



Living Woods

No. 59 SPRING 2021

MAGAZINE

WOODLANDS
FOR THE BIRDS & BEES

PLANNING
AND BUILDING

plus

TIME FOR A NEW CHAINSAW?
MAKING SUSSEX TRUGS

CONTENTS

We're celebrating spring by concentrating on the birds and the bees in this issue. Ornithologist Nick Gardner writes about woodland birdlife and Darryl Cox from Bumblebee Conservation explains how woodlands can be managed to support bees and other pollinators. This is complemented by Roy and Kathryn Nelson's feature on encouraging a healthy understorey.

With nesting season under way, we look at building in woodlands – how to do it well and where to get advice. Songwriter Jim Duncan introduces an innovative way of funding tree-planting in Scotland and we meet the award-winning trug-maker Robin Tuppen of Royal Sussex Trugs.

Covid restrictions mean that the usual list of spring and summer shows remains uncertain, but we hope that by the time of our summer issue it will be easier to make plans.

Judith Millidge Editor

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COVER PHOTO

A bluebell-filled glade.
(Photo: Alex Worsely)

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Published by Living Woods Magazine Ltd, 19 Half Moon Lane, London, SE24 9JU

@Woodland News

APF SHOW POSTPONED UNTIL 2022

The organisers of the **APF Exhibition** have taken a pragmatic view and cancelled the 2021 show in the light of the continuing uncertainty around Covid restrictions in the UK.

Exhibition Secretary Ian Millward commented: 'It is heartbreaking that for a second time we have had to make this decision. But it became obvious that the only sensible option was to postpone until September 2022. The show is the industry flagship event and, before arriving at a decision, we were keen to consult our sponsors, exhibitors and visitors regarding their views about the viability of holding it this year. The results were overwhelmingly in favour of postponement and this reinforced our own feelings as organisers. No one wants a show with reduced numbers of exhibitors and visitors. It was very gratifying, however, that, despite over half of visitors preferring the event to be postponed until 2022, 85% of visitors who replied to the survey said they would attend whatever restrictions were in place, which shows how important the event is to our industry.'



Covering an area of 400km², from Pulborough to the outskirts of Lewes, Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs is a new project launched to restore neglected and damaged woodland in Sussex and protect it for the future. Many of the woods within



this area are small and fragmented and the aim is to create better habitat for local wildlife, make woodlands more resilient and help the fight against climate change. The project has been launched to conserve woodland, especially ancient woodland in the Lower Weald and tackle the biggest threats to biodiversity.

The project is being run by a partnership of Action in Rural Sussex, the Small Woods Association, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust, assisted by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The organisers want to hear from owners of woodlands under 3ha to assess their knowledge and to support them with training packages and woodland assessments. If you own a woodland in this area, please take part in the **Lost Woods Survey** [here](#).

For more information about the project, visit the **Lost Woods Facebook** [page](#).

WOOD FUEL REGULATIONS INTRODUCED

Woodland owners who also use wood-burning stoves or open fires will need no lectures about the dangers (and frustration) of using wet wood. So should we welcome the government's new legislation that restricts the sale of poorly seasoned firewood in England?

From 1 May The Air Quality (Domestic Solid Fuels Standards) (England) Regulations 2020 mean that companies can only supply or sell wood fuel in volumes of less than 2 cubic metres if it is certified as 'Ready to Burn'. This confirms it has a moisture content of 20% or less. This legislation has been on the cards for more than a year and is intended to restrict the sale of 'wet wood' which, when burned, is a major source of the pollutant PM2.5. Microparticle pollutants are thinner than human hair, linger in the air longer because they are so light, are easily inhaled and absorbed by the body. They are the most serious air pollutant for human health, according to the World Health Organisation. In addition, they clog up chimneys and stove pipe work.

Small-scale wood producers who supplied less than 600 cubic metres of wood between 1 May 2020 and 30 April 2021, have until 1 May 2022 to comply with the

new **Ready to Burn** certification scheme.

The government has published guidance on **Selling wood for domestic use in England**. This legislation does not affect those using their own wood in their own homes. The best way to check that your seasoned logs are ready to burn is to acquire a moisture meter (see **LW 50** for a round-up) and pull a few samples out of your wood stack to check that the moisture content is under 20%.



NEW HEAD FOR RFS

Christopher Williams has been appointed Chief Executive of the Royal Forestry Society (RFS), succeeding Simon Lloyd who has stepped down after eight years.

Christopher joins the RFS from Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), where he was Director of Land Management & People Engagement and Deputy CEO. He says,

'It's hard to imagine there has ever been a more important or challenging time for the forestry sector and this is an exciting moment to join the RFS.'

'We know that actively-managed and productive woodland makes a huge contribution to the economy of the UK and to our collective effort to combat climate change and yet the UK remains a relatively unforested country. Much rests on the forthcoming England Tree Strategy and the rollout of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), to underpin the stewardship of our woods. We must also collectively keep up the focus on woodland resilience to meet the threats from climate change, pests and diseases.'

'The RFS already plays a key role through its education work and projects such as Future Foresters, to support people on their journey into the sector. This important work, to broaden the appeal of careers in forestry, must continue if we are to address the known skills-gap.'



Forests in film

Watched more TV than usual in the last few months? Ever wondered where some of the locations are for your favourite films? Forestry England has compiled a list of movies filmed in their forests (and maybe, just maybe, we'll be able to visit them soon).

For a list of locations for shows as diverse as *Gladiator* and *Killing Eve*, visit the [Forestry England website](https://www.forestryengland.gov.uk/). You'll find Jurassic World beginning life in Bourne Wood, Surrey, Wendover standing in for Tuscany and, unsurprisingly, Sherwood Forest playing a starring role as itself in *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves*.

The Major Oak, Sherwood Forest. (David Reed/Pixabay)



VIEW THROUGH THE TREES

Enchantment in the woods: **JULIA GOODFELLOW-SMITH** takes pleasure in small things and ponders how to improve habitat for woodland wildlife.

Totally engrossed, I was watching a beetle ponderously negotiating the fallen beech leaves. Its body was black, but what had attracted my attention was the electric blue on the underside of its rear legs. It was scrabbling like crazy with its short front legs to climb up leaves, then controlling its descent with the forked feet at the end of its very long, very brightly coloured rear legs.

‘Julia, are you alright?’ Mike had thought that I was following him with the fencing gear, but instead I had dropped to the ground to get a better view of the beetle. Once again, the woodland had enchanted me, drawn me into its own world, when I should have been working.

We were already behind with our work schedule, having been distracted by a robin in our glade. It had come right up to the edge, just a couple of metres from where we were sitting, perched on a branch of an elder bush and sung its heart out. We weren’t sure whether it was trying to attract a mate or staking its claim over the glade, having been left undisturbed by humans for the last few weeks. Either way, it was beguiling, and lunch took far longer than was strictly necessary.

If you are a regular reader of this column, you will know that we had contractors in at the end of last year to conduct a significant thinning exercise, but before then, we had felled a few trees ourselves.



Ring-barking, or girdling to remove bark from the circumference of a tree, slowly kills it above the girdle line while leaving it as standing dead wood. (Photo: Harry Toulson)

In those areas, the daffodils are coming through thick and fast. In just a few more weeks, we should have a wonderful display. The other change we have seen in those areas is a healthy population of foxgloves. The first year after felling, the rosette of leaves appears, and in the second year, the spikes of purple flowers. I just love watching big bumblebees completely disappear into the flowers as they drink the nectar deep inside, reversing back out before visiting the next one.

A couple of years ago, we had woodpeckers nesting in one of our trees. We haven’t seen them since, but want to make sure that they have plenty of food and residential options if they return. We leave standing deadwood where we can, and even created some more by ring-barking one of our trees instead of felling it.

One of the habitats we lack in the woodland is standing water, but we now have lots of muddy puddles where the contractors’ vehicles have compacted the soil and clay underneath. Rather than seeing this as an issue, we have started to wonder whether we could create a scrape in that area, puddling the clay to hold water after it has rained. We’re pretty sure that it wouldn’t stay wet all year, but could provide some seasonal access to water for the woodland’s wildlife. After all, the wildlife provides us with such a great deal of pleasure, it only seems fair that we do as much as we can in return.



