

# behappy

Inspirational ways to change your life

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## LIFESTYLE

### BUY YOUR OWN WOOD

# WOODED BLISS

While the housing market fluctuates between unprecedented growth and a nervous drop in prices, sales of woodlands are on the rise with buyers looking for an investment in a better quality of life. Be Happy finds out what the attraction is

**A** report by Woodlands.co.uk has highlighted the positive benefits that owners of small woodlands can have on the management of UK woods. The company, which creates and sells small woodlands, surveyed private owners to find out more about their motivations for buying their woods and what benefits they had found in becoming woodland owners.

The resounding message that came back from the owners was a passion for their woods and a desire to preserve them for future generations. Even though prices for woods have risen by more than 50% in the past three years, there was no desire on the part of the owners to cash in. In fact, not one of the owners surveyed was planning to sell their wood in the foreseeable future and more than three quarters planned to pass the woods onto future generations of their family.

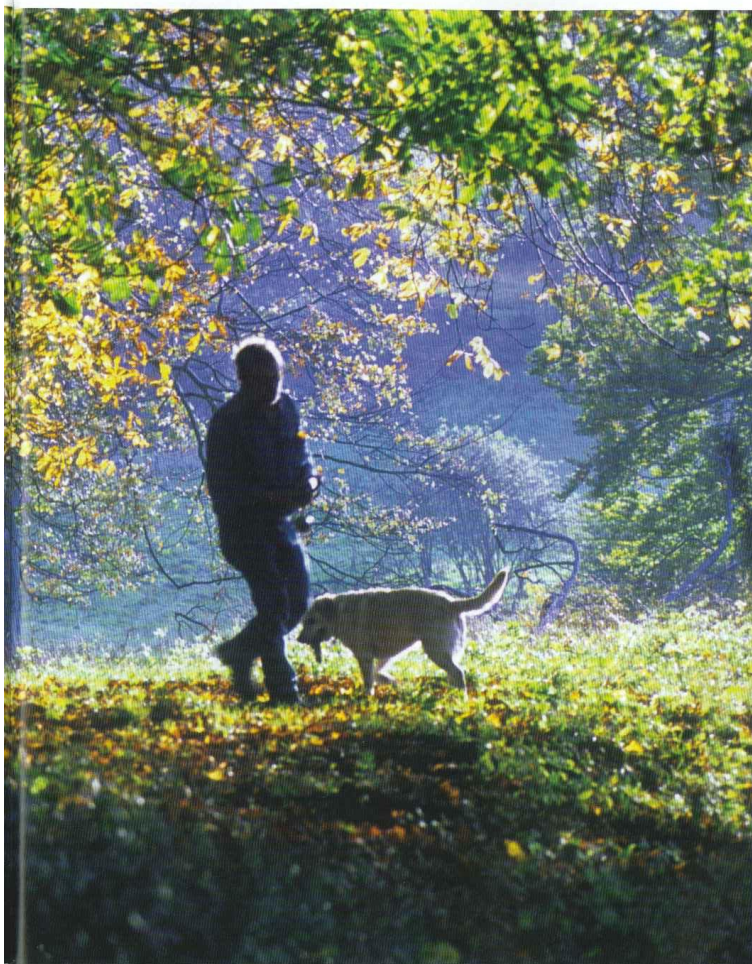
So if it's not for financial gain, then why are more and more people buying woods? Unsurprisingly, almost all said that their love of wildlife was an important factor in buying their woods and this is borne out by figures which show that over the last ten years Woodlands.co.uk owners have planted more than 220,000 new trees, built more than 10,000 dead wood log piles (insect habitats), put up 3,800 nest boxes, dug 350 ponds and installed 350 bee hives. There is also a strong interest in restoring woods to their native condition by replacing conifer with broadleaf trees.

Angus Hanton of Woodlands.co.uk

says: 'In today's fast moving society it's great to hear that there is a desire to gain a window on the outdoors – free from the many constraints of modern life. Being in a wood, with the sights, smells and sounds of nature, is a great way to get away from it all. These owners are building an emotional connection with their piece of woodland and conserving it for the benefit of us all.'

'In this report we uncover an army of unsung conservationists who together are safeguarding more than 12,000 acres of woodland for future generations. Taking large pieces of land into government or





charity ownership is not the only way to conserve our woodlands; individuals can undoubtedly play their part too.'

#### HOW TO BUY A WOOD

A typical woodland costs about £35,000 for five acres (about the size of two football pitches) and you'll find them advertised for sale on various websites such as Woodlands.co.uk. The process is relatively simple but you will require a lawyer to go over contracts, land registry and oversee the exchange of money. It's much like buying a house, although considerably less stressful as you won't be

involved in a chain. In terms of finance, there are several options available if you're not a cash buyer. You can borrow against your own residential property, invest part of your pension fund or even borrow against the woodland itself. Check out Woodlands.co.uk and the website of other sellers as they offer a comprehensive guide to the buying process.

