

LEAF!

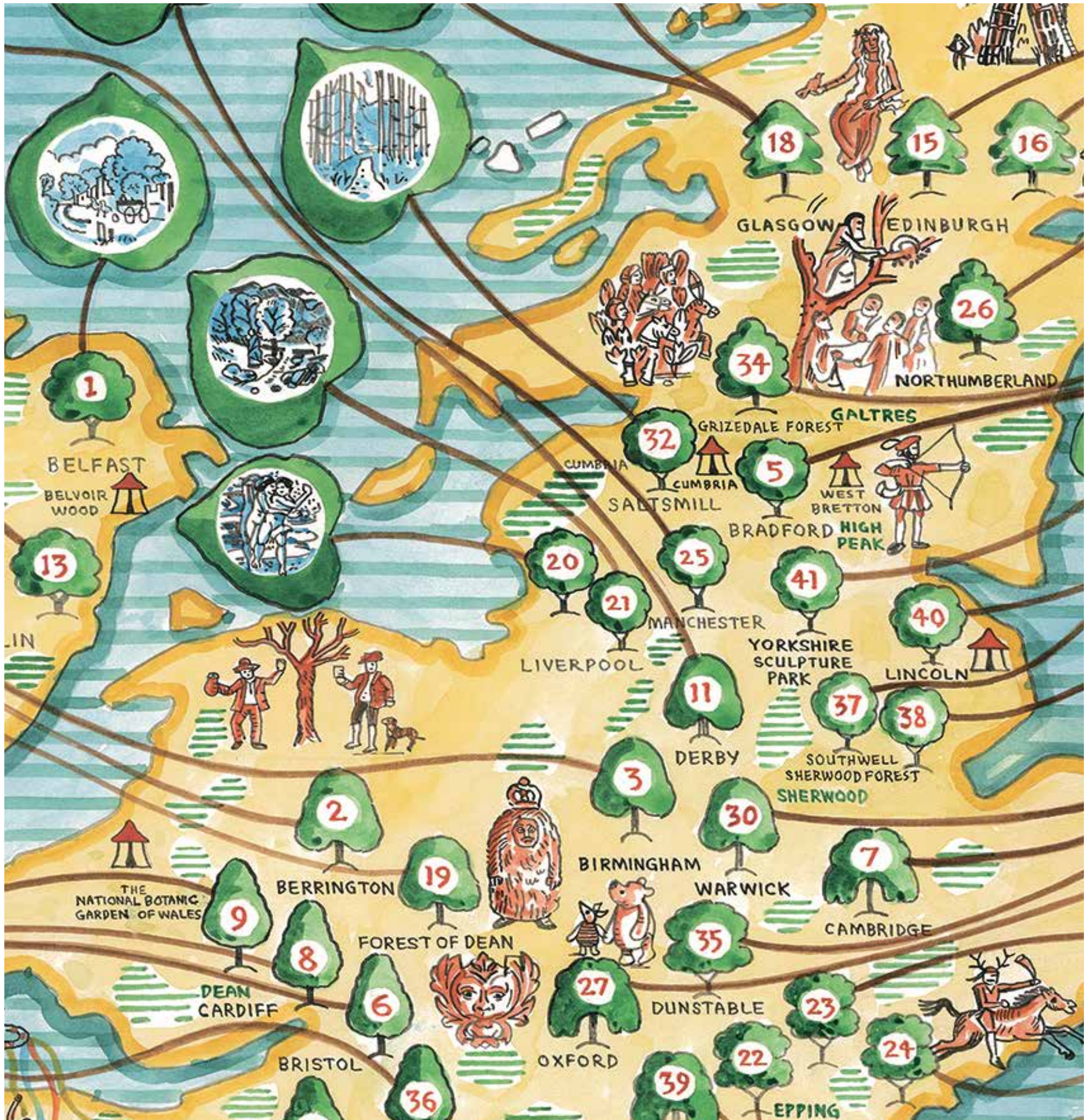
TREES IN ART ISSUE | SUMMER 2017 | FREE



Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People

THE NEWSPAPER FOR TREES, WOODS AND PEOPLE

THE ART OF TREES,
FLOODING, A NEW ARBOREAL MAP,
THE GREAT STORM, ARTIST RESIDENCIES



Detail from TREE TRAILS by Adam Dant

LEAF!

THE NEWSPAPER FOR TREES, WOODS AND PEOPLE

Trees have been loved and venerated in cultures across the world since earliest times, and continue to be a source of inspiration and imagination.

With his arboreal map, featured on the front cover of *LEAF!*, the celebrated illustrator Adam Dant shows us just how significant trees are to the story of art in the British Isles, and just how rich and widely located this visual heritage is.

Common Ground is adding a new layer to the history of trees in art by curating and commissioning a series of artist residencies around the UK. The Tree Charter campaign has challenged people all across the country to consider their relationship with trees, and to reflect on the importance of trees and woods in our culture, environment and economy. Over the next few months, eight artists will bring this thought process to life through a series of varied and very exciting residencies that explore, question and express the relationship between trees, woods and people.

Inside the Chapter House of Lincoln Cathedral, the Turner Prize-winning collective Assemble are making a round wood structure, inspired by bodgers – that lost tribe of men and women who lived and worked in woodlands. In Cornwall, the painter Kurt Jackson is spending a year drawing and painting a single, windswept hawthorn. In Cumbria, Harriet and Rob Fraser are building drystone ‘treefolds’, while in Northern Ireland Christine Mackey is exploring how different communities use Belvoir Wood in southern Belfast.

Wolves are part of poet and artist Alec Finlay’s analysis of two leading pine-wood regeneration projects in the Scottish Highlands. At the National Botanic Garden of Wales, Owen Griffiths is investigating the connection between landscape history and politics. Down in Dorset, Clementine Blakemore is designing and making a new outdoor community space. At the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, near Wakefield, the story-telling potential of trees is the main focus for the internationally acclaimed sound artist, James Webb.

These landmark residencies are matched by a programme of temporary exhibitions and events celebrating trees around the UK, all fuelled by communities, galleries, museums and hard-working Charter Branches who are driving a grassroots movement to celebrate trees. The almanac on the back cover has further details.

This October will be the 30th anniversary of the Great Storm, which felled 15 million trees but also marked a shift in our understanding of trees. When the Tree Charter launches on 6th November 2017 in Lincoln Castle, it will celebrate another anniversary: the 800th year since the Charter of the Forest was written. We hope the Tree Charter of 2017 will mark a new phase in our relationship with trees and woods. The energy and passion for our arboreal neighbours stirred during this campaign gives us hope that the lives of trees, woods and people will remain entwined in the future.🌱



Rising from ash: In response to the spread of ash disease across the landscapes of Kent, from the urban fringes of London to the cliffs of Dover, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty initiated The Ash Project. Alongside the scientific urgency to understand the fungal pathogen *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, which is causing the dieback, there was a need to explore the emotional and historical loss of this significant species. Artist duo Ackroyd & Harvey were asked to respond by creating sculptural works that will soon appear in landscapes across Kent, alongside a programme of walks, workshops and an education programme. Find out more by visiting theashproject.org.uk

REFUGE

by Stephen Boyce

What washes up in the forest is no less
a wonder than the flotsam of oceans.

Take this skeleton of an upturned ark
stranded among a reach of ash trees,

beached in leaf litter, its ribs and spars
secured by a rigging of twiggy larch,

tangles of plaited honeysuckle, all
leaning in as though wanting to give ear

to silence, breath the wood’s cool must.
Some Crusoe surely built this, laid limbs

against a fallen ridgepole, woven vines
and brushwood, spread out a bed of brash,

learned how stillness is a state of mind,
here where things slither, drip and flinch.

Stephen Boyce is the author of pamphlets and collections of poetry, including *In the Northland*, *Something Persists*, *Desire Lines* and *The Sisyphus Dog*. He is also co-founding trustee of Winchester Poetry Festival. ‘Refuge’ is from *The Tree Line*, an anthology of new poetry to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest and the publication of the new Charter for Trees, Woods and People. The book is edited by Michael McKimm and published by Worples Press, with the support of the Woodland Trust and the Legal Sustainability Alliance.

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COMMON GROUND is an arts and environmental charity working both locally and nationally to seek new, imaginative ways to engage people with their local environment and celebrate the intimate connections communities have with the landscape that surrounds them.

THE WOODLAND TRUST is the UK’s largest woodland conservation charity, and the leading voice for woods and trees. We inspire people to visit woods, plant trees, treasure wildlife and enjoy the overwhelming benefits that woods and trees offer to our landscape and lives. The Woodland Trust is leading the call for a Charter for Trees, Woods and People. For more information on the Charter visit treecharter.uk

Views expressed are those of the writers.

The Woodland Trust is a registered charity, Nos. 294344 and 5033885.

Arborealist Tim Craven tells us a story of trees in art

TREES IN ART

From earliest times, trees have been a focus of religious and cultural life for people worldwide. As the largest plant on earth, the tree, an eternal mystical emblem, has been a major source of inspiration for myth and imagination. Trees symbolise longevity, strength and pride. Tree cults, in which a single tree or a grove of trees is worshipped, have flourished at different times almost everywhere.

A strong strand of English landscape painting derives from the mystic Arcadia of Celtic and Christian pantheism. This romantic thread can be traced through Samuel Palmer and the Ancients, the 1920s pastoral etchers, the Neo-Romantics to the Ruralists. Traditional English pastoral landscape recalls a nostalgic, golden age and a way of life under threat. This idyllic view of rural life often celebrates the fecundity of nature with fruit-laden trees. Long-lost rural England correlates to the innocence of childhood, and during times of uncertainty and upheaval, both personal and national, it has come to the fore. The great oak tree, heart of England, was a key picturesque motif, embodying national identity.

‘As in the past, trees will continue to be a subject of rich possibility’

During the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, an inevitable nostalgia for the uncontaminated countryside led to an idealisation of rural life and the Arts and Crafts movement readily mythologised peasant culture. Such notions engender an inevitable melancholy, a sentiment to be found in much English rural poetry and landscape painting, for nature appears vulnerable and fragile. There have always been two kinds of Arcadia: shaggy and smooth, dark and light, a place of bucolic leisure and a place of primitive panic. Tragic landscapes often employ trees as symbols – gnarled tree stumps, overarching distorted trees and ominous shadows give an underlying sense of menace.

Together with Richard Wilson, Thomas Gainsborough, though primarily known for portraiture, laid the essential foundations of the British landscape school in the mid 18th century. Like other native landscape painters he was considerably influenced by the Dutch 17th-century school and in later years he gained much pleasure from producing simple landscapes that often featured woodland. From a close observation of nature he worked at speed with a light palette employing delicate and economical brushwork.

In the 19th century, Samuel Palmer employed rich and concentrated forms with vivid colour to give a heightened, emotive response to his subject. Palmer was strongly influenced by his friend and mentor, William Blake, and his early work was also inspired by his interest in the primitive artists of the 15th and 16th centuries. Palmer's celebrated *The Magic Apple Tree* was painted in 1830 and exemplifies the artist's mystical view of nature.

Trees played their part in the advent of modernism in France but it was the Post-Impressionists who recognised the subject's potential for experimenting with stylistic development. Both van Gogh and Cézanne employed trees close-up for this purpose. In England the four core Camden Town Group artists followed suit for the same ends at different times.

Surrealism, initiated through the horrors of the First World War and Dada, was one of the most influential and powerful art movements of the 20th century. The Surrealist aim was to overthrow



The Magic Apple Tree is a watercolour that Samuel Palmer made in 1830, during his 'Visionary' period (c.1826-32), an intense and innovative phase of the artist's life when he painted the landscapes around Shoreham in Kent. Courtesy of Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge and Bridgeman Images.

the conventions and status quo of bourgeois society through their investigation of subconscious desire, dreams and the irrational. The German-born Max Ernst wrote: 'I never forgot the enchantment and terror I felt when, for the first time my father led me into the forest'.

The dark, mysterious forest is a recurrent theme in German Romantic art and was one of Ernst's favourite motifs. He often used a *grattage* technique where wet paint is scraped over a canvas when pressed down over a rough texture and collage, where tree shapes were formed by narrow strips of wallpaper.

For the Neo-Romantics, trees, upright and limbed were an obvious symbolic substitute for people, especially for an artist looking to charge landscape with significance even though empty of figures. The landscape painter and sometime Surrealist, Paul Nash, attempted to paint trees as if they possessed a moral goodness and wisdom derived from their observations of our human follies. In fact, he even saw trees as people: 'I sincerely love and worship trees and know they are people and wonderfully beautiful people much more lovely than the majority of people one meets.'

From the 1970s, Land Art returned the contemporary visual arts in Britain to the natural, rural world but with innovative conceptual dimensions. Richard Long and Hamish Fulton

developed their art practice purely from a love of walking. Andy Goldsworthy makes (and records with photography) transient sculptures in situ from organic materials including colourful leaves, twigs and branches.

As in the past, trees will continue to be a subject of rich possibility and one to which successive generations of artists will inevitably return. 🌿

Who are The Arborealists?

The Arborealists are a diverse group of artists, from Wales to East Anglia and Sussex to Cornwall, who share the rich and versatile subject of the tree. Tim Craven formed the group in 2013 following the critical success of *Under the Green Wood: Picturing the British Tree*, an exhibition he co-curated with Steve Marshall and Professor Anne Anderson. The group has produced two inspiring books, *Under the Greenwood: Picturing the British Tree from Constable to Kurt Jackson* and *The Arborealists*. The Arborealists hold regular exhibitions of their work – visit arborealists.com to find out more about them or to join the group.



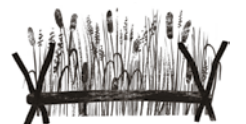
THE CLACTON SPEARHEAD 450,000 BC

Two ice ages ago a yew branch is made into a spearhead and lost at what is now Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Rediscovered in 1911, it is one of the oldest-known wooden human artefacts and indicates woodworking.



WILDWOOD 5000BC

Trees, trees and more trees! A dynamic patchwork of woodland and areas of grassland in which the grazing of deer and auroch (wild oxen) play an important part. In the fifth millennium BC, in the late Mesolithic, wildwood is dominated by lime in Lowland England, by oak and hazel in Wales, western England, and south Scotland, by elm and hazel in most of Ireland, and birch and pine in the Scottish Highlands.