A song thrush, *Turdus philomelos*. (Photo by Nick Gardner)

Ornithologist NICK GARDNER shares his joy of bird watching and explains how to manage woodlands to support birdlife.

I may be the tiniest bit biased as an ornithologist, but when I think of spring, I think of bird song. Of course, there are many wonderful things happening in the plant world that I love to see and smell too, but for me, nothing beats waking up to a dawn chorus. I have been fortunate enough to travel to quite a few far-flung forests, but none of them quite have the same magic as my home in south-east England.

At this time of year, if you're lucky, you will hear mistle thrush before first light. Deeper into spring, song thrush and blackbird take the lead, with robin and wren not too far behind. Wood pigeons and collared doves provide the bass, with the underrated dunnoek ever-warbling away in the upper registers. Come April and May, some of our most accomplished singers arrive from Africa for a true audible feast. With all this activity just around the corner, what's the best way of making the most of it? How can we encourage and best appreciate our feathered friends?

Identification and inventory

First, you need to know what (or who) is already there. A good start is **eBird**, which can tell you what other people have spotted in your area. The RSPB and BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) are fantastic resources for learning bird identification, with advice on distinguishing between similar species (like song and mistle thrush) as well as information on the distribution of species, which can really help narrow your queries. As you may have guessed in the introduction, I am a big proponent of learning birds by their song. Many people find this more difficult than purely visual identification, but don't be daunted! Check out **xeno-canto** for all your bird song needs, and once you start to get it, this skill will open a whole new way of appreciating nature. You might be surprised by how many species you didn't know were there until you learned to listen.

Encouraging birds

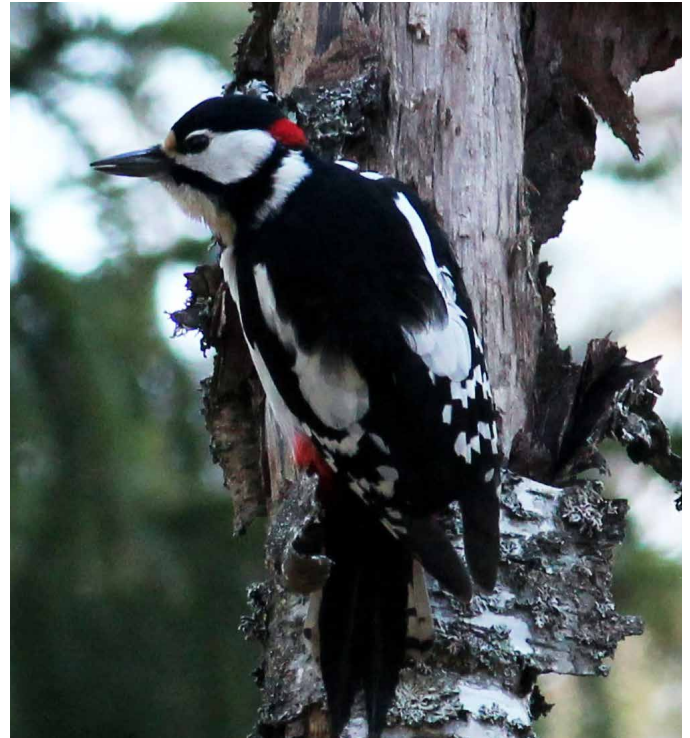
When we talk about encouraging birds in our woodlands, what we really mean is encouraging all wildlife. It is important to remember that natural ecosystems work because everything is in balance, and you can't enhance the habitat and opportunities for one group without doing so for the groups on which they are interdependent. With that in mind, how can we nurture a bird-friendly woodland?

Dead wood

You'll be pleased to know that one of most important management techniques for wildlife is also one of the easiest. Namely: leaving dead wood alone and resisting the urge to 'tidy' it. Tree death is a natural and essential part of the life of a woodland. In fact, no tree is ever truly lifeless. On the contrary, deadwood is bursting with biodiversity! Many species of fungi, lichen and insects only live in dead and dying wood, and where there are insects, there are birds to feed on them. Leave both fallen and standing deadwood, providing it is safe to do so. Look out for wrens and robins hunting for insects in rotting logs, great spotted woodpeckers using standing deadwood for their nest, and if you're really lucky, the rare willow tit. If you're in an area with lesser spotted woodpeckers, look out for them nesting and feeding on dead limbs of living trees, which is their preferred habitat.

Glades, rides and edges

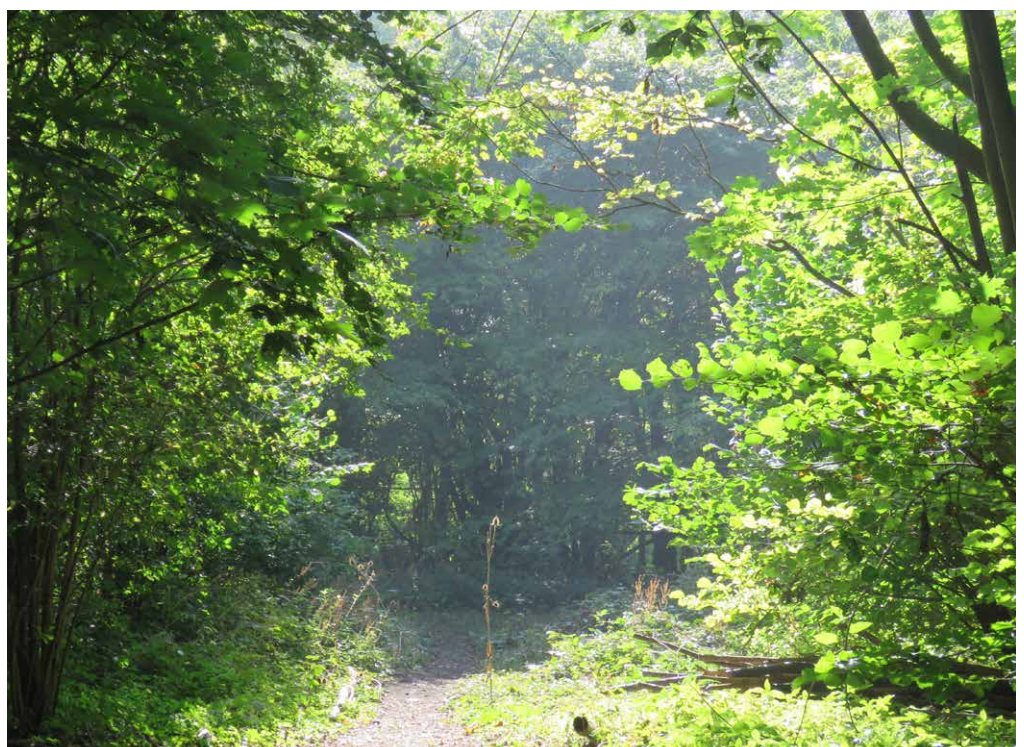
Ask any birder to name some of the best areas for high bird diversity, and they are almost sure to mention 'edge' habitat. The transition zones where trees meet open areas are often very busy with life. Your woodland may already have some open spaces incorporated in it from previous tree falls or access roads. Rather than replanting them all with trees, you can maintain some as glades and rides. Done sensitively and sensibly, this practice encourages herbaceous plants and early succession tree species, which in turn host large invertebrate communities and bring in many birds. For example, hawthorn provide excellent shelter and nest sites for many small birds including summer migrants like whitethroats and blackcaps (my absolute favourite songsters). The beautiful and exuberant siskin is partial to the catkins of



ABOVE: A great spotted woodpecker sits on a dead birch tree. (Photo: Harald Arlander/Unsplash)

BELOW: Transition zones in woodlands, like this glade at Queendown Warren Nature Reserve in Kent, boost biodiversity and attract birds and butterflies. (Photo: Chris 23/Unsplash)

birches, and rowan berries can draw in utterly stunning Bohemian waxwings in colder winters. Of course, your ability to create these spaces will be dependent on what type of woodland you have, and how much time and resources you're able to invest in the venture. Managed properly however, these clearings can noticeably boost the biodiversity of a woodland.



Watching birds

Even if you don't have the chance to alter your woodland for wildlife, it's always possible to observe and appreciate birds. Like us, birds are creatures of habit, and by paying attention to where and when you see particular species (maybe a particular tree or track), you will become accustomed to their routines and be able to have more intimate sightings of them regularly, which can be incredibly rewarding.

