

LEAF!

MIDSUMMER DREAMS ISSUE | SUMMER 2016 | FREE



Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People

THE NEWSPAPER FOR TREES, WOODS AND PEOPLE

SHAKESPEARE'S TREES & FORESTS,
ANCIENT WOODS, TREE MAPS, CITY TREES,
UNICORNS, YOUR TREE STORIES, AND MORE!



Hastings Tree Map by Eleanor Taylor



In a midsummer mood? Illustrator Luke Best responds to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare's woodland play filled with magic and transformation.

Fiona Stafford takes us into Shakespeare's strangest and most magical woodland.

MIDSUMMER DREAMING

What do you do if you're entering a drama competition and you've nowhere to rehearse? If you've fallen out with your partner over childcare? If your favourite man is chasing your best friend? Or if you're really happy with someone, but your Dad's pressurising you into marrying someone else? The answer, in each of these cases, is to find the nearest wood – at least that's the solution favoured by almost every character in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The wood is only a mile outside town, but it seems a world away. There, beds are made of primroses, banks of violets, and thyme is wild. The wood offers a promise of freedom, privacy and fairy-tale endings, though things turn out more strangely than anyone would guess.

The wood in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is outside Athens, but it is a very English wood. Bottom the weaver emerges from a hawthorn bush, singing about blackbirds and thrushes, wrens, finches, sparrows, larks and cuckoos, before being crowned with honeysuckle and waited on by fairies called Mustardseed, Cobweb, Moth and Peaseblossom. By grounding his *Dream* in a recognisable wood at night, Shakespeare made it more real to his English audience than the remote society of Ancient Greece.

The most practical characters in his play are also the most troubled by the potential confusion of

fact and fantasy, which is why they are at pains to tell their audience that the lion is really Snug the Joiner, and their 'moonshine' made up of a lantern and some may flower. During their rehearsals in the wood, on the other hand, the tree demanded by Ovid's tale of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' is real enough; but it is when they meet at the Duke's Oak to run through their lines that their familiar world of bushes and timber turns to myth. 'Bless thee,

'Once out of the city and inside the wood, no one sees things as they did before.'

Bottom, thou art translated!' cries Peter Quince the carpenter, as his leading actor emerges from the wings with an ass's head on his shoulders.

Once out of the city and inside the wood, no one sees things as they did before. Both Lysander and his rival, Demetrius, suddenly turn their attention from Hermia to Helena. The young lovers, like the tradesmen, have slipped into a parallel world, ruled by strange powers. At night, under the moonlight, among the shifting shadows of the trees, the scents of musk rose and violet deepen, nothing is quite as they had thought. This is a place of metamorphoses, filled with sprites and fairies, changeling children, flowers fortified by Cupid's dart and men transformed into mythical beasts. The moonlit wood is a dream-world, where no one is fully conscious of whether it is all ephemeral fantasy or more real than their daylight experience. When asked how he got there, Lysander replies, 'amazedly, /Half sleep, half

waking', not at all sure. 'What do you see?' asks Bottom, the hapless weaver with the hairy ass's head, but his companion has already fled in terror.

The threat of everything darkening into nightmare is never far away, but the dangers are kept at bay. Puck may be best pleased by 'those things . . . That befall preposterously' and gain particular amusement from human absurdity ('Lord, what fools these mortals be!'), but his mischievous instincts are constrained by Oberon, whose concern for the distresses of Hermia and Helena also leads to a softening of his rage against his own Queen. Once in the wood, even the rational Theseus begins to see more clearly. Athenian law is eclipsed by natural lore.

The moonlit wood is only just beyond the routines and ructions of daily life: anyone can get there, providing they are prepared to let go. There is always a wood close at hand, for those prepared to approach their problems with a flexible attitude and a mind open to marvels. Theseus may dismiss the half-remembered tales of the night in the forest, but his captive Queen knows better. Bottom may seem the least likely of visionaries, but turns out to have an instinct for asking the right questions. And if the moonlit wood furnishes 'a most rare vision . . . a dream, past wit of man to say what dream it was', for him, then no one can really be immune to the arboreal magic. 🌿

Shakespeare in the woods

How and why did Shakespeare use forests in works like *Macbeth* and *As You Like It*? Find out during a one-week course at Shakespeare's Globe exploring Birnam Wood, the Forest of Arden and the Athenian forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The course runs between 14 and 19 August 2016. Find out more at shakespearesglobe.com

Luke Best is an illustrator based in London, where he is also a Senior Lecturer at Camberwell College of Arts.