THE SWEET TRACK 3806 BC

A two-kilometre trackway across the wetlands of the Somerset Levels is built out of long oak planks with pieces of hazel, alder, ash, holly, willow and coppiced lime. Coppicing – the cutting and re-cutting of small underwood shoots from the base of a tree – is a lynchpin of traditional woodland management to this day. Neolithic woodsmanship was very sophisticated, crafting different sizes of different woods without the use of metal tools.



SEA HENGE 2049 BC

A large oak and a circle of 55 surrounding oak posts are used to construct one of two Sea Henges near the North Norfolk coast (later inundated and preserved by rising sea-levels). Stonehenge is completed about this time as is the nearby Wood Henge in Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Dr Anne Anderson, FSA, Hon. Associate Professor Exeter University, is a writer, broadcaster and V&A course tutor. She has lectured for many art institutions including the Art Fund, the National Trust, NADFAS and the Conservation Foundation. She has held several prestigious fellowships in the USA and Canada.



THE GREEN MAN 11-15TH CENTURY

The Middle Ages were the heyday of the Green Man, symbol of regeneration and male potency. Carvings in wood or stone were often incorporated into sacred buildings. The intricate Romanesque and Gothic architectural styles of the period lent themselves to the creation of fantastic sculptures. Green Men were just one example of the mythical beasts, demons and other pagan symbols which began to be licensed, even encouraged, by church builders of the time.



THE MAGNA CARTA & CHARTER OF THE FOREST

English Barons force King John to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215, a fundamental Charter of Liberties. This quite possibly happened beneath the Ankerwycke Yew. In 1217 John's heir, Henry III, signs a Charter of the Forest at Runnymede. Clauses of the Magna Carta relating to the forests are expanded and made into their own Charter, setting out freedoms and liberties of all those living in forest areas. It re-establishes rights of access to the Royal Forests for free men.



ROBIN HOOD

Nobody knows who this 13th-century figure really was. Maybe his Lincoln Green clothes stood for the Green Man. Maybe 'Hood' meant 'wood', or the name 'Robin' a nature spirit. He has entered our culture as a free man fighting over the rights to woodland. The Major Oak in Sherwood Forest is said to have hidden Robin Hood from his enemies.

Anne Anderson on veteran trees and why they are symbols of continuity in our busy, ever-changing world

UNDER THE GREENWOOD

We instinctively venerate the oak as the Heart of England. The National Trust, which now protects some of Britain's most ancient trees, chose a sprig of oak leaves and acorns as its logo in 1936. Designed by Joseph Armitage, this symbol now expresses our desire to preserve our most beautiful countryside and historic houses. Our countryside means a lot to us; it has shaped our national character. With poet William Blake's 'dark Satanic Mills' threatening not only our 'green and pleasant land' but also our very way of life, the nation's ancient trees have been revered as sentinels, standing against the rising tide of progress. Trees rouse strong feelings; bombarded by change, we respect their antiquity and strive to protect them. George Pope Morris (1802-1864) demands 'spare that tree' as it invokes memories of his childhood, as well as memorialising distant ancestors; the living tree makes the past proximate, providing tangible links to our paternal ancestors:

*Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy axe shall harm it not.*

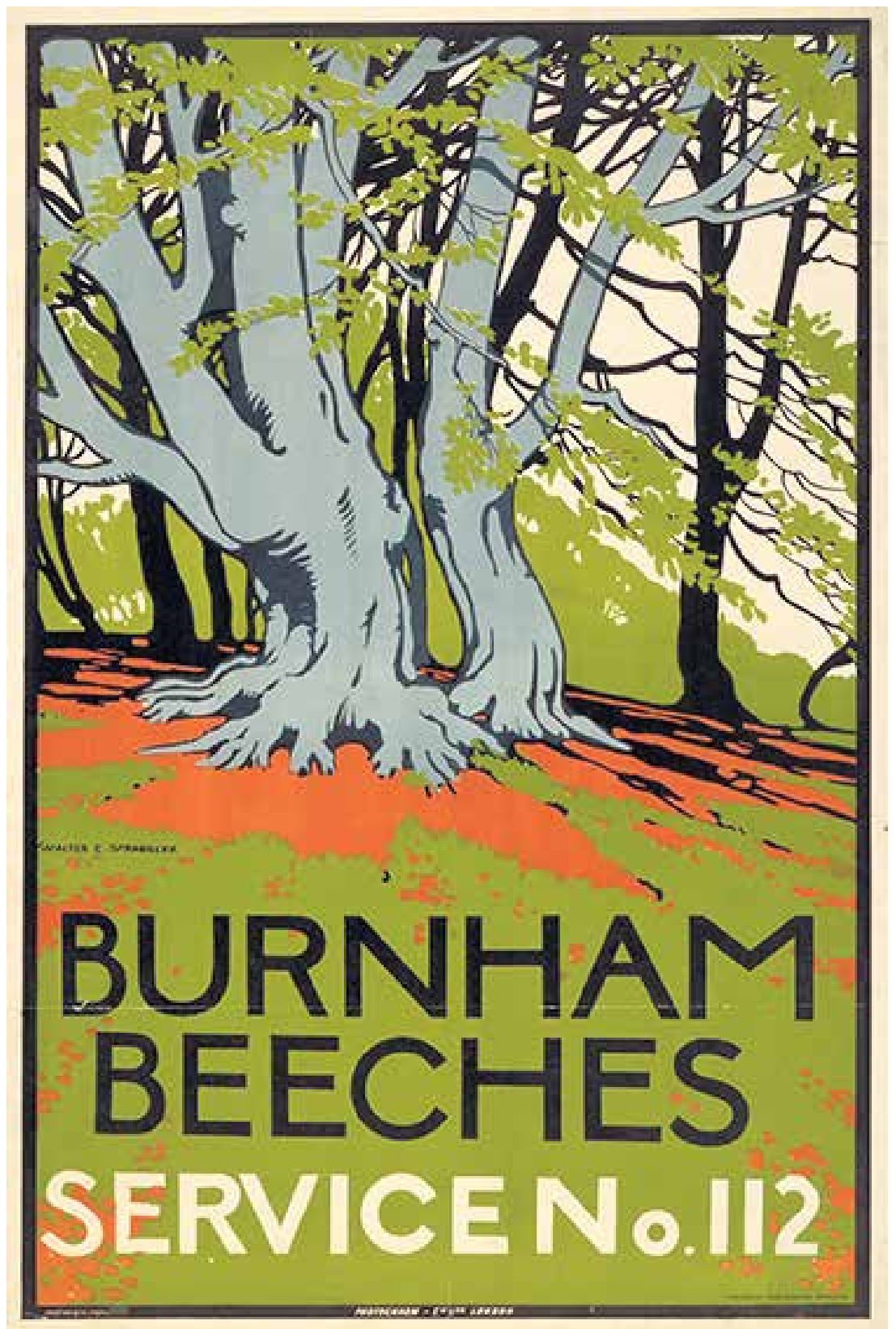
'Trees rouse strong feelings; bombarded by change, we respect their antiquity and strive to protect them'

Burnham Beeches, near Farnham Common, was one of the very first areas of outstanding natural beauty saved for the nation by the Kyrle Society, a precursor of the National Trust. Even though for many of us living in a rural haven is a dream, we still opt to spend our weekends in the countryside, energetically rambling over hill and dale or more sedately strolling through parkland.

Burnham Beeches have captured the imagination of painters, poets and composers; it is said Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47) was inspired by the Beeches to compose his incidental music for Puck and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Sadly the beech that bore his name blew down in 1990 but the stump has been relocated to the Barbican in his honour. The poet Thomas Gray (1716-71) also gave his name to a Burnham Beech, having immortalised a tree in his famous 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1745):

*There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.*

The twisted forms of the old hollow beeches have caught the eye of numerous artists; for many years His Majesty was the oldest and largest beech at Burnham. Named for its size, the giant tree was thought to be some 600 years old when it was felled by the great hurricane of 1987. We lost many great trees that year; beeches are particularly vulnerable owing to their shallow root systems. Trees are both fragile and indomitable; Burnham Beeches are exceptionally old. Some have survived for over 1,000 years, when normally a beech



Walter Spradbery was a watercolourist, linocut artist, poster designer and art teacher. He specialised in landscapes of the countryside around London and exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy. His poster designs, like this image of Burnham Beeches created in 1913, were produced mainly for London Transport, and aimed at inspiring people to use public transport to escape the bustle of the city and suburbs. Courtesy of Transport for London and the London Transport Museum.

would do well to live for a quarter of a century. Many have hollowed trunks, strange twisted shapes and gnarled distorted bark; they exude a curious air of decay and exhaustion. Ironically their longevity is due to man's intervention, as the trees have been pollarded time and again. This is the practice of cutting the tree a couple of metres above ground to promote fresh growth. Cut at a height of around three metres, the new growth is out of the reach of grazing animals. These new shoots can be harvested every 15 to 20 years and used for poles and fencing.

Coppicing was another way of managing woodland, providing a crop on a regular basis. The tree is cut close to the ground, encouraging lots of new growth at the base. Once harvested, the tree can be coppiced again to repeat the cycle. Coppicing in rotation guarantees a continuous supply of timber. Normally trees are coppiced on a seven-year cycle. Biodiversity is encouraged by allowing some trees to grow; this practice, known as 'coppice with standards', provides trees at all

stages of development, thereby offering an ideal habit for both plants and animals.

Although our countryside looks 'natural' it has been managed for hundreds of years. Forests, 'Harbour for wild beasts', were set aside for hunting while woodlands are still maintained as a 'cash crop' or plantations grown for timber. Ancient and veteran trees – the former usually 'third-stage' trees that are relatively old for their species, the latter usually 'second-stage' or mature trees – dot the countryside, while even young trees can be just as beautiful and distinctive. Whether growing in woods, along ancient hedgerows or scattered across fields, trees have an enduring appeal; many have been the subject of legend and folklore and provide a distinctive feature in the landscape. We are also aware that trees cleanse the air from pollutants and promote our physical and mental well-being. We exploit trees as well as revere them. We fell, coppice, pollard and gather their fruits for the table. Trees are so familiar and yet we tend to take them for granted. 🌱

Rob Fraser meets one of Britain's most prolific sculptors and land artists to talk about woods, trees and the natural environment

DAVID NASH

David Nash has an intimate connection with wood, having worked with it as his chosen material for many decades. His work is globally acclaimed. To stand in his studio, or walk through woods with him where he has planted and coaxed trees to encourage particular patterns of growth, is an absolute privilege, and an opportunity to share his vision of wood as an object with almost as much life as the trees from which it comes.

'You look at a piece,' says David, 'and you think it's made of wood. But a tree makes that material. Working with wood is so special because it is something that has grown, a life force that weaves earth and light into the tree's body. It has got a time element to it, which we instinctively recognise, though not necessarily consciously. When I char wood sculptures black, it changes the sense of time. You're not seeing wood any more, you're seeing carbon.'

Many of David's pieces are site-specific. The *Wooden Boulder*, perhaps the most well-known, has been moving down the Ffestiniog valley since 1978 when it was pushed into a stream. 'It is entirely dependent on its engagement with the elements: the tide, the wind, the rainfall, all contribute to where it gets placed. And it may go out of sight, which it is at the moment.'

We walked with David into his *Ash Dome*, a living sculpture of 22 ash trees that he planted 40 years ago, and has gently worked with. 'A tree grows with the energy, the nutrients, the light, and all the natural circumstances it needs, of that particular place. I was looking for a way to have a sculpture outside that was genuinely of where it was sited. The dome shape came from the foothills around, and there's a simple spiritual geometry of the circle and of the dome, and of the inside-outside. I wanted to grow a space, a simple space. And it's a collaboration: the *Ash Dome* is a token of working with nature.'



'I love the concept that when you have an idea, it hasn't got any molecules until you've incarnated it in some way, by making a sketch or making a note. If you don't do anything with it, it evaporates. You had your chance, it winked at you, you need to respond.'

There's no sign here, yet, of ash dieback, which is appearing across the UK. I ask David how he feels about it. 'I was worried, at first, but really, I'm working with natural forces, and this is something of nature that is happening. I have to accept it. I never thought the *Wooden Boulder* would get to sea in my life time, or even into the estuary, but it did. And the *Ash Dome*, I didn't know whether it would get to the 21st century. I took a photograph of it on the last afternoon of 1999 and another from the same space, the next morning, like its graduation photograph. They are exactly the same! It doesn't care, does it?'

David realised early in his career that wood was right for him. 'I wanted a material which would inform the work or be a partner in it.

When I was first working I was just dominating the material – I'd cut it to shape, I'd paint it, sand it ... then I thought: why don't you just look at the wood, where it's coming from? So I did. The wood is a partner, and it leads me.'



This interview with David Nash is from *The Long View*, a new book of photography, prose and poetry reflecting on trees across Cumbria, in all seasons, all weathers, night and day. For further information visit thelongview.today

On the campaign trail: Fiona Stafford calls an arboreal election

VOTE FOR TREES!

The vast green canopies of sturdy oak trees in Sherwood Forest, thick with leaves and birdsong, quickly blot out most traces of the modern world. The limbs of some of these stout veterans are twisted, while their once straight trunks bear the scars of persistent campaigns by the wind and weather. Some have been blasted by lightning, leaving boughs black as the masts of tall ships amid the rippling waves of green. They stand becalmed, as if in waiting. The stately congregation of old trees is enough to steady even the youngest visitors for their encounter with the most awe-inspiring of them all: the Major Oak.

This arboreal colossus holds court in a huge clearing of its own. A circular fence keeps visitors at a respectful distance, from where they gaze expectantly, as if hoping for an audience with a tree once known as the Queen Oak. So weighty are the outstretched branches that they rest on a series of tall, steel poles and taut wires. It looks almost like the landing craft of a great green-headed alien that's descending from outer space, except the corrugated trunk is so deeply rooted that any real movement is limited to the quiver of

leaves, fall of acorns or straining of branches in a storm. This is the oak of all oaks in Sherwood, the grand patriarch of the woods. It's no surprise that in the first Tree of the Year competition to be held in Britain, in 2014, the Major Oak was voted England's favourite tree.

Although the Major Oak saw off stiff competition from such venerable rivals as the ancient Ankerwyke Yew at Runnymede and Newton's Apple Tree at Woolsthorpe in Lincolnshire to win, it did not fare quite so well in the European finals the following spring. Here the Major Oak came sixth in the polls, losing out to a Czech pine tree, a Polish oak, a Spanish poplar



pollard, a Hungarian plane tree and the ultimate winner, an oak growing in the middle of a football pitch in Estonia.