Something I have learned the hard way is not to follow the birds, but to let them come to you, and if you want good views of some of our shyer birds (I'm looking at you, jays), you'll need a hide. There is a wide range of options, from simple bag hides and scrim netting to large camouflage tents. For the adventurous, there is always the challenge of building a more permanent wooden shelter once you're really hooked.

Choose a spot near a source of food (berry bushes, insect-rich deadwood, the edge of a clearing) and set up your hide a little distance away. You could even put up a feeder – make sure to clean it – or spread bird food on a log nearby. Of course, if you want to start photographing birds, you may start thinking more critically about setting up pleasing perches and noticing when the light angle is just right. It's a slippery slope to full on addiction, believe me!

Record your findings

Once you get comfortable with identifying and viewing the birds in your woodland, I highly recommend that you start sharing your species lists on **eBird** or the **British Trust for Ornithology's BirdTrack**. Both websites also have dedicated phone apps, and a large following of citizen scientists. Researchers (myself among them) can access vast amounts of data on bird distributions from these organisations, and learn invaluable lessons about how to conserve threatened species in the face of global climate change and shifting land-use patterns.

Whatever your contribution, whether simply observing the birds in your local patch or actively managing your woodland to conserve and encourage birds, there has never been a better time to get involved. Get birding!



ABOVE: It is worth investing in a decent wildlife hide, like this one with different access flaps for cameras. (Photo: Simon King, Wildlife Hide)

BELOW: Jays are notoriously shy birds. (Photo: Rayner Simpson/Unsplash)



NICK GARDNER is an ornithologist and community ecologist with a background in behavioural ecology. A first-year PhD student at the University of Florida, focusing on the use of bioacoustics to monitor bird communities and study their phenology, Nick may have moved across the pond, but will always be a resident of rural East Sussex at heart.

LINKS

British Trust for Ornithology

eBird

RSPB

Bird sounds from around the world:

xeno-canto



**Imagine a
wood of
your own
for an early
morning
dip**

woodlands.co.uk

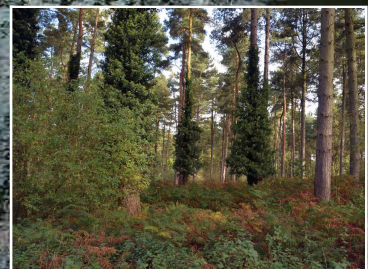
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BEEES IN THE TREES



Buff-tailed bumblebee queen feeding from a willow catkin in spring.

DARRYL COX, Senior Science and Policy Officer for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, explains why well-managed woodlands can offer important habitat for bees.

When you think of a bee-friendly habitat, you might think of sunny, flower-filled gardens or meadows with a variety of colourful blooms and busy, buzzy visitors zipping between them. Indeed, these are some of the most important habitats for pollinators, providing them with the nectar and pollen they need to survive; naturally this is where most of the attention goes in terms of creating and restoring habitats to help them. When looking at the big picture, however, we start to understand that other habitats and their connectivity to flowery areas are just as important for pollinators.

Wild social species such as bumblebees require somewhere to nest, somewhere to mate (which very rarely happens where they eat) and somewhere for newly mated queens to hibernate over winter. Access to the right kind of woodland habitat is central to the success of many species' life-cycles. This can also have important implications for crop pollination: recent research found a greater number of bumblebee species in greater abundance within field margins adjacent to woodlands, as opposed to open field margins. At a landscape level, woodlands serve an important function, offering

pollinators important shelter and respite from intensively managed agricultural land. This does not imply all woodlands or forest habitats are good for pollinators; in fact, some research indicates that forests can act as a barrier to foraging activity across the landscape for some bumblebees. If managed well, however, they can offer the whole package of food, shelter and connectivity.

The value of woodlands

As with all habitats, the value of woodland to wildlife sits on a scale: densely packed conifer plantations offer the least value, while diverse natural woodlands with a good variety of species and structure offer the best opportunities. Light is the commodity that's most in demand for woodland plants and this is the main thing that must be managed to maximise the potential for pollinators. Often the only flowers in woodlands are those which adopt the strategy of flowering early before the tree canopy closes over. Pollinators, however, require a conveyor belt of flowers from spring right through to autumn. Woodlands that include open, sunny, sheltered



LEFT: Spring flora along this path provide ideal habitat. (Photo: Steven Falk)

BELOW: A garden bumblebee worker visiting a foxglove, a tall biennial well adapted to woodland edges. (Photo: Les Moore)

BOTTOM: A well-managed clearing, ideal for pollinators. (Photo: Steven Falk)

habitats with a good diversity of flowering plants are ideal habitat.

Managing woodland edges

Edge habitats are particularly important to manage. South- and east-facing edges tend to be preferred by pollinators as they receive the morning and midday sun which warms them up, though north-facing spots are utilised when the weather is too hot and dry. Good edges are unmown and unkempt, providing opportunity for important herbaceous species like hogweed, thistles, ragwort and knapweed to grow, before transitioning along a gradient into an area with taller herbs, shrubs and occasional flowering trees. Many wildflower species pop up naturally with the right management, though some people opt to sow wildflower strips around the border. The key management practice is lowering the nutrient status of the soil by taking cuts, periodically. If grasses dominate, taking a cut in late summer and removing the arisings each year will help lower the nutrient levels and allow wildflowers to flourish. Cutting can be reduced to once every three to five years once a good sward is established and best practice is to cut in rotation to maintain some cover (don't be tempted to mow the whole lot in a single year). The shrubby areas can be managed on an eight- to 21-year rotation. Brambles (so long as they don't dominate), as well as sallows, hawthorns, crab apples and wild cherry can be wonderful additions. Walled-off woodlands offer the least opportunity to create good edge habitats, although coppicing the edges and creating a herbaceous buffer to the woodland boundary can still be useful.



Rides and glades

The same edge-habitat principles can be applied to woodland rides and glades, though an important aspect is to ensure rides are wide enough to allow light through. Try to make sure the ride is at least as wide as the height of the surrounding trees.

Again, coppicing and cutting vegetation back periodically is important to maintain optimum light levels and create the vital gradient of herbaceous flowering plants, shrubs and trees. In native pine woods, the herbaceous layer can be replaced with heathland species like heathers and bilberries. Open areas and rides create light corridors through woodlands which act as ‘pollinator highways’ and help species navigate to find the resources they need. Dead-ends and isolated coppiced patches are therefore not as useful as connected ones. Opening up light through clever coppicing can create glorious opportunities for flowers like bluebells, primroses, wood anemones, violets and bugle.

Nesting habitat

Dense vegetation and disused underground burrows provide important nesting sites for queen bumblebees, while bare sandy banks, exposed soil faces, dead wood and log piles provide nesting opportunities for a range of solitary bees and other insects. Damp areas with mud and shallow standing water are important for many species of hoverfly, whose larvae are waterborne. Leaf-litter, soil banks, older trees and exposed roots also act as important undisturbed habitats for hibernating bumblebee queens, queen wasps and a number of other insects.

From a broader environmental perspective, growing more trees and managing woodlands are vital ways for us to combat the dual pressures of climate change and biodiversity loss. There are, however, some delicate nuances and balances to be mindful of, particularly when it comes to structuring our woodlands so that they serve wildlife and transition effectively between other habitats. Densely stocked woodlands may sequester more carbon, but they also drive down biodiversity and can even act as barriers between habitats. Equally important when considering the creation of new woodlands is an assessment of what is already there and what would be best for both biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Flower-rich grasslands are some of our most biodiverse habitats and can also store a decent amount of carbon, yet we’ve seen a staggering loss of this habitat over the last century with around 97% being lost, mainly to intensive agriculture and development. An understanding of how our habitats and ecosystems work as a whole and a strategy of right tree, right place is what we need to strike the balance between carbon offsetting and increasing biodiversity.



TOP: This log pile offers perfect habitat for solitary bees.
(Photo: Bex Cartwright)



ABOVE: An early bumblebee nest exposed in the undergrowth.