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 was 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.

Fiona Stafford is Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Oxford. She recently broadcast *The Meaning of Trees* on BBC Radio, on which her new book *The Long, Long Life of Trees* (Yale University Press) is based.

WHAT'S YOUR TREE STORY?

JULIA SHELLEY FROM SURREY SHARES HER TREE STORY:

"The old mulberry tree my friends and I played on and in all the school holidays was a whole world away from adults. We used the berry juice for blood, the leaves for bandages or plates and the branches as a ship. In the winter I crept up there to look at the birds. Under the tree my father buried our first and favourite dog so that my brother and I could talk to her while sitting in the tree. I still remember the rough, damp feel of the bark and the noise of the leaves in the wind. The tree remains a memory of the freedom and excitement of living in our own world."

Share your tree story: treecharter.uk/share-your-story

🌿 FOLK WOOD – BIRCH 🌿

Slender and graceful, birch is sometimes known as the Lady of the Woods. Brooms were made from birch and symbolically it represents sweeping away the old and starting afresh.

**NEOLITHIC FARMING 4000BC**

Neolithic people begin slowly converting wildwood, or the open areas within wildwood, into fields, pastures, heaths and moorland. The British Isles passes the stage of being half forest probably at some time in the Bronze or early Iron Age, roughly between 1300 and 700BC.

**BRONZE AGE HEADACHES 2000BC**

Tree bark of the white willow contains salicin, a chemical similar to that found in modern aspirin. Making tea from the bark of willow trees is known to release a medicine that is effective against minor aches and pains. The first recorded use of salicin is 2000BC, and it was used in the ancient worlds of Sumeria, Egypt and Rome.

FOLK WOOD - ELM

Elm has long been associated with death - trees were once used as gallows and coffins were made from its wood. Sadly it's now infamous for its own demise - from Dutch Elm Disease

Liam Creedon is a writer and editor for *Butterfly* magazine and Head of Marketing at Butterfly Conservation, a charity devoted to saving butterflies, moths and their habitats in the UK.

Bea Forshall studied Illustration at Falmouth College of Art and creates artworks inspired by wildlife and conservation.

Liam Creedon shares a good news story about the butterfly on the rise in woodlands across the UK.

SPECKLED WOOD

Despite a generally gloomy outlook for the majority of UK butterflies the Speckled Wood has bucked the trend to record a remarkable increase over recent decades. Since 1976 the quintessential woodland butterfly has recorded a 71% increase in distribution and 84% increase in abundance.

The aptly named Speckled Wood flies in partially shaded woodland with dappled sunlight and has benefited from the warming climate to spread northward into mature deciduous woodland and conifer plantations.

Besides being a key habitat for the Speckled Wood, woodlands are important for many butterflies including threatened species such as the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Wood White and Black Hairstreak as well as widespread count species such as the Ringlet, Brimstone, Comma and Holly Blue.

As part of the Tree Charter, Butterfly Count is encouraging members to complete their own butterfly count in a local woodland, which will really help us build a clear picture of the importance of these habitats to different species.

Richard Fox, Butterfly Conservation Head of Recording, said: 'Woodlands are vital for many butterfly and moth species as well as being beautiful places to explore and discover nature. But last year only 4% of Big Butterfly Counts took place in woodland. This summer let's all try to do an extra count in a local wood. A woodland count will boost coverage of this special habitat and help us understand how common butterflies are faring in our woods.'

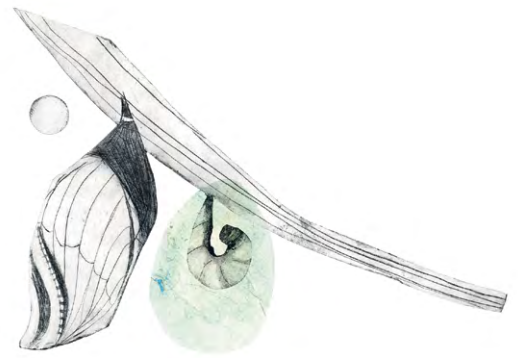
Our woods and trees are facing unprecedented pressures from development, disease and climate change. They risk being neglected, undervalued, and forgotten.