Today, the old tree is now so well propped and protected that the biggest threats are also the smallest: the two-spotted oak buprestid beetle and the oak processionary moth. The beetles prey on trees afflicted with oak dieback, but can also spread acute oak decline, which causes weeping wounds in the bark and eventual death. The little brown moths, on the other hand, munch their way through thick clusters of foliage to leave even the mightiest oaks stripped bare.

Tree of the Year

From mighty oaks to street trees, do you have a tree with an interesting story or one that is special to you and your community? The Woodland Trust is offering up to £1,000 in tree care awards to the most successful trees. Nominations are open until 30 July: woodlandtrust.org.uk/treeoftheyear

The Major Oak was no stranger to fame when it topped the national poll in 2014. Named after Major Hayman Rooke, who published sketches of the forest in his book, *Remarkable Oaks in the Park at Welbeck*, in 1790, the tree has been attracting visitors for at least two centuries.

David Nash is a sculptor and draughtsman, well-known around the world for his land-based works, especially in wood.



YOUNG MAN AMONG ROSES 1580
Trees are depicted in art as symbols conveying a hidden message. Here, in Hilliard's miniature, a youth declares his love leaning against a tree, symbol of steadfastness. He is entwined with eglantine roses, an emblem of Queen Elizabeth I.



SAMUEL PALMER 1805-1881
This visionary British landscape painter is now recognised as a leading figure in British Romanticism. During his lifetime his work was little known outside his circle. In his youth he formed *The Ancients*, a group who were among the first English artists to dream of getting back to nature. After his death, his work was rediscovered, inspiring artists in the 1920s and 30s such as Eric Ravilious and Graham Sutherland.



COMMONS PRESERVATION 1850
The Lord of the Manor of Loughton encloses 1,000 acres of Epping Forest, leaving just nine acres for recreation of the villagers. Thomas Willingale, a labourer, leads a revolt and lops hornbeam pollards for firewood in the traditional manner. The Willingale family are sentenced to hard labour but the Commons Preservation Society takes up their cause and by 1851 the Lords of the Forest are ordered by Courts to remove fences. They refuse and in 1879 5,000 people turn up to protest by exercising their rights. Two years later Queen Victoria is compelled to declare the forest open to the public 'without let or hindrance'.

Fiona Stafford is Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Oxford. She recently published *The Long, Long Life of Trees* (Yale University Press).

THROUGH SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN AND WINTER 2017

COMMON GROUND PRESENTS

TREE CHARTER ART RESIDENCIES

Clementine Blakemore ∞ BOARDWALK ∞ *Dorset*

Kurt Jackson ∞ THE THORN ∞ *Cornwall*

Harriet & Rob Fraser ∞ TREEFOLDS ∞ *Cumbria*

Assemble ∞ LOG BOOK ∞ *Lincoln*

James Webb ∞ SUPERNATURE ∞ *Yorkshire*

Alec Finlay ∞ A WOLF AMONG WOLVES ∞ *Scottish Highlands*

Owen Griffiths ∞ TŶ UNNOS ∞ *Carmarthenshire*

Christine Mackey ∞ GRAFTING HISTORIES ∞ *Belfast*

CELEBRATING TREES,
WOODS & PEOPLE

IN WOODLANDS, FIELDS AND PARKLANDS, CITIES, VILLAGES AND TOWNS
across ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

COMMONGROUND.ORG.UK/CHARTER-ART

Assemble reveal an idea for a new project that celebrates the Charter of the Forest and tells the story of wood's versatility

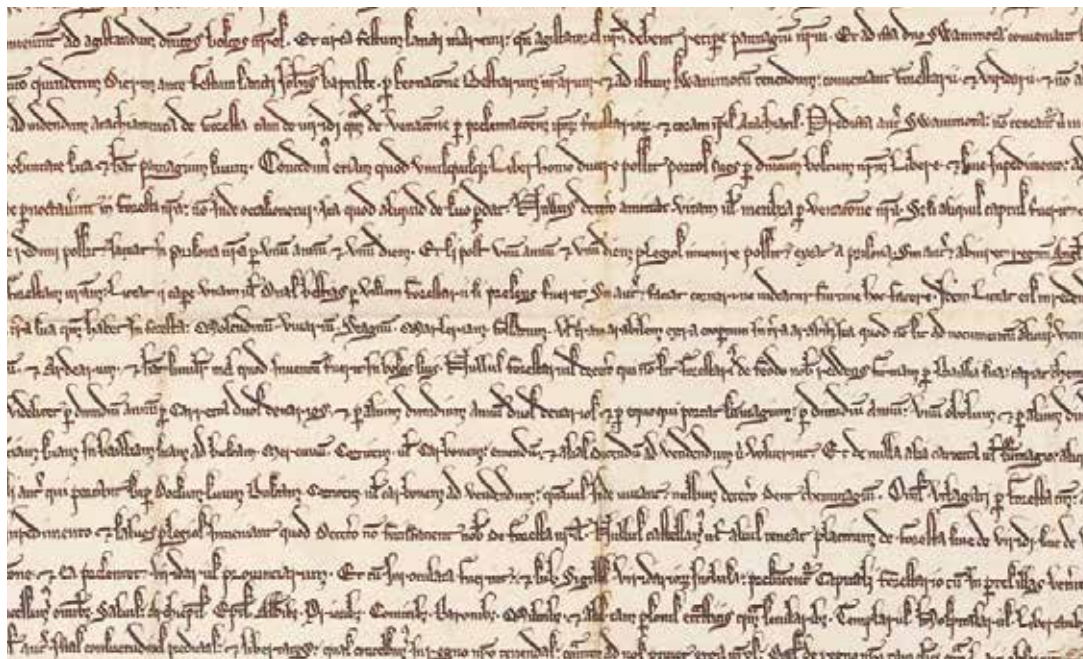
LOG BOOK

As the first legal document to protect common rights to economic use of the woodlands, the Charter of the Forest was formative in defining our cultural relationship to the landscape. But what do these rights mean today and what is our relationship with trees and woods in the 21st century?

Assemble's work is always interested in the relationships between material, economy, culture and place. For our project, *Log Book*, we have drawn inspiration from bodgers – traditional craftsmen living and working with wood – whose tools, products and working quarters were all composed of the same material. With the spirit of resourcefulness and spontaneity embodied by bodgers, we are creating a series of 'arrangements' in wood, using timber in various forms and in different locations in the UK.

The first installation of *Log Book* will take place at the end of October inside the Chapter House of Lincoln Cathedral. Ahead of this, a grassroots campaign is being run by Common Ground and the Frequency Festival through the summer, encouraging people in Lincoln to share their tree stories – these will be digitally recorded and played from speakers placed inside the Chapter House. Visitors to the finished installation will therefore experience a physical artwork that speaks both literally and metaphorically about our historic, social, economic and spiritual relationship with trees and woods.

By looking closely at traditional and contemporary silviculture – the growing and cultivation of trees – we will experiment with the



The Charter of the Forest of 1217 (Carta de Foresta) re-established rights of access to the royal forest for free men that had been eroded since the William the Conqueror.

ways that wood is reimagined at each installation, and express the structural properties of wood, evolving from logs to planks, split firewood through to shavings and finally paper for publication about the project.

Once the first installation is over, the structure will be deconstructed before being used again to create a different installation at a new site, where it will appear as something different from the first. This process of deconstruction and reconstruction will reflect the character of each subsequent location, creating a chronology of simple structures and objects which show us the utility of wood.

Over time, as the *Log Book* project moves from place to place, more and more tree stories will be collected from people around the UK, forming a growing archive of our relationship between trees, woods and people in 2017.

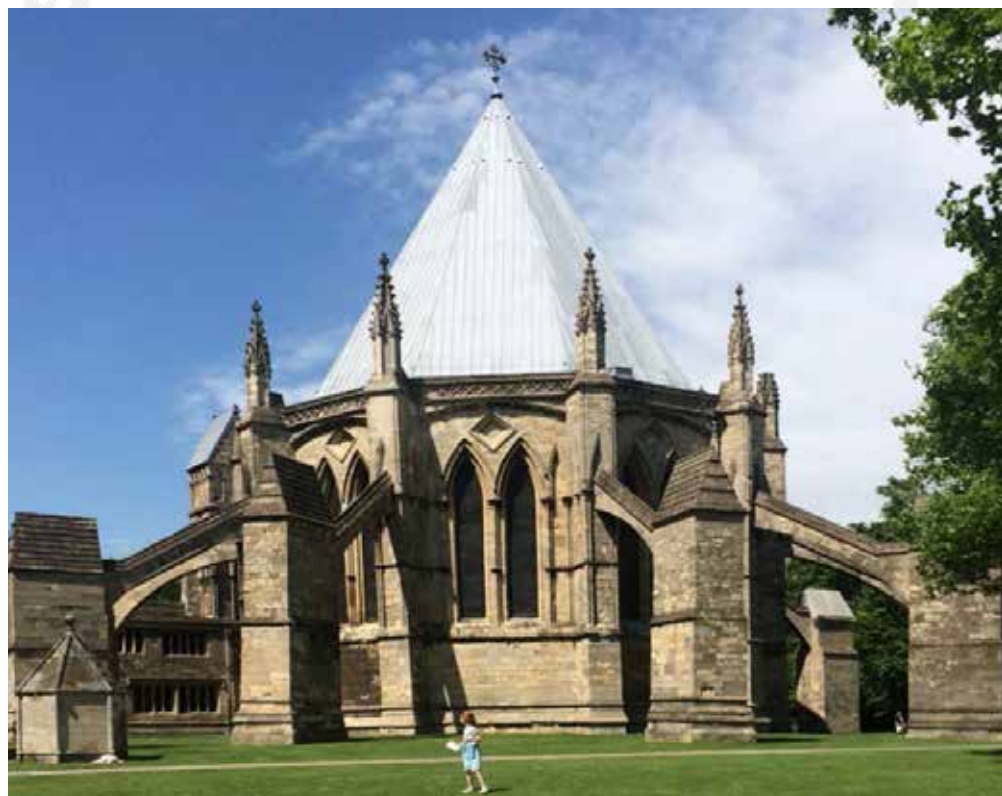
Get involved in the project

Log Book will travel to other locations around the UK after its launch at the Chapter House at Lincoln Cathedral during the Frequency Festival (October 20-29). Assemble would love you to take part in their work, so if you live in or around Lincoln and have something to say about trees – a story, a memory, a poem, an observation, a rant – or if you would like to invite *Log Book* to your community, please get in touch: commonground.org.uk/charter-art



ASSEMBLE are a Turner-prize-winning collective of 15 architects whose work addresses the relationship between people and the built environment. They take a hands-on, collaborative approach. While their work usually includes design it rarely starts or ends there, often employing a range of ways to make spaces that enable independence, creativity and difference. Assemble started working together informally in 2009, and delivered their first project, the Cineroleum in 2010.

The Chapter House at Lincoln Cathedral (left) will be the setting for Assemble's *Log Book*. The project is inspired by the makeshift life of bodgers (right) and the tools they used, including the shave horse (image strip below) for green wood work.





Alec Finlay on mapping ecologies in the Scottish Highlands with words, trees and wolves

CRY WOLF

there is another wood and it is this one! there is another wolf and it is this one! there is another world and it is this one!

trust a deer path over a human path

when deer can be among trees they will, but that doesn't stop them eating seedlings

the deeper the snow lies the more the wolf thrives

the lawless are reborn as wolves

the caledonian forest: an extent of woodland kept under peat

species should be indigenous for, as Tolkein said, 'the tree grows best in the land of its sires'

ALEC FINLAY was born in Scotland in 1966. He is an artist and poet whose work crosses over a range of media and forms, and considers how we as a culture, or cultures, relate to landscape. Finlay has published over forty books and won six Scottish Design Awards, including two Grand Prix Awards (2001, 2015). Recent publications include *minnmouth*, *A Variety of Cultures*, *ebban an' flowan* and *a better tale to tell*. The poem and photograph featured in this article is one of Alec's 'poem labels' (photographed by Mhairi Law) and will be part of his forthcoming book, *a man among men a wolf among wolves*, documenting his Highland residencies.

WE MUST
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WITHIN
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OUR
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TEAR
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as human
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our animality
in aid of
earthothers

freedom to
our earthother
brothers & sisters

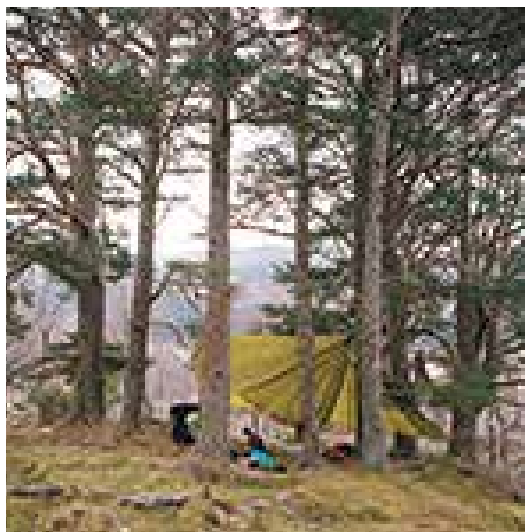
I am undertaking an artist residency in two pinewoods, at Dundreggan, Mar Lodge and Invercauld Estate. Using this research, I will reflect on innovative approaches to pinewood regeneration in the Scottish Highlands – in particular Project Wolf, pioneered by *Trees for Life* at Dundreggan. Here, I have been following 'human wolf packs', consisting of three people per pack, who, through howling their presence on the hill, are successfully warding off deer from vulnerable seedlings.

I hadn't intended on an artistic survey of approaches to woodland renewal, but I fell in love with the imagination and commitment of the people making these projects happen, and their vision for a future that can be measured in the slow growth of a pine grown straight and tall at altitude. What I make will be an account of arboriculture. It will also explore what these practices tell us about our imagination, society and politics, and how we relate to earth-others.

Whatever Scotland is becoming – and that seems to change week by week – it is becoming somewhere new, and this process can be seen in the changing attitudes to land ownership, lairdism, wild nature, Gaelic culture, walking, and what I term contemporary 'transhumance', as much as it can in the debating chamber at Holyrood. The lessons being learnt in the Highland wild labs are relevant for the British Isles and further afield.