LINKS

Bumblebee Conservation Trust:
bumblebeeconservation.org

Managing woodlands for pollinators:

Buglife leaflet
DEFRA guidance



Thanks to Bumblebee Conservation Trust for the images. More of Steven Falk's work can be seen on his website, stevenfalk.co.uk



Ancient woodland, Northamptonshire. (Photo courtesy JHM)

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?

Ecologists and woodland owners **ROY AND KATHRYN NELSON** longed for a woodland with a rich and vibrant understorey. When their young wood in Northern Ireland failed to produce one, they applied academic rigour to the problem and have used their findings to offer practical advice.

In 2001 we decided to convert 10 acres of our farm to a small wood. The area chosen for this was a meadow that had been in permanent grass for the past 30 years. We had an idea that we were returning the land to its once former state, as the area is locally known in Gaelic as ‘Killymuck’ which translates as the wooded area of the pig, but there were now no pigs and very few trees. The future we imagined was a wood with a mix of broadleaved trees (mainly ash, oak, birch, and maple) which would have a beautiful woodland floor covered by a mass of herbaceous flowers. They would provide a fragrance in spring and a vision of wonder. This was something we remembered from our youths. Sixteen years later the trees had grown well, but the utopian vision had yet to be realised and it made us think ‘Where have all the flowers gone?’

In 2017 Kathryn was pursuing research at Queen’s

University Belfast when the opportunity arose to investigate this question. This lack of ground flora appeared to be a common problem for other woodlands. Consequently, a study was launched to examine 30 newly planted broadleaf woodlands that had been established around the year 2000. Kathryn visited these woods once in spring and then again in early summer, and the findings provide practical advice which could be adopted to actively encourage colonisation of new woods by herbaceous ground flora.

The small woodlands visited had mostly been established on the least productive areas of farmland, like our own. Although none of the sites had an arable history prior to planting, the recommendations from this investigation are applicable to many contrasting situations.

Woodland ground flora behaviour

The quintessential woodland that many dream of has a variety of trees and a vibrant herbaceous ground flora. For many, this could be a blanket of bluebells, but in reality can be a combination of many other species. Woodland flora are generally classified with respect to their inherent ability to reproduce, and those inhabiting woodlands are conventionally recognised as either Ancient Woodland Indicator Species (wood specialists) or Woodland Indicator Species (shade tolerant). This classification is used in many situations as an aid to identify the age and history of woodlands. The research, however, revealed a more precise classification system based upon the abilities of the herbaceous plants to migrate into the woods. This helps to explain why there were different patterns observed. These new classifications are:

Ancient edge huggers – typically, ransom, wood sorrel, hart's tongue fern, dog violet, and wood anemone. These plants colonise the edges and expand slowly into the wood.

Expansionists – typically, primrose, greater stitchwort, golden saxifrage, bluebell, and enchanter's nightshade. These plants have greater potential to colonise and, compared to the edge huggers, disperse relatively fast into the heart of the wood.

Woodland dispersers – typically, jack-in-the-pulpit, male fern, and herb bennet. These plants have a more random dispersal within the wood but have the potential to expand quickly to new sites.

Exploiter – lesser celandine. This plant takes advantage of opportunities related to light or moisture availability and, compared to the other groups, can rapidly blanket the ground in local situations.

Management and habitat factors

Several important influential management and habitat factors were found to affect the successful colonisation of herbaceous ground flora. A more active management programme of the woodland prior to and during early establishment aids the colonisation dynamic. The following points should be considered:

1. Many woods are 'isolated' and it is important to ensure connectivity to sources of existing woodland plants. This can be achieved via the habitat corridors that exist within the countryside, namely hedges, which are often the last refuges of these woodland species. Mature hedges must be 'maintained' prior to tree planting, as coarse weeds can impact on the success of herbaceous seed and propagule dispersal.
2. Woodlands planted close to riparian zones (riverbanks) have a high potential for increasing colonisation. However, these areas must be monitored, as streams and rivers can be sources of aggressive invasive species.
3. In newly planted woodland the tree species chosen does not affect the initial colonisation; this related more to the density and mix of the trees. Active early thinning encourages the migration of many of the herbaceous species desired. When mature, however, the planted



ABOVE: Bluebell, with the seeds at the point of spread, is an expansionist species.

BELOW: Herb bennet is a woodland disperser, with a hooked fruiting body that enables it to catch passing animals to aid colonisation to other locations. (Photos courtesy Roy Nelson)

tree species will influence final herbaceous ground floor composition.

4. Owners and managers can bring in plants from elsewhere, but this may cause a 'founder' effect – the loss of genetic variation that can occur when new plants are introduced that are of a different genetic makeup from the endemic species. Plants of local provenance do contribute more fully to the woodland biome. The well-intentioned but ill-judged planting of 'alien' species such as Spanish bluebells in the desire to achieve a traditional woodland with a blue carpet of flowers in the spring must be prevented. However, waiting for natural self-seeding can be problematic as there may only be a few woodland plants growing nearby or some species may even be locally extinct. Therefore, before any planting occurs,



the edges of the site should be surveyed, and management practices adopted that increase and enhance the plants of local provenance to colonise the new wood.

In conclusion, to achieve a woodland that has an associated diverse herbaceous flora requires certain management practices and landscape features. These include

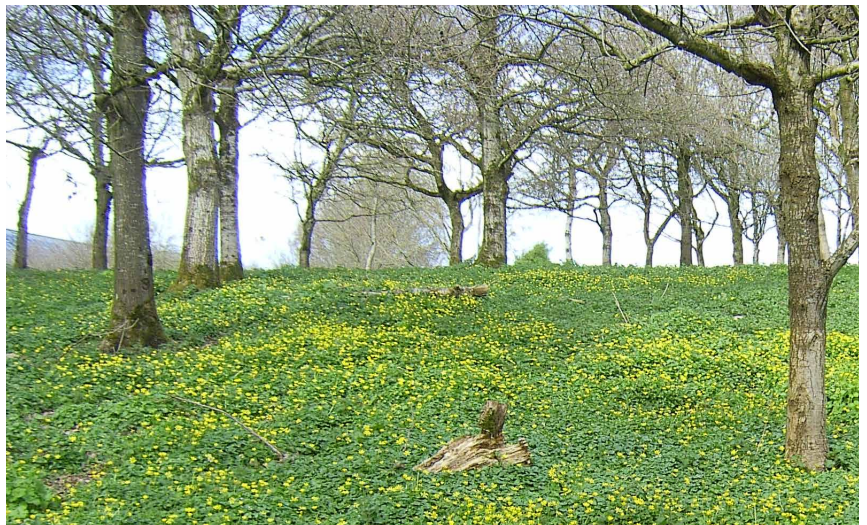
- a mosaic of interconnected woodlands and connected corridors of existing hedges rich in plant species
- the monitoring of riparian zones to reduce the likelihood of invasive species establishing
- a management programme during the early stages of the young wood.

Taken together, these will help to increase species dispersal and create the woodlands of our hopes and dreams.

Reference: Kathryn Nelson, Roy Nelson and William Ian Montgomery (2021) 'Colonisation of farmland deciduous plantations by woodland ground flora', *Arboricultural Journal*

KATHRYN NELSON is an artist and a PhD research student at Queen's University Belfast.

DR ROY NELSON is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at Queen's University Belfast. He uses quantitative analysis and social science research methods to help investigate ecological and related problems.



TOP: Jack-in-the-pulpit, a woodland disperser whose fruit is spread through ingestion by animals or birds, favours damp woodlands.

ABOVE: Lesser celandine (an exploiter species) taking advantage of a local situation. (Photos courtesy Roy Nelson)

Links

Grow Wild (a general guide to identification from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew)

Plantlife UK

Royal Forestry Society
Woodland Species Guide

Wildflower Finder

Woodlands plant ID guide

Woodland Trust

Broadleaved woodland type	Predominant tree species	Common associated herbaceous plants
Dry	Sessile and pedunculate oak, downy birch, holly, rowan, ash, hazel.	Bilberry, bracken, common cow-wheat, great woodrush, hard fern, herb bennet, honeysuckle, jack-in-the-pulpit, lesser celandine, ling, male fern, wood sage.
Damp	Pedunculate oak, ash, hazel, yew.	Bluebell, barren strawberry, dog violet, enchanter's nightshade, golden saxifrage, greater stitchwort, hart's tongue fern, herb bennet, ivy, jack-in-the-pulpit, lesser celandine, male fern, pignut, primrose, ramson, sanicle, wood anemone, wood avens, wood sorrel, wood speedwell.
Wet	Pedunculate oak, ash, hazel, hawthorn, holly, willows, alder (locally abundant).	Bramble, creeping buttercup, enchanter's nightshade, golden saxifrage, hemlock, water dropwort, hedge bindweed, ivy, meadowsweet, nettle, primrose, reed canary-grass, sedge, ramson, wild angelica, wood dock.
Very Wet	Willows, alder, sometimes ash.	Bramble, common marsh-bedstraw, creeping buttercup, lady-fern, meadowsweet, purple loosestrife, skullcap, yellow pimpernel.

