

Committee Members (as at 10th March 2010)



Dave Watson LPIOL – Chairman *

Dave's passion for ancient survival skills, or 'bushcraft' as it has become known, stems from his teenage years when he spent much of his time wandering around Britain in semi-wild places trying to live off the land. This was a powerful and important time for Dave as he searched for some meaning to his life and personal self-worth. What he discovered during this period dramatically affected his whole outlook on life. Dave has devoted his life to using his bushcraft skills to help develop, train or mentor people from all walks of life. He spent ten years working for outdoor activity centres, before deciding to set up in business for himself in 1995. In 2007 Dave instigated the development with the IOL of the Bushcraft and Survival Special Interest Group. This has resulted in the development of training and assessment for outdoor practitioners in the key skills to promote safe practice and understanding.



Sarah Robertshaw APIOL – Co-ordination with Forest Schools

Sarah works for the Forestry Commission, delivering Forest School Programmes mainly to those students who, for whatever reason, are unable to function in the traditional school environment. She has set up the Wyre Forest School Training Centre for the Forestry Commission in order to deliver Forest School Training as well as Bushcraft Instruction. She is also a qualified counsellor and loves using the woodland environment and Bushcraft skills to work with people from many different backgrounds and walks of life, to help them achieve personal fulfilment and often challenge their own self-perception in the light of their achievement.

Sarah holds her APIOL and Cert. Ed.



Kevan Palmer – Quality Assurance and Assessment Co-ordinator*

Kev's passion for wild places originates from a childhood obsession for natural history. Having spent much of his formative years in the British countryside as well as behind the scenes at Whipsnade Zoo he expanded his horizons with overseas travel and wild camping. He then honed his bushcraft skills through Survival School's instructor's course and has been teaching bushcraft and survival in since 2003. He is an approved assessor and trainer with the Institute of Outdoor Learning's Bushcraft and Survival Skills special interest group. Kev first encountered desert on a holiday in Morocco and was "blown away" by the sheer vastness of it. He has subsequently helped run overland 4x4 expeditions in Morocco and since then he has spent time in deserts of the Middle East, Southern Africa, North Africa and the South Western USA and doesn't feel more at home than when the thermometer tops 35oC and all you can see is sand and rock!

Spending time with Kev you will immediately recognise that he has an encyclopaedic knowledge of deserts; including history, culture, geology, flora and fauna. This is why in 2008 Kev's expertise was requested to support Diverse TV in their production of the "Survivor" series. Kev's down to earth, practical approach to his teaching and support inspires people of all ages to learn more, and inspires confidence in travel in the most extreme places on earth.



John Rhyder APIOL – Training Development *

John is both Founder and Head Instructor at Woodcraft School. He has an impressive pedigree in all aspects of outdoor life including being appointed as chief instructor for Ray Mears, receiving his antler handled instructor knife unusually after only one season. He has worked as a professional woodsman heavily involved in conservation management, traditional skills and management practices. He holds formal teaching qualifications and has been instructing regularly since 1994. John has been featured on television, national and local newspapers and many programmes on radio. Much of his time in recent years has been spent pioneering accredited courses in bushcraft and related skills, several of which have been written by him. He has gained his Accredited Practitioner through the Institute of Outdoor Learning - APIOL. In addition he has written a Bushcraft Award for a leading youth organisation Woodcraft Folk and sits on the executive committee of the IOL Bushcraft Special Interest group where he has been very involved in writing the new assessment criteria for bushcraft practitioners.



Jason Ingamells – Membership

Jason's interest in Survival was sparked as a child when he went on his first survival course, rushing straight out afterwards to buy Lofty Wiseman's SAS survival guide and all the kit he could purchase! However as he developed an understanding of what nature could provide he soon understood that it was the knowledge he held in his head and not the gear in his pack that was all the essential kit he needed. As a teenager growing up deep in the heart of the Lincolnshire Fens, Jason spent every minute of his spare time on the banks of the River Welland and in the estuaries of the Wash, building shelters, learning the art of fire lighting and tracking the vast wildlife of the Marshes, and he has been learning ever since. Over the years Jason developed a passion for the British Countryside, which led him to a career in countryside management working in one of the country's premier Country Parks. Jason formalised his bushcraft skills with Survival School before setting up both Woodland Ways and Desert Ways.