My aim is to reflect on these avant-garde ecological practices for an era of climate crisis – not a review of the past, but a snapshot of the present, and sketch of possible futures, made from the inside of the debate. It is necessary to challenge the economies of what I term The Crazes – deer stalking and driven grouse. Although it is not for me to decide the scientific and ethical rights and wrongs, but rather to catch the arguments that are in the air and juggle them into a pattern.

The rise of cultural nationalism and agitation of the Land Reform movement, in what I teasingly refer to as The Wightman Era, are being felt in policy on the hill, conversations in the pub, and debates in the Wee Parliament. The result isn't a straightforward class conflict, a stand-off between tweeds and kagouls; rather, in the past decade, there has been a spurt of hybrid practices, as some sporting estates pioneer attempts to balance the contradictory impulses of guns and ecology, and some wildlife charities attempt to combine traditional stalking with ecological sustainability. Priorities differ according to the wishes of the owners, capacity of the land and economic possibilities – too often it is climate



Top left: Map showing new exclosures and regeneration areas. Top right: Moorland Management Group meeting at Invercauld Estate, photographed by Kate MacAllan.

Centre left: 'Para Camp' a shelter used by the humandwolf pack at Dundreggan, photographed by Mhairi Law. Centre right: Place-names emerge through older maps, like this by George G. MacKay's of 'Glenmoriston', 1849.

Bottom left: 'OUR TOTEM / pine': Dundreggan. Bottom right: Wooden poem blocks by Alec Finlay, based on his residency in the Scottish Highlands.

change that is missing from these defining factors, but in that respect The Highlands reflects the rest of the British Isles.

The rise of the Caledonian pinewood and native woodland regeneration movement has elected a rival – or complementary – totem to the antlered stag. I'm always mindful of the motto Jim Crumley passed on: 'deer and trees belong together'. New strategies for land management are being trialed by landed estates and membership organisations – bodies such as John Muir Trust, the Woodland Trust, Trees for Life and RSPB – which hold vast tracts of land. Mar Lodge is 72,500 acres, some of

it sub-Arctic tundra, which makes it an interesting location to be in residence.

Any account of ecology in the Highlands must also touch on history and The Clearances. I have sketched the effect that crofters and lairds had on the environment, and detailed the traditions of those warring tribes, deer-lovers and tree-lovers, through a survey of place-names – pragmatic markers, eco-poetic mappings and totemic symbols.

I hope the outcome of my residency will help inspire other communities and organisations to adopt and translate the ideas emerging here in the Highlands into other places, other ecologies. 🌱

Kurt Jackson tells us why a lonesome thorn tree near his home has inspired a new art project

THE THORN

On the edge, the hedge. Just where the smallest, wildest, most unused field reaches to the open expanses of the unenclosed stretch of heather moor, there is a small stunted hawthorn tree. As far as trees go it's not the most impressive specimen. It's low, almost bonsai'd in its form; leaning or rather pointing into the east, swept and blown from the west, from the prevailing winds off the Atlantic cliffs; maybe twenty fields away downhill. A crashing wave of branch and stick.

A crow's nest lies in the upper branches, now full of vivid green grass – the only place to nest nearby. Under the dark mass of sticks and twigs the thorn trunks emerge from between the granite of the hedge, itself studded by the discs of pennywort, the odd primrose and clumps of foxglove leaves.

'This Cornish hawthorn is an almanac of a very small piece of the world.'

This Cornish individual is one of the very few trees growing in this landscape. Gaze across the panorama, follow the skyline and you can find a Monterey pine next to the Potter's Cottage across the moor, and one other similar hawthorn near Frog Pond three fields away, but that's it. There is another hawthorn a dozen fields away and this is now shielded inside a swathe of woodland planted by our family with the support of the Woodland Trust and the council – a rapidly maturing bluebell wood complete with badgers, deer and buzzards.

And so my interest has been drawn to this survivor – to draw and paint this ancient *spearn* (in the Kernewek language) that hugs the hedge, hunkering down from those gales, searching out the nutrients in these poor acid soils and avoiding the nibbling of the rabbits and the wild shaggy moorland cattle. Historians tell us this moor was under tree cover until the Neolithic folk chose to clear it; a Mesolithic hunter's flint chippings were found an arrow's distance from the foot of this thorn and a low almost invisible tumulus from another age still lies nearby. The area is littered with ritual sites of the Neolithic and late Bronze Age – a stone circle, holed stones, cists and standing stones. This was an important area, widely used by prehistoric peoples, and remained common land



For the hawthorn study, Kurt Jackson will also observe the life flourishing below its branches, like this *December Primrose* made by the artist in 2014.



Through the seasons: Kurt Jackson began sketching the thorn tree in February, at the end of winter, and will return to the same place every season, creating a mixed media work on wood to express the tree through the year. The first piece is called *The thorn in winter from the south side. A wren sings to me, the wind blows under a weak winter sun and the thorn shivers.*

for grazing, stick gathering and turf cutting into recent memory.

A pile of black decomposing silage plastic sinks into and under the brambles next to a rusting holed tin bath at the foot of the thorn. The surrounding briars have tried to snake up into the lower branches, as if to tie the tree down and stabilise it.

Through all this the thorn survived, its age unknown.

Recent research suggests that trees of this nature in the West Cornwall are often very ancient or at least the rootstock is; maybe even older than the stone hedges supporting them. It grows on a boundary, was the hedge built to include the tree – like a large unmoveable rock is incorporated into a wall – or did it sprout from some bird-dropped seed, a haw wedged between the granite toppers?

This lonesome tree follows her ancestral ways although no neighbours witness or share her seasonal dress codes. These fresh green arrow shaped leaves appear in the spring followed by the pungent May blossoms; the haws develop, turning pillar-box scarlet to remain once the leaves blow away for its winter display. Only an armful of branches, only a scattering of flowers and leaves

and berries; this microcosm of tree.

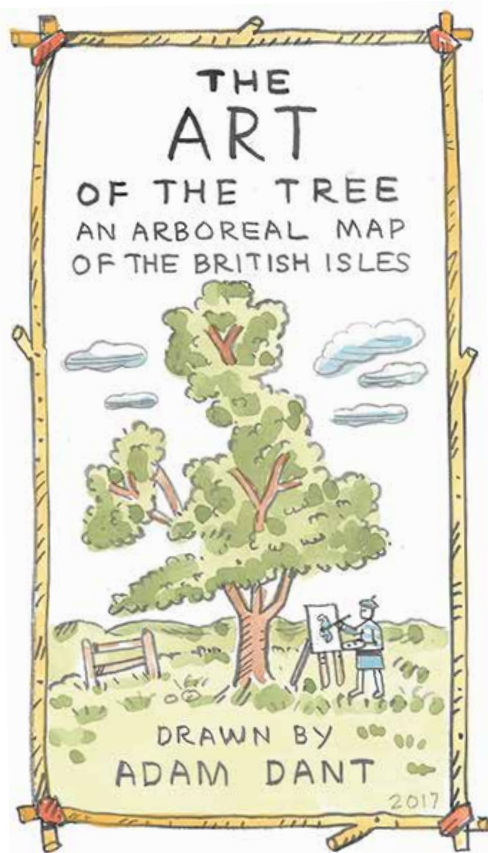
I am drawing and painting and sculpting this individual – capturing these changes, the stages, her seasonal ways. I will spend time next to this tree on her hedge, and share her seasons. I will watch, see, smell and hear her, spot the life in and around her: the other plants and animals that live in, on and around her. I will describe and celebrate this character in paint, sculpture and poetry. This Cornish hawthorn is an almanac of a very small piece of the world.

These hawthorns need to be appreciated as veterans, survivors, beautiful creatures in their own right that also support an array of life. They lend themselves to the imagination with their quirky shapes and marginal positions – as initiators of stories, folk tales and poetry.

We can use them in school lessons and workshops – whether we are discussing ecology or the attachment to the land, history, geography or just looking at the aesthetics and lie of the land. Maybe we can harvest her berries to create another population – siblings that could be part of new growth, replacing the willow, hazel and oak still to be found preserved in the peat below. 🌱



KURT JACKSON is an artist who embraces a range of materials and techniques to celebrate the natural environment. He was born in Blandford, Dorset, and graduated from St Peter's College, Oxford, with a degree in Zoology. He has been Artist in Residence on the Greenpeace ship *Esperanza*, the Eden Project and at the Glastonbury Festival since 1999. He lives in St Just, Penwith, in Cornwall with his family. The photograph above of Kurt sketching the hawthorn was taken by his son, Seth Jackson.



TREE TRAILS traces a 200-year-old story of art and heritage through trees and celebrates the cultural history we share with our arboreal neighbours.

The artworks featured on the map are either on permanent display or in national collections across Wales, Scotland, England and Ireland – a reminder, too, of the way ideas and people move across borders to weave a shared history. Trees and woods are both the frame within which the human drama unfolds and the material of choice for the artwork itself. Across the British Isles, from Samuel Palmer's visions of *The Magic Apple Tree* (1830), the grand views of Wales in the paintings of Richard Wilson, to the moorland paintings of John William Inchbold, David Hockney's industrial scenes of Bolton, Andy Goldsworthy's *Hanging Trees* (2007), David Nash's *Habitat* (2015) and Katie Patterson's *Hollow* (2015), Common Ground's *Tree Trails* maps the different places and spaces – imagined and real – that we all cohabit with trees.

Celebrating the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest, *Tree Trails* was created for the Tree Charter by Common Ground and illustrated by Adam Dant.

The Tree Charter recognises and protects the cultural impact of trees, and *Tree Trails* gives us a way into this rich seam of arboreal culture wherever we live in the UK. For more information about the Tree Charter campaign and for details of temporary exhibitions and events across the country to mark this landmark year for trees and woods, visit treecharter.uk