NOTE: Herbaceous plants should not be dug up or relocated.

Fossit, J. A. (2000) *A guide to habitats in Ireland* (pp. 48–58). Dublin: The Heritage Council.

Grime, J.P., Hodgson, J.G. and Hunt, R (2007) *Comparative plant ecology; a functional approach to common British species*, Castlepoint Press, Sheffield.

Planning and building

Ask not what a shed can do for you, but how it benefits your woodland.
Forestry Commission Local Partnerships Advisor **CAROLINE GOOCH** discusses the finer points of building in woodlands.



Stage one is complete: you've bought your woodland, congratulations! It might previously have been actively managed. It might be an absolute jungle. You've probably spent a bit of time wandering around it, getting a feel for your new purchase, working out what you've got growing, what wildlife you might be sharing your woodland with. At some point you may make the decision you want to do a bit of work in your woodlands. This could be habitat management for wildlife, green wood working, some coppicing and thinning here and there. These could be small pottering projects, or full-scale woodland management across your plot. It could just be to create a comfy area for recreation for you and your family. Either way, it'll be likely that it will involve a bit of physical effort, use of tools, possibly some long hours. It'll be even more likely that at

some point it's going to rain (this is Britain, after all).

The solution seems obvious: you need some sort of shelter. Wouldn't it be great to have somewhere to shelter from the weather, enjoy a steaming brew while you admire your hard work, perhaps somewhere to keep a few tools? It doesn't seem an unreasonable ask; after all, people have sheds in their gardens for this type of thing. What harm can there be in whacking up a shed or a cabin?

The law

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your point of view), it is not that simple. Ahead of you lie murky and mysterious waters – planning laws. More specifically, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, a whole raft of

subsequent planning policies, revisions, amendments, partial repeals, and the dark arts of planning permission, prior notifications, permitted development, and certificates of lawfulness. Add in the devolution of government bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and their different planning laws, not to mention the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and you'd be forgiven for just wanting to run into your woods and ne'er return.

Quite simply, these laws are in place for a specific reason: to protect our land and countryside from over-development. Your little shed might seem innocuous, and well-hidden, but what happens when your neighbours in the adjacent lots want the same? Or decide they need a barn to house bigger machinery. And actually, having an office as part of that barn would be really useful. Maybe even a bunk for the odd overnight stay. Suddenly things get a lot less innocuous and well-hidden.

Permitted development

One article of law which gets bandied around a lot in support of woodland buildings is permitted development. Permitted development is essentially development or works which be carried out without need for planning permission. The **General Permitted Development Order 2015** outlines what classes as permitted development for the purposes of forestry, but you must still talk to your local planning authority, who will determine whether what you wish to build meets the requirements for permitted development. If they don't, you'll have to go through full planning permission.

Forestry purposes

Whether for permitted development or full planning permission within woodlands, to have a hope of getting your building, you must demonstrate that what you intend to use your building for is a genuine need to carry out actual forestry. If you can show that you have a real need to store machinery and tools on-site, for the benefit of the woodland in which it sits, this will help your local authority come to an informed decision. One way of demonstrating the need is to ensure you have a Forestry Commission-approved woodland management plan or felling licence in place. This will show that not only do you intend to manage your woodland, but that it will be carried out in a way which is compliant with the UK Forestry Standard and therefore will benefit the woodland under your care.

The local authority is likely to take a rather more dim view if what you are proposing is simply somewhere to have a brew, or do a bit of yoga, or run any sort of business which is not directly linked to forestry. Local planners are not in the business of being difficult for the sake of it; they're in the business of protecting nature. Many local authorities have long and bitter experience of granting permission for one structure and then seeing applicants overstep the mark, thinking they have carte blanche to add more buildings, clear a bit more woodland, stick in a hot tub deck (no, really), and so on.

I'm sure many of you have seen the TV episodes of *Grand Designs* featuring renowned woodsman Ben Law, who has built a truly beautiful house and surrounding buildings within his woodland, and is raising his family there. But it cannot be emphasised enough that he a) had a very long and drawn-out process (over ten years) just to get permission for his first building, and b) is a full-time, professional woodsman. He is actively managing his woodlands as a business, producing woodland products, running educational events around woodland management, and employing apprentices. Ben Law is the exception to the general outcome for household planning permission in woodlands, not the rule.

In short, really think about why you want a building in your woodland. Will it genuinely aid you in looking after your woodland in a way which benefits your woodland, rather than just benefiting yourself? Is it worth the paperwork? If you just want somewhere to shelter from a bit of bad weather, consider getting a decent tarpaulin, and honing some bushcraft skills, which will reap its own rewards. If you feel you have a real need to store anything on-site (and are happy to accept the risk of those items getting pinched if you're not there every day to check on them), then ensure you can demonstrate that need, and talk to your planners. They're real people too.

“

Think about why you want a building in your woodland. Will it genuinely aid you in looking after your woodland in a way which benefits the woodland, rather than just benefiting yourself?

”

LINKS

Information about planning regulations and woodlands

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (England)

Owning a woodland and planning legislation

British Log Cabins

USING TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES ON A NEW BARN

RICHARD HARE is a woodland manager in East Sussex. He needed more storage for his timber and forestry equipment and four years ago he acquired planning permission to construct a timber-framed barn.



Working neglected oak woodlands in the High Weald, I have thinned mature oaks to open up rides and bring light to the woodland understorey.

These old oaks are the perfect material for building and have helped me fulfil a long-held ambition, to construct a building from local materials using age-old techniques.

One of the motivations for the project has been to create a building with as low a carbon footprint as possible. Already we have locked up a few tons of oak into the structure which may last half a millennium. It may not save the planet on its own, but it is really satisfying.

The timber for this building has come almost entirely from woodlands I manage in the local High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The oak trees were about 100 years old and crowding out the rest of



a previously worked coppice wood to the detriment of both coppice and oak trees. About 20 of these make up the frame.

The main pitched roof rafters are western hemlock which we felled as part of a ride-widening project. The rest of the 'lean-to' roof structure and the outside cladding is larch which has come from a nearby PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site).

I briefly considered an oak or chestnut shingle roof, which would have been a convenient use for all the offcuts of oak and coppiced chestnut the project has produced. However, splitting out shingles is an incredibly time-consuming process and instead serendipity played a part when I visited Tony Kindell at Aldershaw Handmade Tiles just two miles down the road. He makes award-winning heritage clay tiles from his own quarry and

happened to have just the right amount for my roof. Not only did I get them for a good price, but conveniently, they had all been pre-weathered on another building for ten years and were perfect for my needs.

Traditional building techniques

Building the barn using traditional techniques has been a revelation. After all the effort that we have gone through to harvest, mill, transport and joint all the timbers for this build has been a challenge to say the least, but we have had the use of chainsaws, a sawmill, a four-wheel drive vehicle and all sorts of power tools. You can only wonder at the effort of doing all this without such aids, and it has filled me with awe and respect for the craftsmen that went before us and who were responsible for so many timber-framed buildings which still survive today, hundreds of years on.

At times this project has appeared too daunting and overwhelming, but I've found the best way to approach it is little by little, concentrating on what needs to be done on the day rather than worrying too much about how much more is left to do. Once I discovered this I found the process became much less stressful and more enjoyable. Pandemic permitting, I'm hoping I can wrap up and secure the building before another winter sets in.

