

## Beech and Birch in Natural History, History and Literature

**Start date** 28 June 2019**End date** 30 June 2019**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ**Tutor** Dr Patrick Harding**Course code** 1819NRX044**Director of ISP and LL**

Sarah Ormrod

**For further information on this  
course, please contact the Lifelong  
Learning team**Zara Kuckelhaus, Fleur Kerrecoe  
[shortcourses@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:shortcourses@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 764637**To book**See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

---

### Tutor biography

Patrick Harding has been teaching courses at Madingley for over 30 years. He is the author of 8 popular books about trees, fungi, flowers and Christmas. His courses include a mix of illustrated lectures, outdoor sessions and readings of poetry and prose. Where possible he likes to mix his scientific approach with history and folklore. He includes a large display of books and uses handouts where necessary. He still contributes to both radio and television programmes – most recently on Radio 3 and The Antiques Road Trip. Patrick likes to impart some humour into the weekend and steers away from a dry approach to learning.

---

## Course programme

---

### Friday June 28th

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

**20:30 – 22:00**      **1. Beech and Birch in history and folklore**

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday June 29th

07:30                      Breakfast

**09:00 – 10:30**      **2. The natural history of Birch**

10:30                      Coffee

**11:00 – 12:30**      **3. The natural history of Beech**

13.00                      Lunch

**13:45 – 16:00**      **4. Visit to examine Beech and Birch trees**

16:00                      Tea

16:30 – 18:30          Free

18:30                      Dinner

**20:00 – 21:30**      **5. The many different uses of Beech and Birch**

21:30                      Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday June 30th

07:30                      Breakfast

**09:00 – 10:30**      **6. Birch and Beech in Literature – inputs from class members and the tutor (Public speaking not compulsory!)**

10:30                      Coffee

**11:00 – 12:30**      **7. Conclusions and a walk around the grounds at Madingly to look at trees including beech and birch**

12:45                      Lunch

### The course will disperse after lunch

Students are asked to bring suitable outdoor clothing and footwear for the outdoor sessions and poetry/short prose extracts for the literature session.

## **Course syllabus**

### **Aims:**

1. To enable students to be able to evaluate the roles played by both birch and beech in legend and history
2. To provide students with both the practical skills needed to be able to identify our native beech and native birch species (and their common cultivars) and the source material for the more rigorous study of the fauna and flora associated with birch and beech woodlands.
3. To encourage students to integrate information from both the arts and the sciences in the acquisition of a broad knowledge of beech and birch.

### **Content:**

There will be sessions covering folklore, legend and history as it relates to both birch and beech. The natural history sessions will cover identification of the trees and additionally will review the animals and plants associated with both beech and birch woodlands. One session will cover the vast range of different uses to which different parts of the trees have been put. The outdoor sessions will allow theory to be put into practice while the literature session will examine how the two trees are portrayed in literature.

### **Presentation of the course:**

There will be a mixture of illustrated lectures backed by handouts and with time for discussion. The literature session will hopefully involve all class members in readings and/or discussion. The outdoor sessions will be more informal.

### **As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

1. Identify, making use of practical skills learnt on the course and available source material, the different native species of birch and beech together with their cultivars.
2. Evaluate the relative importance of beech and birch in the context of Britain's natural history.
3. Appreciate the past importance of beech and birch products in Britain.
4. Demonstrate, by way of discussion, an understanding of the portrayal of beech and birch in literature.

---

## Reading and resources list

---

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk \*

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher and date</b>
<b>Edlin, H</b>	<b><i>Woodland Crafts in Britain</i></b>	<b>Batsford 1949</b>
<b>Hemery, G and Simblet, S</b>	<b><i>The New Sylva</i></b>	<b>Bloomsbury 2014</b>
<b>Johnson, O and More, D</b>	<b><i>Collins Tree Guide</i></b>	<b>HarperCollins 2004</b>
<b>King, A and Clifford, S</b>	<b><i>Trees be Company</i></b>	<b>Green 2001</b>
<b>Mabey, R</b>	<b><i>Beechcombings – the narratives of trees</i></b>	<b>Chatto &amp; Windus 2007</b>

There will be a large display of books

---

## Additional information

---

### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:  
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

### Refreshments

Tea and coffee, lunch and dinner will be provided as outlined in the timetable. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 29 April 2019