The Annual Woodland  day was held just before Christmas following  the National Tree Planting Week.  No-one could fail to see that All things Trees are very topical at the moment  along with the subject of Climate change. Planting trees as one of the main means of carbon capture (as well as for aiding biodiversity, of course)  being on the lips of evry school child, politician, journalist and celebrity.  The Forestry Commission celebrating 100 yr anniversary promised more tree planting but avoiding the monoculture  and straight edge mistakes of yesteryear. Good news from the Ash Dieback scientists, who now believe 40% of Ash trees will survive.  Given the focus on tree planting ; our region has to get to grips with the explosion in the deer population or our saplings won’t last long.

To make tree planting economically viable farmers and other landowners are being encouraged to look at trees as a crop and not just taking land out of agricultural production  for amenity usage ; interestingly the government plan to follow up on this with financial incentives to achieve this. Managed back to Nature projects are happening in the region - otherwise known Rewilding . Some of the wilder schemes such as reintroducing  the lynx,  very  hotly debated, but not  envisaged any time soon  or at all.  Out of the need to reaffirm tree planting (as well as something lovely to see and play in)  as a crop to be utilised whether by  selective harvest or clear felling and replanting - making it sustainable and environmentally a good thing. Much attentive was paid to wood products and the commercial production and marketing of the same.

Local  author Vincent Thirkettle  launched his The Wood Fire Book with a whirlwind of  fascinating information. Extolling the “soothing effect of dancing flames and glowing embers” we all so love. Best types of firewood, storing and drying . Emphasising the  moral, financial and environmental need to  burn sustainably produced wood.  Keeping smoke and particulate emissions to a minimum. Eye openers for me were; don’t clear your grate too often ; top down lighting does work well and Alder is an underrated wood for fires. A good read and a reference book well worth buying for yourself.