Note that with sales of woodland you enter into a covenant which limits you from doing certain things with your woodland. For instance, without the appropriate permission you won't be able to use the land for a commercial »

## ON THE MARKET



**Wades Wood, North Yorkshire**  
About 4 acres, £39,000

Wades Wood is situated within the outstanding scenery of the North York Moors National Park and is a mixed woodland of almost 4 acres which offers a peaceful setting to escape the rigours of hectic modern living.



**Trelawne Wood, Cornwall**  
About 4 acres, £25,000

Trelawne Wood lies along the eastern arm of a large, T-shaped area of woodland which occupies a secluded valley, not far from the south Cornish coast.



**Latch Wood, Kent**  
7 1/2 acres, £55,000

Latch Wood is a classic ancient woodland with some fine mature oaks, along with hornbeam, hazel, holly, hawthorn and birch and shows off a wonderful display of bluebells in spring.



**Bear Wood, Essex**  
About 3 1/2 acres, £39,000

An enchanting ancient woodland located close to the attractive village of Wickham Bishops. As you approach Bear Wood along the woodland track you already get the feeling that you are somewhere special.

All woods listed above are available for sale at [www.woodlands.co.uk](http://www.woodlands.co.uk)



# LIFESTYLE

## BUY YOUR OWN WOOD

campsite or use the land for any sort of vehicle racing. Check with your seller what limitations apply.

### WHAT TO DO WITH IT

Owning a wood is a liberating experience, especially for those who have not owned a significant amount of land before. You'll have the freedom to camp with friends, light a camp fire, plant and fell trees, and clear paths. You'll be able to enjoy the natural environment with the chance to see badgers, rabbits, butterflies and birds. You can build a shelter, care for trees, climb trees, collect firewood and even grow your own Christmas trees. You can learn woodcraft or simply use it as a place to relax. The options are endless, but what a wonderful thing to have – your very own corner of nature to share with your friends and family.

### WE BOUGHT A WOOD

Mike Houghton, who recently bought seven and a half acres of Welsh hillside with his wife Jill, says: 'When I was thinking of buying this wood, I kept wondering what are we doing? Now, twelve months later, our woods have become our church, our playground, our school, the best nature documentary ever,

and fascinating in different ways each time we visit. I have become both more "possessive" – wanting to protect it from the harm of uncaring visitors – and at the same time realising that it owns me far more than I can ever own it.'

Husband and wife Stephen Briggs and Sarah Walters bought Alvecote Wood near Tamworth near Staffordshire five years ago.

'Be it a crisp winter day, a calm summer evening or a glorious spring morning, sitting on a log eating our sandwiches and listening to the birds singing is a magical experience,' says Sarah. 'Butterflies fly along the brambles and woodland edge. We get glimpses of mammals including moles, rabbits, muntjac deer, badgers, foxes, stoats and all manner of little mice and voles. The bluebells form beautiful carpets under the trees and the water bubbles through the new ponds. There is so much pure pleasure that it makes all the hard work worthwhile.' ✱



Check what woodlands for sale are available in your area at: [www.woodlands.co.uk](http://www.woodlands.co.uk).

**Branching out:** Mike Houghton enjoys climbing a tree in his Welsh wood



## THE JUBILEE WOODS PROJECT

The Jubilee Woods project is a national scheme being run by the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading conservation charity, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Through this ambitious project, the Trust is going to plant six million trees and create hundreds of new woodlands with the help of the public. The scheme is backed by the Queen and has Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal as patron.

The UK is one of the least wooded countries in Europe with just 13% woodland cover compared to a European average of 44% – much of our native woodland has been cut down for timber production and lost to development.

Woodland is a vital wildlife habitat which many of the UK's native species rely on for survival, but they also have many benefits to people. They provide cleaner air, wood fuel, help prevent flooding by making land more 'sponge like', provide shade and shelter for our livestock, and store the carbon we produce through our modern way of life. They are also simply beautiful!

The Trust is looking for landowners, schools, community groups and individuals to come forward and take part in the project. It's not just for people with lots of land to spare – you can even plant a tree in your garden to be part of it. All trees planted can be registered on the new Royal Record – a 2012 version of a book that logged trees planted for King George VI's coronation in 1936. The new Royal Record will be handed to the Queen herself and a copy given to the British library, so anyone taking part will take their place in history.

The Trust is helping hundreds of people to create Jubilee Woods – woods of at least one acre in size – and can help with the funding, as well as providing advice and practical help. Sixty special woods of 60 acres in size will be exclusive Diamond Woods – each commemorating 60 years of the Queen's reign.

The Trust is also giving away thousands of packs of trees to schools and community groups to plant in their local area, go to [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/jubilee-woods](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/jubilee-woods) to find out more and apply for a pack.