Big Butterfly Count

The Big Butterfly Count was launched in 2010 and has rapidly become the world's biggest survey of butterflies. Over 52,000 people took part in 2015, counting over 580,000 individual butterflies and day-flying moths across the UK. Join the Big Butterfly Count in a woodland near you from 15 July to 7 August 2016. Find out more by visiting bigbutterflycount.org

**WHAT'S YOUR TREE STORY ?****SUSIE FOX SHARES HER TREE STORY:**

"I work as a domiciliary carer and worked at one point in the community supporting disabled people and people with learning difficulties. I supported one man who was autistic and had cerebral palsy. He could not communicate verbally and often got stressed. This led to behavioural challenges. I took him for walks in a local wood that has a 40 minute circular walk by a little pond and through the rhododendrons. Many a time he and I went there to de-stress and spend a calm hour walking quietly together. Very precious memories!"

BEA FORSHALL'S SPECKLED WOOD BUTTERFLY**WOOD RIDES**
by John Clare

Who hath not felt the influence that so calms
The weary mind in summers sultry hours
When wandering thickest woods beneath the arms
Of ancient oaks and brushing nameless flowers
That verge the little ride who hath not made
A minutes waste of time and sat him down
Upon a pleasant swell to gaze awhile
On crowding ferns bluebells and hazel leaves
And showers of lady smocks so called by toil
When boys sprout gathering sit on stulps and weave
Garlands while barkmen pill the fallen tree
- Then mid the green variety to start
Who hath (not) met that mood from turmoil free
And felt a placid joy refreshed at heart



Hollow in the grounds of Royal Fort Gardens, commissioned by the University of Bristol.

Katie Paterson explains why she brought 10,000 tree species together to create her new installation in Bristol.

HOLLOW WAY

When I started thinking about the project *Hollow* I envisioned bringing together an entire planet of trees into one space. To collect nearly every known tree species that exists, and collapse it together in microcosm.

All my work deals with nature and time, in an expanded sense. With *Hollow* I wanted to span space and time, bringing together tree species from all over the planet, and through time from the most ancient fossils to the near extinct species of today. It became clear to me through the research and development that I was hitting a brick wall when it came to envisioning the form. I work with ideas and physical things, but not the body in three dimensional space.

That's when I approached the architectural studio Zeller & Moyer, and the project really took off. We had a shared visual sensibility, and our ideas merged seamlessly. The architects were able to work with the idea of the 'miniature forest' and take it to an entirely new place: an immersive form that visitors could enter into. Together we looked at grottos, caves in the landscape, crystalline underground structures, and Zen gardens: a landscape miniaturised.

Hollow contains tree species from almost every country on earth. Some of these samples are incredibly rare – fossils of unfathomable age, and fantastical trees such as Cedar of Lebanon, the Phoenix Palm and the Methuselah tree thought to be one of the oldest trees in the world at 4,847 years of age. There is even a railroad tie taken from the Panama Canal Railway, which claimed the lives of between 5,000 to 10,000 workers over its 50-year construction, and pieces of wood salvaged from the remnants of the iconic Atlantic City boardwalk devastated in 2012 by hurricane Sandy.

Hollow went through a number of design phases before becoming what it is today: an intimate space that surrounds people physically, and through their imagination and senses,

transports them to all corners of the earth, through distant forests, jungles, coastal forests, cloud forests, rainforests, the tundra wilderness.

It brings together the diversity of life on planet earth, and each individual piece of wood has its own identity within the whole: connecting it together with every other living tree, and in extension with us as humans, all creatures on the planet, and stars in our solar system; through space and through time, the ancient and the present. The fossils embedded in the floor area go back over 400 million years, to a time when the first forests began to grow. The scents inside *Hollow* also transport us. The colours and textures are vibrant. You can gaze into the intricate clusters of wood, through the stalactites and stalactite forms, through the dappled light that mirrors a forest canopy. *Hollow* will subtly change from day to day, as the light flows through the space, and from season to season.