Permission

Planning permission for this building was not easy to obtain, and it might have been easier had I had more experience of the planning system. It seemed to me that my business ticked all the boxes for environmentalism, sustainability and support of the local economy, but in reality there was lots more to think about.

Change of use is one of the biggest issues in planning and this building was intended to replace an old Nissen hut. Over its 70-year history it would have been used for agricultural storage and repairs and maintenance tasks, but proving this was difficult. Applying for like-for-like replacement as a forestry/agricultural store seemed to be the only option.

Eventually, after much discussion, permission was granted in 2017.

LINKS

The full story of Rich's barn, is available on the **SWOG website**.

Contact Rich via his website: **Keeper's Coppicing**.

TOP: The original Nissen hut on site in 2016. It had previously been used by tenant farmers for storage and agricultural purposes.

MIDDLE: Hewn from local timber, the oak frame takes shape in 2018.

BOTTOM: With local clay tiles on the roof, the new barn fits well into its surroundings in the Sussex Weald.





Newly-planted trees overlooking Loch Nevis on the Knoydart Estate. (Photo © EForests Limited)

With tree-planting numbers falling some way short of government targets, individuals are stepping in to help out. But planting the right tree in the right place is not cheap. Scottish musician **JIM DUNCAN** has come up with an innovative way to get trees in the ground.

Singer-songwriter Jim Duncan has three studio albums under his belt, has performed at Glastonbury and runs a website dedicated to creating personalised songs for businesses and special events.

Jim's latest project reflects his two great passions – the environment and music. He has teamed up with **Eforest**, a not-for-profit organisation that helps to create and restore woodlands throughout the United Kingdom.

He has written two songs which will be available from April and for each song downloaded, EForest will plant a tree. We asked Jim how he dreamt up the whole project.

What prompted you to use your music to encourage tree-planting?

I was raised in a forest. My mum and dad bought a house in the middle of 11 acres of woodland so I have always had a strong connection with trees. You can only imagine the fun my brother and I had growing up in our own Ewok village in the late 1980s. I spent a lot of time in those woods and they kind of became a part of my musical journey. I would take off into the woods with my guitar and practise. Now that I've grown up I consider myself an environmentalist and anything I can do to help raise awareness of climate change problems

I'll do. My skill set is in songwriting so I'm more than happy to use my talents for good, and planting trees is just that.

Recording music professionally is not cheap – how did you get the project funded?

People don't realise just how expensive it is. When you have several musicians and a studio to pay for, it quickly mounts up and unfortunately it's really difficult to recoup the cost. I decided to get sponsorship and found the Breedon Group, an aggregates company and cement manufacturer. They have an active corporate social responsibility policy and, as it turns out, are committed to operating in as sustainable manner as possible. They seemed happy to help, which was so refreshing as I've banged on a lot of doors!

Never one to miss an opportunity, I took my guitar to the meeting and had a wee sing-song in the meeting room. I'm not sure they were used to that approach, but it can't have done any harm, as they still backed the project and have remained right behind it despite the uncertainty of Covid. I'm not surprised though. I have been extremely impressed by Breedon. The thing that stood out the most during our meeting was how seriously they take the well-being of their staff. They really look after them.



Hillsides are being replanted with young saplings, which are a mix of conifer and broadleaved species. (Photo © EForests Limited)

How does the whole scheme work?

It's really simple: download the song and a tree gets planted! Eforests, who are a not-for-profit tree-planting organisation, are the sole beneficiary of the project. They have agreed to plant the first 2,000 trees for the download price of £1.99. That's a bit more expensive than the normal single download price, but with that you get your own personal tree planted with an e-certificate to that effect, so it's a great gift. After the first 2,000 trees are planted the price will revert to the standard £0.79 per download and all the money will just go into a tree-planting kitty.

Where will your trees be planted?

We have a site arranged at Knoydart in Mallaig courtesy of Eforest. It's a truly stunning part of the world. Knoydart, traditionally known as the 'Rough Bounds' because of its remoteness in the West Highlands of Scotland, is renowned for its stunning beauty, rugged grandeur and blissful tranquillity. It is a haven for hill walkers, mountaineers, wildlife enthusiasts and those who just want to get away from the hurly-burly of urban life.

Do you have plans to expand the project?

I very much hope so. I'm half way through another much larger project which is an environment-themed sci-fi music concept album. It's quite a theatrical piece consisting of 20 tracks featuring a host of talent from all over the world, including Dan Aykroyd, David Grier, Tony Furtado and John McCusker.

DOWNLOAD JIM'S TRACKS HERE
asongforyou.net/tree-planting-music-project



TO THE FOREST WE SURRENDER

*Come spend with me thine blessed
time – in love and joy and splendour
Entwined in earth's majestic realm
to the forest we surrender*

*For a life enriched with nature
in symbiotic harmony
We'll build ourselves a peaceful home
And all important armoury –
of pine cones for the fire and water
from the brook
Acorns from the forest bed to feed our
friend the rook*

*We'll listen to the evening
and join its lively tune
Whilst warming by the fire's glow
in the scattered light of moon
And when the morning takes its turn
and the patterns form through trees
The kaleidoscope of spiders' webs
will glisten in the breeze*

*Through winter's lazy sunshine –
through spring's resurrection
Through summer's light and
autumn's colours
We'll find our life's connection
With nature's sweetest chorus and the
laughter of the flowers
We'll dance in joy to nature's rhythm
And waste no precious hours*

*Come spend with me thine blessed
time – in love and joy and splendour
Entwined in earth's majestic realm –
to the forest we surrender.*

WOODLANDS AWARDS 2021

Ever evolving, the Awards are back!

ANTONY MASON of Woodlands.co.uk reports.

The Woodlands Awards aim to spotlight and celebrate the hard work, artistry, knowledge and enterprise invested in British woodlands.

'That's fantastic news, great to have something positive to report, in these tricky times.' This is how one winner of the Woodlands Awards 2020 responded. Buoyed by similar responses from the 40 winners in 2020, Woodlands.co.uk are launching the Awards for 2021, with renewed vigour – and encouraging everyone to join in, either by entering themselves for a prize, or nominating others. There are real prizes to be won in many categories: "The prizes arrived this morning... what can I say except they are wonderful and very generous. Thank you very much!"

Awards categories

There are 14 categories again this year. It is not quite the same list as last year, as two awards have been replaced by two new ones. The Makers in Wood Award is designed to celebrate the best of woodland-related craft work: furniture, turning, jewellery, sculpture, spoons and more. Best Woodland Toilets – a topic described elsewhere as 'close to every woodowner's heart' – calls for ingenuity, aesthetic choices and perhaps a sprinkling of humour.

How to enter

Each of the categories has its own criteria for entry. Some (such as the Woodland Photography Award) depend on individuals submitting their own entries. Some (such

as the Woodland Courses Award) depend on personal recommendations. Others still (such as the Woodland Instagram Award and the new Makers in Wood Award) depend on a mixture of these.

The main idea is that they are all easy to enter. Full details are available on the **[Woodlands Awards web pages](http://Woodlands.co.uk)**.

Deadline for submissions: 31 July 2021.

Any questions? Please email **antony@woodlands.co.uk**

Winners

A panel of judges will draw up shortlists of the best entries, and then award the prizes. There may be a number of winners in each category: all entries judged to be of equally high merit will be awarded a First Prize (i.e. no Second, Third etc).

The 2021 award winners will be announced in September 2021.

A note to past winners: the competition rules say that winners cannot win an award in the same category for a second time, but there is nothing to stop them entering (or being entered) in another category.

Prizes

The prizes (depending on the category) will be a mixture of award certificates, selected woodland books and woodland equipment and/or tools – and recognition!

Details about 2020 winners can be found on the **[award winners pages](http://Woodlands.co.uk)**.



**THE WOODLANDS
AWARDS
SPONSORED BY
Woodlands.co.uk**

Prizes will be awarded in each of the following categories:

AWARDS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Small Woodland Websites
Woodland Photography
Woodland Instagrams
Makers in Wood **NEW**
Woodland Tool
Recommendations
Woodland Huts
Woodland Toilets **NEW**

AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISES

Woodland Contractors
Woodland Tree-Planting
Projects
Forest Schools
Woodland Courses
Community Woods
Woodland Books of the
Year
Regional and National
Woodland Organisations

MEET *the* MAKER

ROBIN TUPPEN has been making iconic Sussex trugs for nearly 40 years and is passionate about keeping this ancient and endangered craft alive.