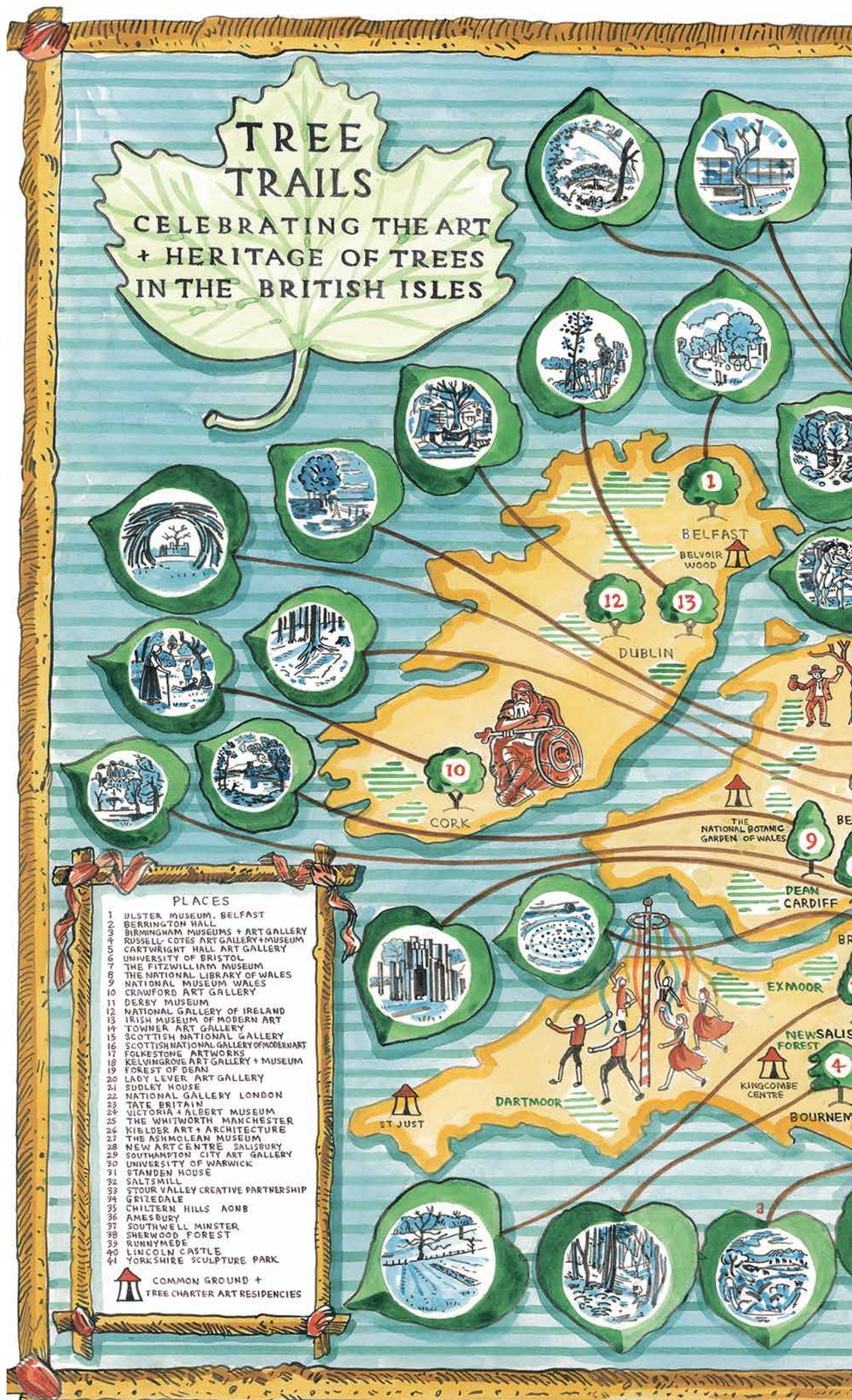


COMMON GROUND

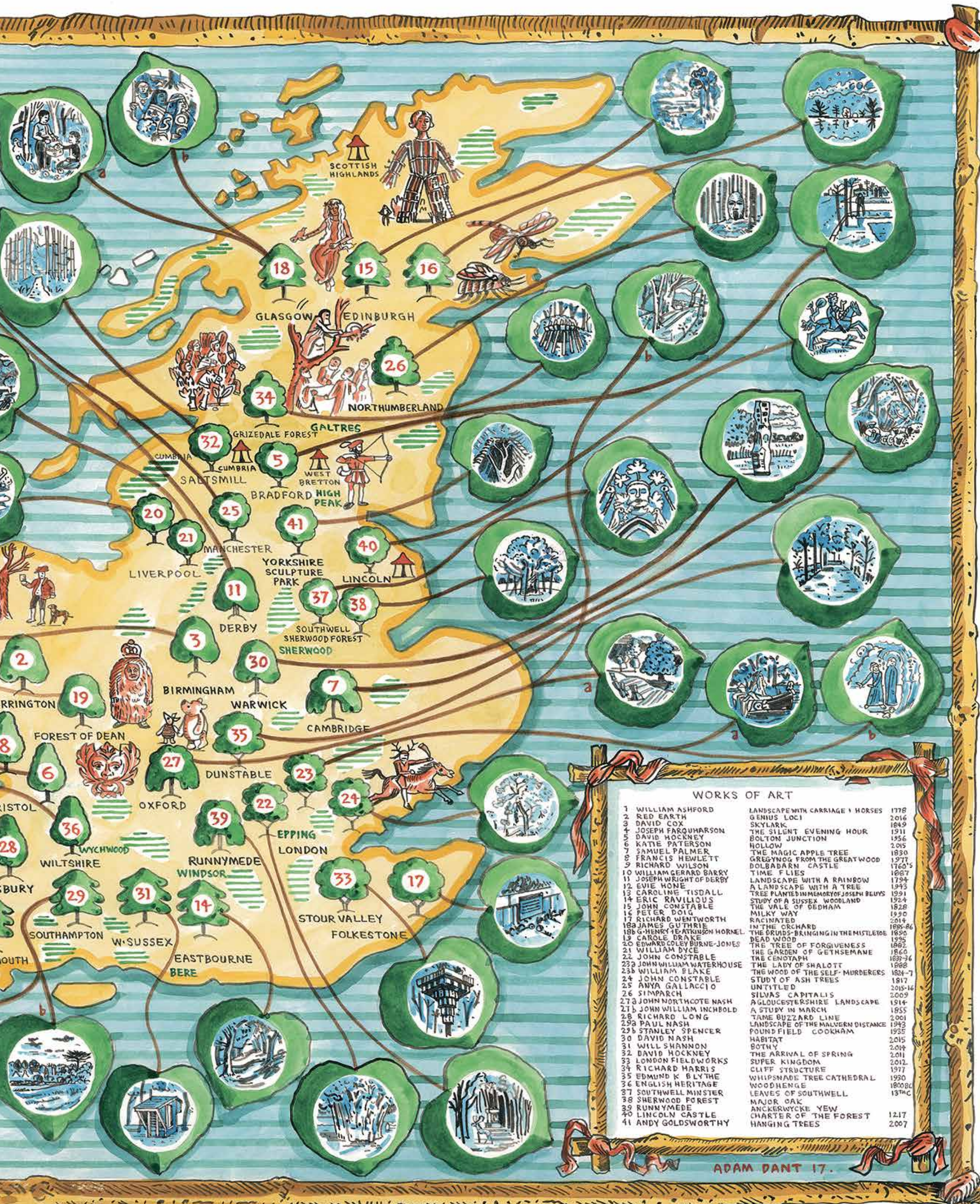


WOODLAND TRUST

ADAM DANT was born in Cambridge and attended the Liverpool School of Art and later the Royal College of Art. In 2002, he received the Jerwood Drawing Prize and was selected as the official artist to document the UK General Election in 2015. His dense, elaborate narrative drawings provide a unique insight into the complexities of social, cultural and political life. He lives in London with his family.



- PLACES**
- 1 ULSTER MUSEUM, BELFAST
 - 2 BERRINGTON HALL
 - 3 BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS + ART GALLERY
 - 4 RUSSELL-COTES ART GALLERY + MUSEUM
 - 5 CARTWRIGHT HALL ART GALLERY
 - 6 UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
 - 7 THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM
 - 8 THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES
 - 9 NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES
 - 10 CRAWFORD ART GALLERY
 - 11 DERBY MUSEUM
 - 12 NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND
 - 13 IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
 - 14 TOWNER ART GALLERY
 - 15 SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY
 - 16 SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART
 - 17 FOLKESTONE ARTWORKS
 - 18 KELVINGROVE ART GALLERY + MUSEUM
 - 19 FOREST OF DEAN
 - 20 LADY LEVER ART GALLERY
 - 21 SUDLEY HOUSE
 - 22 NATIONAL GALLERY LONDON
 - 23 TATE BRITAIN
 - 24 VICTORIA + ALBERT MUSEUM
 - 25 THE WHITWORTH MANCHESTER
 - 26 KIELDER ART + ARCHITECTURE
 - 27 THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM
 - 28 NEW ART CENTRE SALISBURY
 - 29 SOUTHAMPTON CITY ART GALLERY
 - 30 UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
 - 31 STANDEN HOUSE
 - 32 SALTMILL
 - 33 STOUR VALLEY CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP
 - 34 GRIZEDALE
 - 35 CHILTERN HILLS AONB
 - 36 AMESBURY
 - 37 SOUTHWELL MINSTER
 - 38 SHERWOOD FOREST
 - 39 RUNNYMEDE
 - 40 LINCOLN CASTLE
 - 41 YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK
- COMMON GROUND + TREE CHARTER ART RESIDENCIES



WORKS OF ART

1	WILLIAM ASHFORD	LANDSCAPE WITH CARRIAGE & HORSES	1778
2	RED EARTH	GENIUS LOCI	2016
3	DAVID COX	SKYLARK	1849
4	JOSEPH FARQUHARSON	THE SILENT EVENING HOUR	1911
5	DAVID HOCKNEY	BOLTON JUNCTION	1956
6	KATIE PATERSON	HOLLOW	2015
7	SAMUEL PALMER	THE MAGIC APPLE TREE	1830
8	FRANCIS HEWLETT	GREGYNOG FROM THE GREAT WOOD	1977
9	RICHARD WILSON	DOLBADARN CASTLE	1760's
10	WILLIAM GERARD BARRY	TIME FLIES	1867
11	JOSEPH WRIGHT OF DERBY	LANDSCAPE WITH A RAINBOW	1794
12	EVIE HONE	A LANDSCAPE WITH A TREE	1943
13	CAROLINE TISDALL	TREE PLANTED IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH BEUYS	1991
14	ERIC RAVILLIUS	STUDY OF A SUSSEX WOODLAND	1824
15	JOHN CONSTABLE	THE VALE OF DEDHAM	1828
16	PETER DOIG	MILKY WAY	1990
17	RICHARD WENTWORTH	RACINATED	2014
18	JAMES GUTHRIE	IN THE ORCHARD	1895-86
19	HENRY DE-ATRIUSON HORNEL	THE DRUIDS-BRINGING IN THE MISTLETOE	1850
20	CAROLE DRAKE	DEAD WOOD	1995
21	EDWARD COLEY BURNE-JONES	THE TREE OF FORGIVENESS	1862
22	WILLIAM DYCE	THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE	1860
23	JOHN CONSTABLE	THE CENOTAPH	1829-36
24	JOHN WILLIAM WATERHOUSE	THE LADY OF SHALOTT	1868
25	WILLIAM BLAKE	THE WOOD OF THE SELF-MURDERERS	1824-7
26	JOHN CONSTABLE	STUDY OF ASH TREES	1817
27	ANYA GALLACCIO	UNTITLED	2015-16
28	SIMPARCH	SILVAS CAPITALIS	2009
29	JOHN NORTHCOTE NASH	A GLOUCESTERSHIRE LANDSCAPE	1914
30	JOHN WILLIAM INCHBOLD	A STUDY IN MARCH	1855
31	RICHARD LONG	TAME BUZZARD LINE	2001
32	PAUL NASH	LANDSCAPE OF THE MALVERN DISTANCE	1943
33	STANLEY SPENCER	POUND FIELD COOKHAM	1935
34	DAVID NASH	HABITAT	2015
35	WILL SHAWN	BOTHY	2014
36	DAVID HOCKNEY	THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING	2011
37	LONDON FIELDWORKS	SUPER KINGDOM	2012
38	RICHARD HARRIS	CLIFF STRUCTURE	1977
39	EDMUND K BLYTHE	WHIPMADE TREE CATHEDRAL	1950
40	ENGLISH HERITAGE	WOODHENGE	1800-80
41	SOUTHWELL MINSTER	LEAVES OF SOUTHWELL	13TH C
	SHERWOOD FOREST	MAJOR OAK	
	RUNNYMEDE	ANCKERWYCKE YEW	
	LINCOLN CASTLE	CHARTER OF THE FOREST	1217
	ANDY GOLDSWORTHY	HANGING TREES	2007



Christine Mackey explores the legacy of a number of woods in Northern Ireland planted to celebrate the Millenium

IT IS TO THEM WE JOURNEY

CHRISTINE MACKEY is based at the Leitrim Sculpture Centre and works across a range of practices and sites of interest. The evolving projects, public engagements, publications and exhibitions are meticulously researched. She pursues a narrative structure based on an assemblage of key research material, sites of interest and the active and creative involvement of other voices. Her work embeds a series of sensitive responses in relation to site, agency and ecology.

It is now nearly 17 years since these woods (approximately 51) were planted through the Woodland Trust's 'Woods on your Doorstep' programme, supported by the Millennium Commission. I see this as an opportunity to re-visit, re-engage and re-activate these woods creatively. How the work emerges will be speculative for now. The footwork will be honed to place, people will be met, stories collected, walks made, images archived.

Last month I visited Friends of Belvoir Wood, on the outskirts of South Belfast, along the eastern bank of the River Lagan. This is but one of the 15 sites that I will transect and link with the other woods across Northern Ireland. I will explore on foot more of the different historical processes that have shaped these woods, uncovering the social and physical impacts these changes have had upon the local human communities and the communities of flora and fauna unique to each part of the woodlands.

After recently spending time at the Woodland Trust office in Bangor, searching through the archives built around these woods, what strikes me is the pattern beginning to emerge of the various wooden benches distributed on site, and how they commanded a view in and of the landscape. In thinking about the complexity of



While everything in the surrounding landscape changes, a bench remains still. What can the bench as an artefact tell us about ourselves and our relationship with nature? Christine Mackey's research-based practice evolves from an interest in exploring the relationship between people and their environments, with artworks in different mediums emerging out of her journey through a particular place.

these bench-sites and the geographical locations, a map begins to emerge based on the whereabouts of these varied bench-marks. These can be used as points of reference and as framing devices in the woods.

Mindful of the histories of these varying woodlands, I would like to find out how the local communities actively use the different places today, inviting them to share both their personal and communal experiences of being in *their* woods. I will take audio and visual documentary recordings of these experiences through informal conversations with visitors to the wood and people who live nearby, who tell me about their favourite walk, tree, place in the wood, or

perhaps the bench they like to sit on.

Gathering up this material, enriched with what I discover in the archive at Bangor, I will create a series of multi-media works that 'map' these layers and patterns of social, historical and ecological life in the woods.

Through my walks in these young woods, what might the bench-marks express about the patterns that have shaped and are still shaping the landscape? How do human experiences revolve around them as the landscape changes? What do these different locations reveal about our own creative imaginings of the relationship between all living organisms and what will emerge thinking and acting in the world as a forest of trees? 🌱



Harriet Fraser on elemental meetings of root, rock and air in the mountains and lakes of Cumbria

THE LONG VIEW

It wasn't their age or size that lured us in. We selected the seven trees of *The Long View* for the way they so beautifully 'fit' their individual spaces, spread like a constellation among the mountains and lakes of Cumbria. And because they have thrived despite challenges including rough, steep ground, exposure to fierce weather, and grazing pressures.

We have spent days and nights with these seven trees, in all weathers, alone and in company of others. We've walked between them, slept with them in midsummer and midwinter. The more time we spend with them, the more we study them, and each time we introduce them to others, they seem more special. They've seldom been remarked on before. They are sentinels that invite a pause, instil wonder, and always prompt conversations.

Our work draws us to notice things closely, and slowly – Rob through photography, myself through writing. As an addition to these, our installations at each of the seven trees have pulled us in yet more deeply. Our designs have drawn on our own experiences and on what we've learnt from people who know their stuff about trees and the natural and cultural history of the land.

We have applied the colours to the trees without following the natural order. In fragmenting the rainbow there is a suggestion of the confusion in climate, a seeming jumble of seasons in the UK, and the destruction that can



Rob hard at work marking out the site of one of the treefolds before site works begins.

arise when decisions are rooted in human need without adequate appreciation of environmental impact. Alongside this view, because it isn't all doom and gloom, we have used our crafts to emphasise beauty and share the thrill we feel when we walk to, and rest with, these trees. They really are stunning.

Trees matter, and that means every tree, including outliers and the craggy loners (with 50 per cent of the UK's trees dwelling outside of woodlands these can't be overlooked). So celebrating the seven lone trees has been at the heart of our work, and has led us to ask questions. What part do humans play in shaping landscapes? Are we prepared to stand up for them?

As a culmination of *The Long View*, we will build a series of drystone 'folds' in Cumbria which will embrace new trees, offering a space for people to sit and pause with the trees, and revisit them over the years. Each 'treefold' will contain some stones carved with Harriet's poetry – the poem can be read individually or as one long poem threading its way across the landscape.

The drystone treefolds will be made with local stone by a master waller, using vernacular techniques that date back for more than a thousand years. Each finished fold will be an invitation to consider ordinary trees that are part of our landscapes, and the importance of celebrating and protecting them. 🌱

Owen Griffiths invites you to visit him during his residency at the National Botanic Garden of Wales

Tŷ UNNOS

Magna Carta acknowledged the widow's 'estovers in the common' (fuel) while its companion, the Charter of the Forest, protected *pannage* (pig's food). The lexicon of the agrarian commons – turbarry, piscary, herbage, etc. – is obscure, forgotten, local or arcane. Much communing is durable to the extent it is invisible.

From *Stop Thief! The Commons, Enclosures and Resistance* by Peter Linebaugh

Trees are key to our survival. They came before us and we have used, abused and loved them for thousands of years. They have provided our sustenance, food, shelter, medicine and the air we breathe. They are our history and our future. Yet we take them for granted.

From *In a Nutshell* by Common Ground

Ideas start with words, and I am fascinated by words from the Charter of the Forest and certain sentences from books like Common Ground's *Arboreal* and *In a Nutshell*, and writers like Peter Linebaugh. Words resonate and remind us of the language and thinking that was once more rooted to the landscape.

Although some of these phrases, place-names and words are used today, more or less without thinking about them, it is fascinating to think about the language passed down and borrowed from previous generations who worked with the land and with trees.

