

History of accredited Bushcraft courses in the UK

1. Plumpton College's Early Role

In 2003, **Plumpton College** hosted the first bushcraft instructor course in collaboration with **Woodcraft School**, led by John Rhyder.

This marked the beginning of structured bushcraft instructor training in the UK.

2. John Rhyder's Later Initiatives

Following the initial collaboration, John Rhyder developed and delivered the first fully **NCFE-accredited bushcraft programmes** in the UK through his own organisation, Woodcraft School. He became the originator of a dedicated NCFE-awarded bushcraft instructor qualification.

3. Timeline of Key Events

- **2003** – Plumpton College, in partnership with Woodcraft School, hosted the first bushcraft instructor course.
 - Based on an NCFE qualification.
 - Included NCFE Creative Craft.
 - Included a Woodland Management module from Edexcel.
 - Students also completed the **Basic Expedition Leaders Award (B.E.L.A)** and a **16-hour outdoor first aid certificate**.
- **Mid-2000s onward** – Woodcraft School developed the first NCFE-accredited bushcraft programmes independently.
 - Combined all aspects of the awards into a single qualification.
 - B.E.L.A and first aid were still included in the early years.

Summary

- **2003:** Plumpton College delivered the earliest bushcraft instructor courses in partnership with Woodcraft School.
- **Later years:** Woodcraft School independently created and delivered the first NCFE-accredited bushcraft programmes.

Further Developments

Independent Accreditation by Woodcraft School

- Creation of the **Certificate in Bushcraft Leadership (NCFE Level 3)**, designed for bushcraft instructors.
- Covered bushcraft techniques, teaching strategies, leadership skills, with assessments in:
 - First aid
 - Expedition leadership

- Food hygiene
- Later upgraded to **Level 4**.

The NCFE Level 3 and Level 4 Certificates in Bushcraft Leadership became the first accredited bushcraft instructor qualifications in the UK, setting professional standards in the field.

Expansion of Programmes

- **Certificate in Applied Bushcraft (Level 4):** Covered broadly the same criteria as the instructor programme, but without teaching theory. Still running today.
- **Advanced Bushcraft Award (Level 3):** Still current and sought after by teachers and outdoor instructors. In the years prior to covid, this award became the first accredited bushcraft course to be run in Ireland.
- Earlier NCFE-accredited courses in Woodland Craft and Primitive Technology are no longer available.
- **Latest accredited awards** include:
 - Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications in Ethnobotany.
 - A Level 4 qualification in the Art of Bowmaking.

Tracking and Assessment

- Previous wildlife tracking accredited courses have been discontinued.
- Replaced by the **CyberTracker evaluation process**, the global standard for assessing wildlife tracking.
- John Rhyder is an evaluator for this system.

Current Focus

Woodcraft School continues to provide both accredited and non-accredited bushcraft education in the UK.

Programmes focus on:

- Wildlife tracking
- Bushcraft
- Ethnobotany