How and when did you realise you wanted to be a trug maker ?

I was export manager for Artex (the ceiling finishes manufacturer) and had worked for that company for nine years. I left to complete a business management course at Crawley Tech and began working with my brother Peter. We started making our Cuckmere Trugs in April 1983.

How did your style develop?

The trugs that we made at that time, South Down 'Contemporary' Trugs, had been invented by my brother's father-in-law, Dudley Hide, and his brother Laurence in the 1970s. In fact, they they obtained a Design Centre Award for their creation.

In July 1989, the original makers of the



Robin has won a number of awards for his trugs. In recent years he has travelled extensively throughout the UK and Europe demonstrating and promoting the craft at a trade and wood shows.

traditional Sussex trug, Thomas Smith's, was going to close down. With Frank Odell (well known in the garden industry) and Anna Piper, we raised the funds and bought Thomas Smith's to save it from closure.

Where do you look for your inspiration?

I am a Yeoman Member of the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers (a City of London livery company); a member of the Basketmakers' Association; a member of the Pole Lathe Turners and Green Woodworkers' Association and of the Sussex & Surrey Coppice Group. I get inspiration from all of these organisations.

I also have inspiration when I am in the woodlands, from nature and from handling the wood.



Where do you source your wood?

For the Royal Sussex Traditional Trugs we coppice our own sweet chestnut for the handles and rims. The boards are made from cricket bat willow, which is a by-product of the English cricket bat industry. Due to a shortage of English willow we now source willow of the same species from Croatia.

Our South Down Contemporary Trugs are made using the finest European and Scandinavia birch ply. All of our woods come from sustainable sources.

How do you start a piece and how long does it take to complete a trug?

With the Royal Sussex Traditional Trugs we start by cleaving out the sweet chestnut for the handles and rims. This is then shaved by hand with a draw knife and then steamed and bent around a former. The willow is sawn and planed before being placed inside the frame and fixed with solid copper cut tacks.

For the South Down Contemporary Trugs we cut the ply into one inch wide strips and laminate these together with solid brass escutcheon pins to form the handle and rim. The boards are then cut and shaped to fit inside the trug.

Could you tell us something about the various styles of trug – do they have different purposes?

There are several styles of trug:

- The Garden Trug – most people think of this as the 'Sussex Trug'. It is rectangular with squared ends and is used for general gardening purposes.
- The Oval Trug is slightly deeper than the Garden and has rounded ends.
- The Flower Trug is shallower and has a higher handle – ideal for protecting stems and blooms.
- Fireside Log Trug – just as it says, for holding logs by the fire. A big, tough, deep basket.
- Oblong Trug – one of the fancy trugs at 16 x 11 in (40 x 28 cm).
- There are also Squares and Bowls (with handles and without).

- Finally, there is the Cucumber/Wine Trug – perfect for longer veggies and for a nice bottle of wine at the dinner table as a conversation starter.

Tell us about your workspace and the tools you use

Our workshop is an old tin building in a lovely field in Magham Down, Herstmonceux. It was built in 1914 as the village hall and before we took it over, was empty for around 14 years.

For the Royal Sussex Trugs we use cleaving axes and draw knives to split and shave the chestnut. Our tools include formers, on which we bend the handles and rims; hammers to nail in the copper tacks; pinchers (for when we bend a tack!) and a knife which is used to trim the ends of the boards to make them nice and neat.

What does the craft mean to you?

My wife says that I only live for trugs, but that's not true as I like to eat her dinners as well! I have devoted 38 years of my life to keeping this traditional craft alive and the people working with two of my competitors learnt their craft in my workshop. I have travelled all around Europe attending shows and visiting customers to spread the word and to gain business. I also have worked on a Department of Trade and Industry Gardening Task Force for three years, have been a director (and chairman for four years) of Gardenex and a director of the Garden Industry Manufacturers' Association (GIMA).



STAGES IN MAKING A TRUG

TOP: Sweet chestnut poles are cleaved for use as handles and rims.

ABOVE: Split chestnut is steamed to make it pliable and then bent around a 'former' or rim.

BELOW: Made from recycled cricket bat willow, the boards are either steamed or soaked in very hot water and are then bent on the ends. This makes them springy and stops them splitting when they are shaped within the frame. The boards are placed inside the frame and fixed securely into position using solid copper tacks.





Robin and his team run trug appreciation courses, which enable customers to get a feel for the intricate skills involved in making a traditional trug.

For many years now my staff and I have run courses at the [Weald & Downland Living Museum](#) and have run courses in our own workshop. These are two-day appreciation courses as it takes a three-year apprenticeship to learn how to make our trugs. In the past, my son Chris (a Master Craftsman), has run team-building courses for organisations such as Southern Water. With my craftsman Caleb Pimm (who joined as an apprentice six-and-a-half years ago), I often visit local groups to give a talks and demonstrations.

We also attend many shows each year both here in the UK and in mainland Europe where we demonstrate our craft to audiences that express great interest in what we do and what we make. We have a large following in Europe.

What's your proudest achievement?

You know, I have never really thought of what I do in that way. I guess I am sort of proud that, 38 years after joining the industry, I still get up early to go to work and enjoy what I do and the people I meet. Many are famous people, most are not, but everyone I meet is interesting and it is enjoyable talking to them. Often, miles away from Herstmonceux, someone will come up to us and say, 'My Dad/Grandad used to work at Smith's'.

Sussex trug making is an endangered craft – how do you see the future?

Yes, the craft is endangered and it is of great concern to me. However, you can either sit on your office chair and bemoan the fact or you can actually do something about it! One of my competitors, on his website, says that he is proud to be one of the last traditional Sussex trug makers in Sussex. How

on Earth can you be proud of that?

None of my competitors have an apprentice. I have two and have also trained two others who became Craftsmen Trug Makers. This year I will be seeking a third apprentice to join our team. There are currently seven trug makers in our company and just five outside of the company, gainfully employed in making trugs commercially.

My ultimate ambition is to create a Sussex Trug Heritage Centre where the focus will be on training more people, young and older, to become trug makers and repopulate the industry. I have started a company, Sussex Trug Heritage Centre Limited, in order to start the ball rolling but I really need some specialised help to create funding streams. I am 73 next month and need to pass on the baton and secure some sort of future for our industry. Without apprentices or trainees, how are my competitors going to survive when the current owners retire?



Caleb Pimm's masterpiece, a beautiful bowl trug.

ROBIN TUPPEN is the proprietor of Thomas Smith, the original makers of the Royal Sussex Trug. He and his team export trugs all over the world.

Visit the Thomas Smith website, www.sussextrugs.com to learn more about the craft or to order trugs.

CHAINSAW

REVIEW



RICH HARE puts the new **Feider Pro 45 Petrol Chainsaw** through its paces.

Winter is a busy time in the woods, a time when all your kit gets a good run out and when breakdowns and downtime can be annoying and expensive. Chainsaws particularly take a hammering, so I was pleased to get to try a Feider 45 Pro saw, a brand I must admit I had never heard of before. Coincidentally, I had just changed my Stihl MS260 which had served me well for ten years, for a new MS261, which is a 50cc saw and can be roughly compared with the 46cc Feider.

The Feider came boxed with everything I needed to get going: chain oil, two stroke, small mixing can, spare chain, some rudimentary PPE, a socket for the chain cover/spark plug and a small screwdriver for carb adjustments.

I took the chain cover off – although, as the nuts are not captive, put a couple of spares in your kit.

Smooth operation

The brake band is on the underside of the cover which means the sprocket is between the clutch drum and the saw body. Personally, I find this a bit of a faff for changing bars and chains, but those who are used to Husqvarna saws will be familiar with this design and not find any problems. The bar and chain are good quality supplied by Oregon.

Operating the chain brake is simple: push forward to apply and back to release. It took a bit of getting used to as it seemed to need a firm pull in order to release it.