I would like these words and ideas to flow out of books and history to the present, becoming banners, text works or simple visual interruptions around the National Botanic Garden of Wales in the Towy Valley, Carmarthenshire. As engagement tools with local communities and visitors to the Botanic Garden, these words will help me ask: what relevance does the Charter of the Forest have for people today? In particular, what does it say about social disconnection, land use and privatisation in the 21st century?

For the first phase of the residency I will be moving to the Botanic Garden in my caravan, which will serve as an artist studio and alternative space where people will be invited to have a brew of tea and share ideas and stories with each other.

During this time I will meet volunteers, staff who work there, and visitors who use the garden regularly. All of these people will become potential collaborators in the residency – it is their stories and ideas which will be woven into a performance that will be staged at the Botanic Garden, and some of the people I meet will also



Planting action: Owen Griffiths and Shimabuku during *Vetch Veg* in Swansea, 2011–12. A Welsh heritage apple tree is being planted into gallery packing cases, photographed by Eva Bartusek.

be invited to take part in this event, as actors.

Later this year, this collaborative performance will become the focal point of a large community gathering at the Botanic Garden, which at the

'What relevance does the Charter of the Forest have for people today?'

same time as expressing something about the trees and surrounding landscape, will also be rooted to contemporary political issues of land and sustainability.

From a platform, perhaps built up in the trees, the audience will at first sit and enjoy the show, hearing a narrative about life, work and trees. They will then be invited into the performance, asked to carry pieces of timber towards another location in the Botanic Garden, where a new, temporary community space will be created for social gatherings and educational workshops. This temporary community structure will be built with materials from the surrounding land – the

vernacular of the gardens.

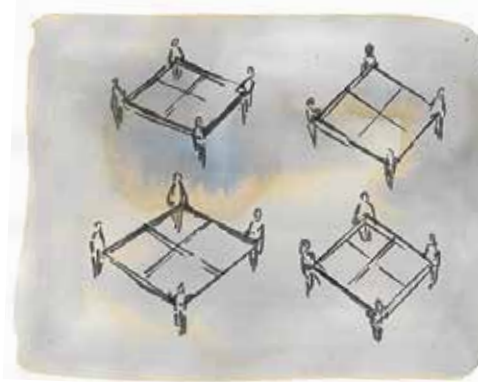
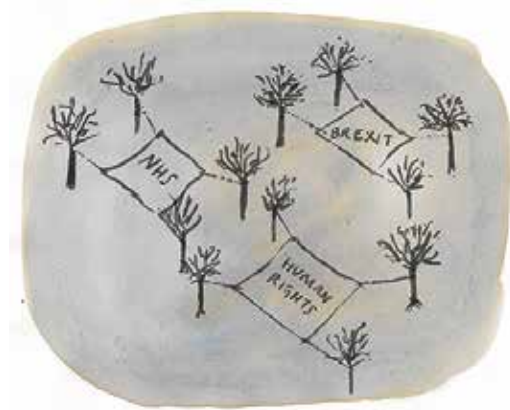
In Wales there is a tradition of *tŷ unnos* (one-night house), which dates back several hundred years and suggests that if you were able to build a house on common land, with a fire smoking out from the chimney, the land was then rightfully yours. Most *tai unnos* were originally made of turf and soil, with a roughly thatched roof. Once built, these walls were often replaced with other local materials, like clay, timber and stone.

The idea of a one-night house appears throughout the world, mostly as folklore but sometimes in customary and even statutory law. The dramatic potential and symbolism of a community getting together for this purpose is intriguing, even if it is practically challenging or impossible. It is in the spirit of *tŷ unnos*, in particular how urgency can create material invention and the need for community involvement, that our structure will become a temporary space for people to gather at the Botanic Garden, and perhaps create a new conversation about how communities should interact with the landscape and use the Garden in years to come. 🌱

Tŷ unnos working drawings by Owen Griffiths.



OWEN GRIFFITHS is an MFA graduate of the School of Walls and Space at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. In 2016 he was awarded Cultural Ambassador for Wales and 2014 was a British Council Fellow. His work is connected to redeveloping a new sense of urban vernacular, community and collaboratively-led research focusing on issues of land, food, social justice and civic design. In 2012 he established *Vetch Veg*, an edible land project in Swansea as part of *Adain Avion*, Cultural Olympiad, Wales. Current and ongoing collaborative partners and land project locations include housing associations, HM Prison services, Common Ground, National Museum Wales and the National Botanic Garden of Wales. He is currently the lead artist on the *Trebanog* project for Artes Mundi, an ambitious project developing a new school for social learning. He works and lives in Swansea and is driven by the potential of small nations as authors of big changes.





CLEMENTINE BLAKEMORE is an architectural designer with an interest in the relationship between design, making and place. Her London-based practice recently completed a pavilion for the new Design Museum and she regularly leads design/build workshops, and has taught on the Architectural Association's Visiting School programme. She was a founding partner of the collective WORKSHOP architecture, completing two educational buildings in India. She has a background in sculpture and film, and was educated at the University of Oxford, the Rural Studio, the Architectural Association and the Royal College of Art.



Visualisation of the boardwalk and outdoor community space being created by Clementine Blakemore.

Clementine Blakemore explains the thinking behind her residency at the Kingcombe Centre, Dorset

BOARDWALK

New Vernaculars is a collaborative research project initiated by Common Ground which seeks to explore ways in which contemporary forms of architecture and design can emerge through a meaningful engagement with the landscape, culture and people of a particular locality.

Through a series of projects, developed over a number of years in partnership with local communities, artists and craftspeople, the aim is to produce a collection of small buildings which test both innovative design ideas and methods of construction. At the centre of each project will be an interest in locally sourced skills and materials, alongside the accommodation of wildlife.

For the first two years of the project, I will be helping Common Ground explore these ideas in West Dorset, at the beautiful and very special landscapes around Kingcombe. In partnership with the Architectural Association and the Dorset Wildlife Trust, the aim is to reconstruct a boardwalk and create a new outdoor learning space at the Kingcombe Environmental Centre, a 'pavilion', which will also be the only place in West Dorset to have disability access to the River Hooke.

In the research and development phase of the

project, I have been meeting the community who live and work around the Kingcombe Centre, local conservationists, site wardens, teachers, farmers, and the groups of amazing Dorset Wildlife Trust volunteers who have been helping dismantle the old boardwalk and dig foundations for the new one.

The final design was developed with the London-based engineers Structure Workshop, and the plan is to assemble the structure with a small group of art and design students from around the world. They will all arrive in Dorset this July to take part in a two-week-long workshop based at the Architectural Association's rural

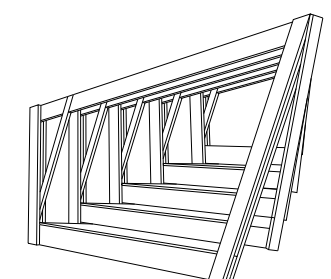
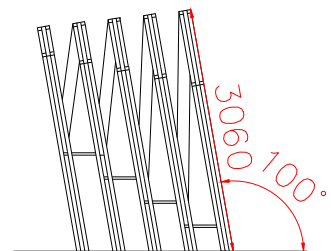
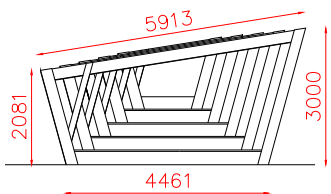
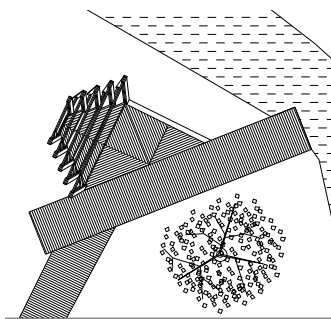
campus at Hooke Park, just three miles away from Kingcombe and also on the River Hooke. Most of the timber for the new structure will come from Hooke Park, where the students also spend the first week fabricating the structure and designing smaller elements of the project. The assembly will then take place on site in the second week and involve a number of public events at Kingcombe, such as 'find and make' creative workshops with local primary school children, visits from nearby secondary schools, art and architecture lectures, and a 'topping out' celebration that will take place on July 22

alongside a haymaking festival. In this way, education and exchange will be a core part of the project – with the definition of 'localness' being informed by the cultures and experiences of a range of different people. The main challenge (unsurprisingly!) is financial. Sculptural building projects, however small, end up incurring significant costs. Which is why it is wonderful to have the support of the Woodland Trust, who are not only co-funding this residency project but also supplying additional timber from a woodland that they manage in the Bovey Valley, Devon.

The finished structure will be used by people from all walks of life who visit the Kingcombe Centre from across the UK and Dorset, either to participate in environmental activities that run throughout the year or simply to have a cup of tea and cake at the café. The structure will also provide an outdoor classroom for nearby primary schools and a space for a regular group of visitors undergoing drug and alcohol addiction therapy.

While this project is deeply rooted in Dorset, we hope it will become a model for similar approaches to architecture and artist residencies in rural and urban areas, both within the UK and abroad. What we learn during this Kingcombe project will feed into ongoing New Vernacular projects, enabling more artists, architects and students to engage holistically in a locality, generating contemporary vernacular design that absorbs the needs of local people and wildlife, and expresses the distinctiveness of a landscape. 🌿

'The finished structure will be used by people from all walks of life.'



Left: Recently arrived from the Woodland Trust's Pullabrook wood in Devon, the Douglas fir being milled at Hooke Park, Dorset, by Edward Coe. *Right:* Volunteers preparing the Kingcombe site for the new boardwalk and pavilion.





'What would we hear if we could understand the language of trees? What would they tell us?' James Webb with the *There's No Place Called Home* installation at Folkets Park in 2016, photographed by Ricard Estay.



JAMES WEBB'S work, framed in large-scale installations in galleries, or as unannounced interventions in public spaces, often makes use of ellipsis and displacement to explore the nature of belief and communication in our contemporary world. He has presented his work around the world at institutions such as Wanås Konst in Sweden, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the Darat al Funun in Amman, Jordan, as well as on major international exhibitions such as the Biennials of Sharjah, Habana, Venice, Marrakech, d'Art Contemporain de Lyon and the Melbourne International Arts Festival. He lives and works in Cape Town.

Pioneer of sound art **James Webb** describes his favourite installation and plans for a new work at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park

SUPERNATURE

It's hard to choose just one favourite artwork. So many projects mean different things to me and seem to come to life in new situations. But an early project, *There's No Place Called Home*, continues to inspire me and the people who interact with it.

It all started in 2004, in Kitakyushu, Japan, and since then *There's No Place Called Home* has become a recurring, worldwide intervention artwork with audio recordings of specific foreign birdcalls broadcast from speakers concealed in local trees. A recent example involves calls of a canyon wren (*Catherpes mexicanus*), a songbird native to the western part of North America, broadcast from a speaker concealed in a tree in Bergen, Norway.

Bird vocalizations are generally used to mark territory and attract mates, and the project's audio is mixed so as to appear to sound as lifelike to humans as possible within the environment. The incongruent sounds do not affect the local birds any more than the ringing of mobile phones do: the calls are unrecognisable and irrelevant to endemic birds. For the human audiences, I tend not to advertise the work, and rather present it as a covert, site-specific action, like a hack into nature, or a type of sonic graffiti.

This work keys into the symbol of the bird – the animal at which we direct ideas of freedom, transience, migration and cultural currency. It is a call to wanderers, strangers and outsiders – to those who have got lost. *There's No Place Called Home* generates meaning out of displacement, using foreign elements to illuminate the social, cultural and political interactions found at the

installation site. Like a metaphorical 'cuckoo's egg', the birdcalls are disguised as a part of the natural environment, concealing a level of meaning from all but those in the know.

For my residency in West Bretton at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, I will make another piece that warps our relationship to the surrounding landscape. Part alternative history, part science fiction, and even part psychoanalysis of the West Bretton landscape, I will pay special attention to the presence, history and imaginative possibility of trees. Where did they come from? What brought them to this place? How are they placed in relation to things? What if these trees could witness things? What would we hear if we could understand the

language of trees? What would they tell us?

I will invite a selection of experts in various fields to spend an individual session with me at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and ask them to tell me what they see when they look around the Park and at the other artworks in the landscape. These 'interviews' will then be transcribed and shared with a writer who will help me script a series of literary images and fictional dialogues. These texts and ideas will be recorded by local voice actors and the sound recordings broadcast from speakers concealed in parts of the park, especially in the trees, and broadcast so as to create a sense of the Park speaking its thoughts, talking in its sleep, bubbling over with psychodynamic potential. 🌿

James Webb (photographed by Jonty Wilde) at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park where he will return later in the year to undertake his new project.



STAY IN TOUCH

TREE
CHARTER
ART

COMMONGROUND.ORG.UK

Will Ritchie is the Curator of Horticulture at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. Will started at the Garden in January 2017 and is responsible for the management and development of the plant collections. Originally from Aberdeenshire, Will has also worked in botanic gardens in Scotland, the United States and the Middle East.



PAUL NASH 1889–1946

One of the most important landscape artists of the 20th century, Nash was also a leading figure in the development of Modernism in British art. As an official war artist in WWI, his paintings of shattered trees mocked the ambitions of war. His later work explored Surrealism, notably *Event on the Downs*, which showed a giant tennis ball next to a twisted tree stump.



WOODLAND TRUST

THE WOODLAND TRUST 1972

Spiralling threats to our precious woods and trees leads to the founding of the Woodland Trust, which remains at the forefront of the fight to protect, restore and create UK woodland. The Woodland Trust now owns and manages more than 1,000 wildlife-rich native woods across the UK, including many ancient woodlands and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.



COMMON GROUND 1983

Common Ground is founded and its first major project is 'Trees, Woods and the Green Man' – from 1986 to 1989 it explores the cultural relationship between trees and people, publishing various books and initiating several art exhibitions, including 'The Tree of Life' with the South Bank Centre, 'Out of the Wood' with the Crafts Council, and Andy Goldsworthy's 'Leaves' show at the Natural History Museum.

Simon Clements is a wood carver specialising in bespoke carving commissions and community based sculptural projects. He lives in Oxfordshire.

Will Ritchie tells us about the Wood of the World growing in Wales

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The National Botanic Garden of Wales, although a modern botanic garden of only 17 years, was built upon a Regency parkland established by Sir William Paxton. The picturesque image of rolling hills and pasture, as depicted by Thomas Horner's painting of the estate, was a landscape designed by Samuel Lapidge, and inspired by the works of Capability Brown. To this day, the characteristics of the landscape have been preserved and a £6.7 million project is due to further enhance and manage Paxton's parkland. Despite this appreciation and care for the site's history, the Botanic Garden is not limited by smooth and undulating swards of closely cropped pasture and fields. Within 560 acres you will find a certified organic farm, a National Nature Reserve (NNR), botanical collections and trees.

