have tried to make items in the workshop which we need and can use around the farm whilst also producing some products that we can sell either at summer shows or just to interested parties that hear about us.

In the former categories we have made a number of netted tunnels for use in our field to help protect young growing plants, improving on those made in previous years by having a more sturdy frame and easier to assemble components. The making of these items are good for our farm workers as the frame making skills required are quite simple but using them on such a large frame is a challenge.

Cutting and drilling the plastic pipes is interesting as it is working with a different material and tricky to drill holes through a round cylinder.

Fixing the netting is again using different material and skills. We now use a staple gun to secure the netting to the lower frame and there is a definite knack to getting it cut to the right size and fixing it all neatly.

One of our other in-house manufacturing projects closely related to our land operations was a glove rack made from plywood and designed to organize & store the various sizes and designs of work gloves that we use.

We also helped with measuring and marking levels for the new shed purchased for the field, making it a bit easier to then lay down the shingle and sleepers for the shed base. When the shed was assembled thought was given to the best way of storing the tools and equipment inside and a number of racks and a work surface were designed, made and installed. Great use has been made of the woodworking equipment purchased with grant money received and also tools donated from interested parties and companies.

2 items were also made for use inside the workshop.

One farmhelper made a special rota board with interchangeable sections so that it is clear who is attending on which days, communicated with symbols and pictures as well as words for those people who cannot read or get anxious without the information being clear and visible. This project involved cutting a lot of plywood sections, putting in pins and hooks, painting in different materials and finally fixing velcro and laminating graphic cards to bring it all together.

We also improved the workspace area in the resource room in the workshop by making a computer table + shelf unit. This employed a lot of different skills including successfully fixing the wooden units to the wall and then painting them green with 'Suffolk Punch' brown edges, painting in-situ without painting the white walls!

Many of our farm helpers are interested in making things and learning woodworking skills so we looked into making owl boxes. After researching the required design 2 of the farm helpers each prototyped their own different versions of suitable housing, the larger of the 2 had it's own integrated balcony with an extended roof overhead and was very nice but we chose the smaller prototype of the 2 which was simpler to make and used narrower strips of plywood, important as we use factory off-cut's for much of the construction.

I then made up thin MDF templates for all the components of the box making it easy to mark out for cutting and marking where the holes need to be drilled, plus I made 3 assembly jigs to help the farmhelper put them together without assistance.

We have now made quite a few and are looking for more customers who want to attract nesting Tawny Owls to their property by installing proper accommodation.