The air filter and spark plug are easily accessible under a snap-off top cowling. Annoyingly, the spring which connects the plug to its wire came off when I pulled the boot off. It

was easily put back on, but could be a nuisance in the woods

The oil and fuel filler caps are simple and robust, with a thumb turn. It does have a slot which takes the slotted head screwdriver on the supplied socket should you need a mechanical advantage to open it. Unfortunately the diameters of the holes are smaller than the auto-stop nozzles on my filler can, so a free hand approach was called for when topping up the levels.

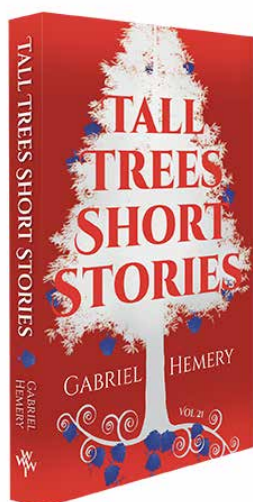
On first use, the machine started easily and picked up revs fairly quickly. It has a primer next to the choke lever but no decompression valve, although the starter cord is easy to pull. I cross-cut some dry chestnut about 8in. in diameter with no difficulties. Then I cleared up a couple of windblown stools. The saw is light and fairly agile, though I may be tempted to put a slightly smaller bar on for this kind of work.

In conclusion, I think this saw offers good value for its features. It's probably half the price or less than the leading brands, so it would make for a fine entry-level saw. I would probably be more inclined to use it as a back-up or for lighter work such as snedding and smaller coppicing. It might also make a useful addition to anyone who regularly mounts tools like the very handy Mortice Safe on their saws, as it would save a lot swapping and changing bars and chains in the field.

The **Feider Pro 45** is available from Mow Direct, price £239 (RRP £299)

The whole range of Feider products can be seen here:
mowdirect.co.uk

BOOKS



Tall Trees Short Stories Vol 21

Gabriel Hemery

£10.99 (paperback)/

£3.99 (e-book)

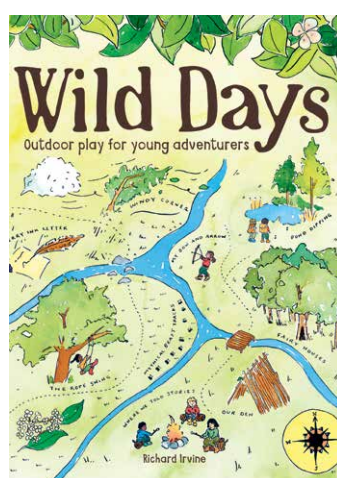
Gabriel Hemery has published his second book of short stories. 'During 2020 I decided to write a story every month of the year and to release them to regular readers via my newsletters. This public promise was sometimes tough to fulfil yet proved to be a great discipline.'

Tall Trees Short Stories Vol 21, includes a total of 18 stories, some of which are published

for the first time in this volume.

Reviewed last summer, **Volume 20** was, in the words of our reviewer, 'overflowing with literary invention, scientific detail and philosophy'. Chief executive of the Sylva Foundation and a highly respected forester, Gabriel Hemery is also the master of quirky, inventive and absorbing stories, so we have high hopes for his latest book, which will be reviewed in the next issue of *Living Woods Magazine*.

In the meantime, it can be purchased direct from **Gabriel's website** (gabrielhemery.com/shop) in paperback (£10.99, signed by the author) or as an e-book (£3.99).



Wild Days

Richard Irvine

RRP £16.99

GMC Publications (for ages 5 and above)

Forest school practitioner Richard Irvine has an excellent track record in producing inspiring books which introduce children to the great outdoors.

'Every day can be a wild day. The wilderness is not always on our doorstep, but little bits of wild nature can be found everywhere – whether you live in a bustling city or its suburbs, or close to farms, forest or on the coast. There are adventures to be had in parks, on city streets, canal tow-



paths, riverbanks, beaches, woods, moorland and country walks. All that is needed is a bit of curiosity and maybe a guide like this book.'

Packed with advice, useful tips and simple step-by-step instructions, all accompanied by superb photographs, this book will prove useful to novices and experienced outdoors-people alike.

If you are trying to provide a more diverse education this spring away from screens, this will be your go-to book, and if you're concerned about allowing children to use tools, all the safety advice you could need is in here, backed up by Richard's knowledge and practical experience as an outdoors craft educator and as a parent.

SYMBOLS IN TREES

CLARE GIBSON reflects on the lime or linden tree, which has an especially rich symbolic legacy in Europe and a powerful place in ancient myths.

Symbolism is often subjective, and certain trees may therefore represent different things to different people. Take the lime or linden tree (*Tilia*). Some cricket-lovers may associate it with Kent Country Cricket Club, and specifically with the lime tree that stood on the playing area of its St Lawrence Ground (now the Spitfire Ground), in Canterbury, until 2005. (When the ailing tree blew down in a storm, its replacement was planted outside the boundary.) Others may think of the lime as an annoyance, a tree to avoid in late summer on account of the honeydew released by aphids feasting amid its branches, making walking beneath it a disagreeably sticky experience.

As for me, Berlin immediately springs to mind, the association being with the German capital's famous boulevard Unter den Linden ('Under the Lime Trees'), named for the graceful trees that stand alongside it. Following the destruction of their predecessors during World War II, the lime trees that flank Unter den Linden today were planted during the 1950s.

The lime (*die Linde*) has a special place in German hearts. It was regarded as a sacred tree by ancient Germanic tribes, who convened public assemblies and courts of law beneath its boughs (such trees were known as *Gerichtslinden*, or 'court lime trees'). Its status as a gathering point endured in German villages (when it was known as the *Dorflinde*, or 'village lime tree'), and it also became a focus of festivities, often as the *Tanzlinde* ('dance lime tree'). German lovers traditionally met under the branches of a lime tree, too, perhaps because *Tilia* was once considered to be dedicated to Freya, the Germano-Norse goddess of love and fecundity. The lime tree came to be regarded as a symbol of community and justice, and of joy and love.

The lime tree's Greek name is *philyra*, which, according to Greek mythology, was also the name of a daughter of the Titan Oceanus. Following an encounter with Cronus (another Titan) in the form of a horse, the nymph Philyra gave birth to a human-horse hybrid, the centaur Chiron. So ashamed and appalled was Philyra by her offspring's

appearance that she begged the gods to transform her, and she was duly changed into a lime tree. Chiron was later schooled by the god Apollo in many subjects, including healing, an art in which Chiron in turn instructed his disciples, among them Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine. And on the subject of healing, an infusion of lime flowers is believed to have relaxing, restorative and even therapeutic properties, so it may be no coincidence that *lind*, the German word for 'balmy' or 'gentle', and *lindern*, meaning 'to soothe' or 'to ease', are closely related to *Linde*.

The lime tree's best-known symbolic association, however, is probably with conjugal love, largely

thanks to Ovid. In Book VIII of his *Metamorphoses*, the Roman poet relates how the gods Jupiter and Mercury, disguised as mortal men, sought a bed for the night in Phrygia, but were turned away by all but Baucis and his wife Philemon, an old couple who welcomed them into their humble cottage and made them feel at home. Having revealed their true identities, and, in appreciation of their hosts' hospitality, transformed their cottage into a temple, the gods granted Baucis and Philemon's wish that they should serve as priests at the temple and, at the end of their lives, die at the same instant.

When their time came, Ovid relates, they saw each other putting out leaves, and, 'as the tops of the trees grew over their two faces, they exchanged words, while they still could, saying, in the same breath, "Farewell, O dear companion", as . . . the bark covered them, concealing their mouths'. Baucis

had been changed into an oak tree, and Philemon into a lime. The traditional pairing of oak and lime has thus come to represent mutual marital devotion and companionship.

Freya, Philyra and Philemon – all three are identified with the lime tree, as was once Aphrodite/Venus, the Graeco-Roman goddess of love – maybe because of the allure and beauty of its fragrant blossoms. Femininity is therefore another quality associated with a tree that has long had profound symbolic significance.



Linden trees in Berlin frame the City Hall, the Rotes Rathaus seen from Unter den Linden. (Photo courtesy Jan-Patrick Meyer/Unsplash)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*With grateful thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue of
Living Woods Magazine.*

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Bumblebee Conservation

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A song for You

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Harry Toulson
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Ruth Feltham, Simon Feltham,
Angus Hanton, Antony Mason, and
the Woodlands editorial team.