As a botanic garden our role is to conserve, educate, research and display. As a national botanic garden, our mission includes conserving the flora of Wales. To preserve Welsh native trees we combine science and cultivation. In addition to holding DNA barcodes for genetic studies, we grow a diverse range of native species, both *in situ*, throughout our NNR, and *ex situ*, within the botanical collections. Three species of rowan growing in our collections are *Sorbus leptophylla*, *S. leyana* and *S. minima*, all three are found only in Wales and are threatened by extinction. The specimens in the Botanic Garden are their lifeline; stories, research and propagation all helps to preserve them for future generations.

Since the conception of the Botanic Garden in the mid 1990s, an arboretum has been planned. The South Park of the estate was designated as a potential site for the arboretum in some of the earliest designs and latterly the 'Woods of the World' was created. In 2005, large-scale planting



Araucaria araucana, otherwise known as the monkey puzzle tree, from the Chile section of the Wood of the World at the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

begun in eight plots representing regions of the world with climates similar to Wales. The former director of horticulture, Ivor Stokes, envisaged an arboretum that didn't just feature regimented lines of specimens, like an antiquated museum, but eight exotic woodlands recreated. Ivor planned to plant entire habitats, including trees and their associated flora, the herbs and shrubs they would grow alongside in the wild. Although the project is still a work in progress, some beautiful specimens have already become established. In the plot representing the temperate regions of the Himalayas, you'll walk past

Tibetan cypresses accompanied by wild-collected rhododendrons; you can touch the elegant white bark of Himalayan birch and admire species of roses which are new to cultivation. The Woods of the World project continues to this day. Creating an arboretum is a unique opportunity and it will be an important part of the Botanic Garden. With more than 9,600 tree species threatened by extinction, arboreta have never been so important.

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is a joy to explore, a vital resource for conservation and an exciting project to be part of. 🌱

Simon Clements on carving oak poles for the Tree Charter

WOODCRAFT

I've made things by hand for as long as I remember and first worked with clay, throwing pots. After pottery, I worked as a teacher in the therapeutic units of various hospitals, where I often found myself making things in wood with patients. Several years later, this led to a job making masts and spars for sailing boats.

To celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest and to launch a new Tree Charter in November this year, I've been asked by the Woodland Trust to carve 11 'marker poles' to be placed in various locations around the UK. All the wood for the project has been donated by the Crown Estate at Windsor Great Park – that's 11 premium oak trees, each to be hand carved with imagery and accompanied with poetry by Harriet Fraser and Christine Mackey (who are both taking part in Charter Art Residencies this year), along with Sophie McKeand and Mandy Haggith.

The images carved into the wood will express the relationship between people and trees. It is my job to design a visual interpretation of these pieces of poetry and the Tree Charter principles, so that it can all be carved into a large, irregular cylinder of oak. The trick is not to be too obvious, nor so obtuse that people don't



On site at the Sylva Wood Centre in Oxfordshire, where Simon Clements will carve the 11 'marker poles' over the summer months, to be installed across the UK and unveiled during the launch of the Tree Charter on 6 November 2017.

understand what it all means. But it is important to me that the work is open to interpretation, so it is all a bit of balancing act.

The lettering needs to be large enough to be seen at a distance and legible enough for visitors to read as they spiral around the pole. I chose Lucida Sans because it is striking and easy to read – even at 3 metres high!

As pole number one nears completion I have a 1.5 tonne oak pole sitting here on the carving trestle, complete with carved ribbon and imagery, destined for Manchester City Forest Park, telling the story of a family walking a woodland path. The narrative begins at the base with child-sized bare foot prints scampering through the mud, treading leaf litter under foot. 🌱

Jim Bettle of the Dorset Charcoal Company explains why you should buy British charcoal

FEEL THE BURN

More than 90 per cent of all charcoal used in this country comes from overseas, predominantly the endangered tropical rainforest and mangrove habitats of South America, West Africa and South East Asia. In addition to the damage caused by unsustainable forestry practices in these regions, there is the negative environmental impact arising from the consumption of fossil fuels transporting charcoal so far around the world.

British charcoal is not only the sound environmental option but is also a high-grade fuel. With carbon content as high as 90 per cent compared to only 60 per cent in many imported varieties, charcoal produced from British hardwoods is unsurpassed.

Using wood as a fuel has a number of benefits. Firstly, contrary to what many people think, burning wood and charcoal can be environmentally beneficial.

Much of the woodland in the UK is semi-natural woodland and benefits from being managed. Many small woodlands are under-managed, so cutting firewood and producing charcoal from them can help rekindle traditional woodland management to the benefit of both the trees, the wildlife and the owners.

Bringing coppice woodlands back into rotation encourages a greater diversity of flora and fauna. Cutting wood opens up woodlands for flowers, insects, birds and small mammals letting in light.

Sean Hellman tells how he learned about building coracles

PADDLE POWER

I first came across coracles when I was on a greenwood course in Ironbridge, on the banks of the River Severn. Being very shallow-drafted boats with no keel, coracles are perfect for rivers that other boats would run aground in.

One evening, we were taken out in them and only one person fell in – and not me! It was great fun paddling and crossing the river in them, and of course this inspired me to want to make coracles myself.

They are traditionally made from willow, ash or hazel and covered in a large animal hide but are now commonly made from ash lath and calico, which has been waterproofed with bitumen paint. I used to make coracles from sawn ash lath but now I use cleft or bent roundwood, typically willow or hazel. Ash lath can waste too much good ash, as it snaps if the grain runs across rather than along the pieces. They can weigh between 25 and 40 pounds and are easily carried with the aid of a strap around the front of the shoulders. They are best carried up the river and floated down, as it can be impossible or, at least, extremely hard work to paddle upstream in them for any distance.

Coracles are different from most other river craft due to their weight, construction and how they are paddled. It's very simple to navigate: you have a single, long, paddle which you use at the front of the craft, not at the side. If you paddle from the side you will only succeed in going around in circles!

The paddle is placed in the water with the flat face before you, and is then moved from this position in a figure of 8, this motion pulling the coracle forward. Crossing a current in a coracle is easy, and this was the most common use of this



One hour into the burn process, Jim locates the chimneys and seals the lid.

New woodfuel markets will secure the future of our historic wooded landscapes.

Producing charcoal and using wood as a fuel also benefits the rural economy by providing local employment, and an opportunity for diversification for farmers and other landowners to find value in low-grade wood. Local deliveries eliminate the necessity for long-haul transportation and the production and supply of local charcoal has been shown to reduce fossil fuel consumption by over 85 per cent, compared

with imports from South America or South Africa. Moreover, providing the wood comes from a sustainable source it is a source of renewable stored solar energy.

People often ask if burning charcoal and firewood is bad for the environment. Well, trees turn sunlight and carbon dioxide into carbon (wood) which we can burn to create energy, a truly renewable resource so long as the wood comes from a sustainable source and is burned in a clean, efficient way, close to where it was felled. 🌱



Sean Hellman (left) and Alex Langlands (right) build coracles while filming *Edwardian Farm*. (Photograph copyright S. Hellman.)

craft: to ferry people and goods. Even when toll bridges were built, people often resented paying the toll and carried on using their coracles.

Apart from transportation, another purpose was for fishing, either by line or with nets. With net fishing, a net is held between two coracles, which drift down river taking salmon or sea trout. (To do this today you must have a licence, which is issued yearly, by the appropriate river authority.) People also used coracles for fishing single-handedly, and there is a way of paddling with the paddle under your armpit, leaving one hand free for the net. As you might imagine, this method of takes time to master properly.

Each river in Wales has its own design of coracle. For example; Teifi in Cardigan; Tywi in Carmarthen; Taf in Cardiff; Cleddau in Haverfordwest; Wye in Chepstow and, apparently, three designs on the river Severn.

However, the coracle is not just a Welsh boat. It has been found to be part of traditional ways of life in Britain, Ireland, France, and across the globe in India, Vietnam, Iraq and many other lands. Most cultures who wanted to use a boat have made something like a coracle at one time or another, due to the simple way it is constructed and the availability of materials required. 🌱

Jim Bettle has entered his 50th year of age and his 20th year of charcoal production. Having left college in London with a degree in estate management, Jim travelled extensively and sampled many forms of employment including thatching and coppicing before establishing The Dorset Charcoal Co. in 1997.



THE GREAT STORM 1987

A powerful storm ravages the UK in the middle of October. Winds gust up to 100mph, 18 people lose their lives, and of the 15 million trees said to have blown over in the night, most are chainsawed and removed, even if they are still rooted and alive. This reaction in the aftermath of the storm reveals our estranged relationship with trees.



DAVID NASH 1945

Sculptor David Nash is known for works in wood and for shaping living trees. His large sculptures are sometimes carved or partially burned to produce blackening. He uses a chainsaw and axe to carve the wood and a blowtorch to char the wood. He also makes land art, the best known of which is *Wooden Boulder*, a large oak sphere, which over the years has been washed downriver from North Wales to the sea.



ANDY GOLDSWORTHY 1956

Goldsworthy creates ephemeral site-specific sculptures using whatever natural materials come to hand. He incorporates found objects and natural specimens into temporary sculptures, which he then documents extensively through photography, taking 'before, during and after' shots. These photographs are often the only permanent record of his works.

Sean Hellman is a greenwood worker who runs a small craft production business on the edge of Dartmoor. He works in local and sustainable wood to produce artefacts for indoors and outdoors.

Sabine Peukert works for the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West in Somerset as a Resource Protection Adviser. She offers farm advice on natural flood and soil management, diffuse pollutions, regulation compliance and agri-environment schemes.

SUMMER HARVEST

Cherry Pie

The first Sunday in August was traditionally known as 'Cherry Pie Sunday' in Buckinghamshire. It marked the end of the local cherry harvest when the area's famous black cherries, called 'chuggies' were made into delicious pies, cakes and pastries.

375g plain flour, sifted
175g butter

40g caster sugar
2 to 3 tablespoons cold water

450g cherries, stoned and halved

2 to 4 tablespoons Demerara sugar
zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 pinch ground nutmeg or 1 teaspoon vanilla essence

1. Rub the flour and butter together in a bowl until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the caster sugar and then a little cold water to bind into a dough. Wrap in clingfilm and pop in the fridge for 30 minutes.

2. Preheat the oven to 190 C / Gas 5. Grease a pie dish.

3. In a saucepan over a medium heat combine the cherries, Demerara sugar, lemon zest, juice and nutmeg or vanilla. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook until the cherries soften, about 20 minutes.

4. Remove the pastry from the fridge and roll out on a floured surface, adding a little more water if necessary, to a 1cm thickness. Roll enough to line the dish and make a lid.

5. Line the prepared pie dish with the pastry then spoon in the warm filling. Cover with the pastry lid and press the edges together to seal. Trim if necessary and cut two small slits in the top.

6. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes or until the pastry is golden and the filling is piping hot. Remove from the oven and serve.

Martin Maudsley is a professional storyteller based in Dorset and working across the South West of England. He is the lead artist for Common Ground's Seasonal Schools project.

Trees are our natural ally in flood management says Sabine Peukert

SLOW THE FLOW

Recent flooding events, such as the Cumbria floods in winter 2015/16 and the Somerset Levels and Moors in winter 2013/14 have taught us that we need to re-think our approach to flood management. Historically, we have straightened rivers and drained the upper catchments to get the water off the land as quickly as possible, constructed engineered flood defences to protect communities and properties from flooding and funded dredging in the lower catchments. Now, the focus has shifted towards measures across whole catchments that seek to restore the functioning of the landscape and slow the flow of water through it – termed natural flood management (NFM).

Numerous small interventions, each being low cost and low risk and providing small effects, add up to reduce the volume of river flows during or after heavy rain, and delay the time it takes for flood water to reach the floodplains. NFM is not trying to replace but rather supplement conventional engineered flood defences to reduce localised flooding. A whole range of benefits can also be provided by NFM including habitat creation, improved water quality, enhanced recreational value of the landscape and carbon storage. Several projects have cropped up across the UK to deliver natural flood management, for example the Hills to Levels initiative in Somerset.

Trees are an ally in natural flood management. Trees take up water themselves, improve soil structure, and woody material can be used in the form of leaky woody dams to slow down the flow of water across the landscape.

Historically, woody debris that naturally occurred in streams was removed because it was believed to 'choke up' waterways. Attitudes are changing and we are now reintroducing wood into small streams in the form of leaky woody dams or brushwood dams.

Woody dams are made from logs secured to the banks or ground to avoid any movement during floods, which mimic naturally fallen trees. Leaky woody dams allow low flows and fish to pass unimpeded, but slow high flows and raise water levels above bank height to create temporary water storage on the floodplain. Brushwood dams mimic beaver dams and are made from wooden stakes securing bundles of brushwood. They slow the flow in ditches and filter out silt before it can get



Woodland planting on the floodplain near Ilminster, Somerset, to soak up flood flows.

to streams and rivers. Research has shown that woody dams significantly slow the flow of water and are essential to stream health. The efficacy of such dams will vary, which introduces variation to the time when high flows arrive at the floodplains. Leaky woody dams alter the movement of water,

'Woodland soils can absorb approximately double the amount of water as agricultural land'

creating a variety of conditions and resources which benefit wildlife. For example, 147 species of invertebrates are considered to be associated with coarse woody debris in streams, including craneflies, mayfly nymphs and native crayfish.

The best sites for leaky woody dams are in small headwater streams or across seasonal runoff channels, where local wood is easily accessible and sites that are away from housing, bridges and culverts. Leaky brushwood barriers however are in ditches without fish populations. It is important to remember not to cut down trees during the bird breeding season – 1 March to 1 September. County

council land drainage consent or Environment Agency flood risk activities permits are required. Funding for leaky woody dams is available for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation or Higher Tier.

Over centuries, tree cover has been reduced in the UK. We have taken out woodlands and hedges and intensively farmed the floodplains. Tree planting is a large part of NFM, for example planting woodlands, tree shelterbelts or hedges across slopes, as well as planting floodplain woodlands.

Research has shown that woodland soils can absorb approximately double the amount of water as agricultural land and that planting a tree shelterbelt at the bottom of slopes in agricultural landscapes can reduce river flows after heavy rainfall. Trees also reduce the movement of soil particles to watercourses by acting as a barrier to field runoff and binding the soil with roots.

Hedgerows, shelterbelts and woodlands also provide valuable habitat and food sources for wildlife and take up nutrients which may otherwise enter watercourses.

The best sites for planting are across runoff pathways, across slopes, in wet field corners and on floodplains. Generally, it is best to plant tree and shrub species that naturally occur in the area. Water-loving species, like alder, willow and black poplar are best for floodplains. 🌱

LEAF! storyteller-in-residence
Martin Maudsley enjoys the cool shadows of summer

WELL-DRESSED FOR SUMMER

After the effervescence of May and the blooming of June, summer reaches its height in the humid warmth of July. The seasonal peak of summer's solstice ('the sun's stasis') has been reached and striving to grow gives way to a sigh of relief and a pause in the cycle of life. Stepping underneath the canopy of trees, now in their foliar fullness, there are pools of cool air to slip into and savour as woodlands become natural cathedrals: still and quiet, with luminous green light filtering through stained-glass leaves. Here too, sometimes, there are secret pools of water inviting us to plunge in and wash away the frenzy of everyday life; as the portrait of the hot and bothered policeman in Denys Watkins-Pitchford's wonderful novel

Brendan Chase so viscerally encapsulates. In Celtic mythology the tree particularly associated with this time of year is hazel (*Corylus avellana*), the tree of learning and knowledge. An archetypal story relates how nine nuts from nine hazel trees containing all the wisdom of the world once fell into a sacred well where they were duly swallowed by a fish – the Salmon of Knowledge. The salmon was eventually caught and eaten by the Irish hero Fionn MacCuill ('Son of Hazel') who – in a nutshell – gained all the knowledge of the trees for himself.

Outside the sheltered woods and their ancient mysteries, July's weather is often tempestuous; prone to sudden, drenching downpours of rain which puddle and pool on the sun-hardened earth. One of the best known nuggets of weatherlore relates to the feast day of Saint Swithin, an Anglo-Saxon bishop, on the 15 July: 'St Swithin's Day if it does rain/ For forty days it will remain...' Forty days of rain is an ominous prospect at a time when harvesters and holiday-makers alike are keeping a weather-eye on the rest of summer. In the orchards, by strange contrast, a good crop is traditionally said to rely on the baby apples being

baptised by rain on St Swithin's Day.

High summer is also the time of year for one of the most artistic of British traditional customs: well-dressing. In parishes around the country, but most frequently and famously in Derbyshire, wooden frames filled with moist clay are meticulously decorated with colourful collages of flower petals and other natural materials to be proudly displayed besides the village well. Contestably claimed to stretch back to Romano-British pagan practices of worshipping water deities, well-dressing has nevertheless re-rooted in recent years and caught the imagination of communities in celebrating the season and local distinctiveness. In July and August there are more than 50 such decorated wells to be found in Derbyshire alone; all beautifully dressed for the occasion. 🌱

Host a Tree Party

Celebrate special trees and woods by hosting your own 'Tree Party'. The Woodland Trust is giving away fundraising picnic packs full of fun activities! They'll be available until the end of August. Sign up for yours at woodlandtrust.org.uk/treeparty

ON THE
WOODSHELF

Aftermath of the 1987 Great Storm at Taymount Rise in South London.

Tamsin Treverton Jones talks of landscape, legacy and loss

THE GREAT STORM OF '87

In the early hours of an October morning in 1987 the biggest and most ferocious storm to hit the British Isles since 1703 made landfall off the coast of Dorset. Unexpectedly twisting inland, it raked the southern half of sleeping Britain in a cruel slant from Weymouth to the Wash, killing 18 people.

Fifteen million trees were lost in the space of a few tumultuous hours. Woodlands, parks and gardens were devastated. Up to 700 specimen trees fell at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew; over 360,000 on National Trust land alone.

Almost 30 years later, in a box of my late father's paintings, I came across an old photograph of the Kew Mural, a large commemorative sculpture carved with the wood of exotic trees that fell in the gardens that night (and is still on display there today).

Designed by my father, Terry Thomas, and carved by a young sculptor, the mural is a skillful and intricate interplay of grain, texture and tone, that shows the stone lions of Kew attempting to defend the gardens from the calamitous breath of the wind.

The discovery of the photograph was the starting point for this exploration of landscape, legacy and loss: a journey to seek out and tell some of the untold stories from that unforgettable night, and to search for the roots of my father's unique talent.

I travelled across cultures, continents and generations with sailors and fishermen, luthiers and lighthouse keepers, rough sleepers and refugees, all of them inextricably bound by the events of one extraordinary night, their personal experiences played out on a national stage.

After the storm, the urge to clear and replant was strong: in cleansed woodlands, row upon row of new trees were planted in blue plastic tubes and huge fires of storm-damaged wood burned for months. But the unprecedented violence of the storm had generated exceptional horizontal,

as well as vertical vigour, and as trees fell and canopies opened, new light brought new life to the forest floor.

Despite the good intentions of tidy-minded people, the newly-planted woodlands were soon overwhelmed, as seeds, blown by the wind, took root among nursery seedlings. But we learned to value this natural regeneration, to love dead

‘But we learned to value this natural regeneration, to love dead wood, to embrace the wild in our landscape’

wood, to embrace the wild in our landscape and to understand that what remained was more important than what had been lost.

The storm brought many changes: a change in the way our fruit is grown; a change in the way we understand our woodlands, the weather and the wind. It brought nightjars and breeding woodlarks back to Kent and gave sculptors, joiners and craftsmen enough wood for another 30 years. It also allowed me to celebrate my father – everything he was, everything he left behind – and the serendipitous twists of time and place that make us who we are.

This is my windblown journey, but everyone who was there that night remembers the storm and has their own story, and our children have grown up in the landscape it created. 🌱



Windblown by Tamsin Treverton Jones marks the 30th anniversary of the Great Storm of October 1987. It will be published on 5 October by Hodder & Stoughton.

FATHER AND SON

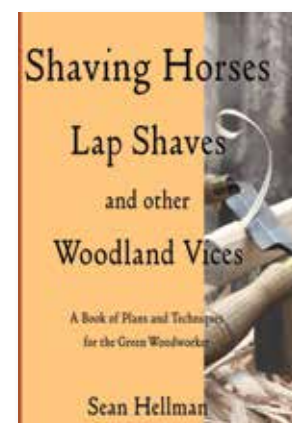
father whittled at my crib
pulling bark and heart shaped leaves
from slender yellow sticks of lime
bestowing on me nature's toys
freshly scented closely grained
smooth to my unseasoned grasp
brought me to the feel of wood
filled my head with forest songs

I was schooled in linden groves
seated on a softening stump
sunk deep into the alkaline
on shallow rooted sorrel slopes
canopied by emerald beech
I memorised each bough and burr
senses swarmed by buckram bloom
my mind alive with all I knew

taught to turn while others played
to split and quarter lumber stacks
with sickle blade and sharpened axe
rapt I stood beside the lathe
showered in motes of greenwood dust
watched him rattle rasp and sand
whet the black Arkansas stone
breathed his passion shaped my own

woodsman's season rolls again
creatures seek secrete and store
leaves extract the sun's last rays
drop or fly denuded stems
I stand before the silent bench
his vintage billhook in my hand
loot the forest floor alone
dragging windblown timber home

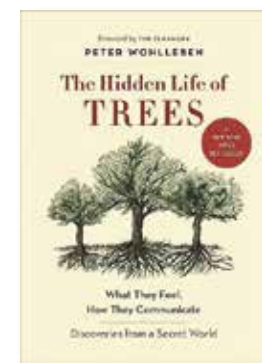
This poem is from a collection of poetry inspired by the events of the Great Storm, and was written for the sculptor of the Kew Mural, Robert Games, and his late father, Gilbert.



SHAVING HORSES, LAP SHAVES AND OTHER WOODLAND VICES
by Sean Hellman



THE TREE LINE: POEMS FOR TREES, WOODS & PEOPLE
Edited by Michael McKimm



THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES: WHAT THEY FEEL, HOW THEY COMMUNICATE - DISCOVERIES FROM A SECRET WORLD
by Peter Wohlleben

Tamsin Treverton Jones is a writer and poet. She studied French at Bristol University and was Head of Press at the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court Theatre and Bath Festivals. She writes arts and travel features, has written, produced and presented features for radio, programmed literary events for live digital broadcast and published two books for The History Press.



Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People

JULY

KEW GARDENS
Now - September
British Artists in
the Shirley Sherwood
Collection
kew.org

**HIGGINS ART GALLERY
AND MUSEUM**
Now - September
Romance and Rebel-
lion: The Art of the
Victorians
thehigginsbedford.org.uk

**TOWNER ART
GALLERY**
Now - September
Ravilious & Co: The
Pattern of Friendship
townereastbourne.org.uk

**THE LONG VIEW
MEET THE ARTISTS**
20 July 12, 2pm
Grizedale Forest
Meet artists Rob and
Harriet Fraser
artrabbit.com/events/artists-
talk-rob-and-harriet-fraser

**HAYMAKING
FESTIVAL**
22 July
kingcombe.org



**THE GREEN MAN -
COMMON GROUND**
TREES, WOODS
IMAGE BY BEN NICHOLSON



AN ARTS TRAIL ALMANAC Special



**TREEFOLDS
THE LONG VIEW
EXHIBITION**
Now - 31 August
Grizedale Forest
thelongview.today



**STAY IN TOUCH
TREE
CHARTER
ART**
COMMONGROUND.ORG.UK



for Trees, Woods and People
Summer 2017



**OWEN GRIFFITHS'
CARAVAN STUDIO**
20 July - August
National Botanic
Garden of Wales
commonground.org.uk/
charter-art

**STAY IN TOUCH
TREE
CHARTER
ART**
COMMONGROUND.ORG.UK



ROYAL WELSH SHOW
24 - 27 July
Ponys
rwaw.wales/royal-welsh-show



SUMMER BREEZE
6 July - 11 August
Fritch Street Gallery
An Ensemble of
Gallery Artists
fritchstreetgallery.com

SECOND NATURE
11 July - 8 October
Royal Academy
The Art of Charles
Tunncliffe
royalacademy.org.uk/exhibi-
tion/charles-tunncliffe-ra

THE CLEARING
Now - 17 December
Compton Verney
Nex Hartley and Tom
James
comptonverney.org.uk

INTO THE WOODS
Now - 28 Jan 2018
Victoria and Albert
Museum, Gallery 102
Trees in British Book
Illustration
vam.ac.uk

PAUL NASH
Now - August
Sainsbury Centre for
Visual Arts, Norwich
scva.ac.uk

**WHAT'S YOUR
EVENT?**
Share your local
celebration or find
out more about what's
happening near you
treecharter.uk/events-
calendar

**THE LONG VIEW
MEET THE ARTISTS**
22 July 11am - 12pm
Grizedale Forest
Rob and Harriet will
be giving a talk in
the Yan building Free
to attend.
artrabbit.com/events/artists-
talk-rob-and-harriet-fraser



**THE HIGHLAND
COLLECTION**
Now - 27 October
Highland Folk Museum
The social & rural way
of life of the Scottish
Highlanders from the
1700s to 1900s.
highlifehighland.com



**FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT EVENTS**
treecharter.uk/events-calendar



ASH WALKS
Saturday July 29
Wye, Kent
The Ash Project Walks:
Reference Points
theashproject.org.uk

AUG

**THE LONG VIEW
DROP IN DAY**
7 August 12 - 2pm
Grizedale Forest
Meet Harriet and Rob
and the master dry
stone waller
artrabbit.com/events/artists-
talk-rob-and-harriet-fraser

**PARTIAL
LUNAR
ECLIPSE**
7 August

**KURT JACKSON
WORKSHOP**
11 August - 10 am
Jackson Gallery,
Cornwall
Rare opportunity to
take part in a Kurt
Jackson art workshop
kurtjackson.com

**TREEMENDOUS
TREE FUN**
19 August
Walks, Talks and Eats
Summer Picnic
woodlandtrust.org.uk/events

JUNIOR RANGER CLUB
starting 26 August
Beaulieu Wood
woodlandtrust.org.uk/events



**INTO THE WILD
Summer Festival**
25 - 28 August
An intimate music
festival set in the
stunning English
countryside
intothewildgathering.com



**BENTLEY WEALD
WOODFAIR**
15 - 17 September
Lewes, East Sussex
bentley.org.uk

MORNING MUSIC
14 September 9-10am
Live musical event,
experience the unique
environment of the
Barbara Hepworth
Museum before the
town wakes up.
stivesseptemberfestival.co.uk

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS
7-10 September
5000+ UK heritage
sites including historic
landscapes and parks
free to visit for one
weekend only.
heritageopendays.org.uk

**FOLKESTONE
TRIENNIAL**
2 Sep - 5 Nov
Sol Calero, local
artists and crafts-
people will make
furniture out of
locally sourced wood.
folkestonetriennial.org.uk

**SMITH HILLS WILD
FORAGING**
2 September
woodlandtrust.org.uk/events

SEP

TREE DRAWINGS
Victoria and Albert
Museum, London
Topic boxes of
tree drawings and
watercolours for the
Prints and Drawings
Study Room
am.ac.uk



**AUTUMN
EQUINOX**
22 Sep



**THE GOOD LIFE
EXPERIENCE**
15 - 17 Sep
A weekend of music,
food, books, ideas,
workshops and the
great outdoors.
thegoodlifeexperience.co.uk

**TREE COUNCIL'S SEED
GATHERING SEASON**
23 Sep - 23 Oct
Since 1998, The Tree
Council has been
organising Seed
Gathering Season.
folkestonetriennial.org.uk

OCT

EXHIBITION
Oct 2017 - Jun 2018
Victoria and Albert
Museum, Gallery 38A
An exhibition of
photographs of trees
vam.ac.uk

WOODLAND FAIR
Chapel Lawn Village,
Redlake
Saturday 7 October
10am to 430pm
(Evening talk: 7pm)
rvcb.wordpress.com

FOREST FESTIVAL
Tweed Valley, Peebles
Wood market, conkers
and more!
21 - 29 Oct
forest-festival.com

FREQUENCY FESTIVAL
Lincoln
Festival of digital
culture
20 - 29 Oct
frequency.org.uk



**TREE
CHARTER
LAUNCH**
6 NOVEMBER

**COMM
ON GR
OUND**