I hope the visitor will experience something new every visit. And I hope the combination of all these things creates a deep and immediate effect, both visual and sensory, creating an overall sensation of entering an almost infinite microcosmos of trees – the feeling that the planet has collapsed into one. 🌱



Katie Paterson is a visual artist whose multimedia artworks explore time, distance and scale. She has many solo exhibitions all over the world, from Cambridge and London, to Oxford, Vienna and Seoul. She is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Edinburgh, and in 2014 she was the Leverhulme Fellow at University College London and the winner of the South Bank Sky Arts Award. *Hollow* is a public-participatory artwork, realised with the studio Situations and the architects Zeller & Moyer.

Martin Maudsley reimagines a traditional tree tale

HEART OF OAK

Once there was a woman who loved the woods. She loved them in spring when catkins danced in the breeze and in autumn when the leaves twisted into a kaleidoscope of colours. But most of all she loved the woods in summer, those hot, hazy days in June and July when the woodland became a green cathedral, and she walked in reverie breathing its cool, clear air.

One day, on midsummer's morning itself, the woman was wandering amongst the dappled green and gold of the woods and became so entranced by its stillness that she travelled deeper and further than ever before. Eventually she came across a huge, magnificent oak tree, ancient and angular, looking every inch like the King of the Woods. Feeling awe-inspired and weary, she sat down at the base of the tree, back against bark in a made-to-measure chair of rising roots. She tipped her head back and gazed up into the interlacing canopy of branches and leaves, she sighed contentedly and whispered aloud.

'Thank-you'.

Instantly, as if in reply, the bark behind her began to tremor. Jumping to her feet she saw a crack appear in the trunk of the tree, which slowly widened until it revealed a round, wooden door. Taking a deep breath she pushed open the door, stepped inside, and entered a world, lush and luxuriant, growing with leafy ferns and glowing with incandescent light. Beneath her feet the ground was soft and mossy, and taking off her shoes she began to walk barefoot, following a winding stream of emerald green. At a bend in the stream she saw a steep bank covered with hundreds and hundreds of brightly coloured flowers, each with a shining jewel in the middle of its petals: ruby roses, diamond daisies, sapphire speedwells.

Suddenly she heard a voice – she wasn't sure if it came through her ears or straight into her head – but she knew it was the voice of the oak tree. 'Take one of my treasures,' said the tree's voice. Slowly, she bent down and nervously picked one: a ruby rose. 'Thank-you,' she said once more.

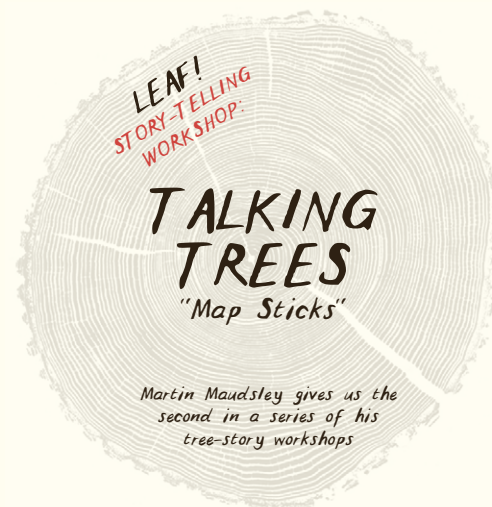
The woman followed the emerald stream to the doorway and stepped back into the woods. Cradling the precious rose in her hands she walked home, her heart brimming with joy.

But as she walked home the summer sunlight glinted and glanced off that ruby and sent it dazzling across the land. Her neighbour, a mean and measly man, saw the ruby light and became so consumed. He couldn't bear to see something he himself didn't have, and when the woman came nearer with the ruby-rose he demanded that she tell him where it came from. Frightened, compelled to speak truthfully, she told him of the great oak and the secret doorway.

The man reached for his axe and ran to the woods, grinning with greed. And when he came to the great, old oak he didn't sit down to enjoy its magnificence. Instead, he began to strike at the tree's trunk with his axe, as hard as he could. Before he'd struck three times, the oak tree began to tremble and the crack appeared, widening to reveal its secret wooden door.

Once inside the tree world the mean man didn't stop to take off his shoes or appreciate its inner-worldly beauty, he just followed the emerald stream and ran straight towards the jewelled flowers, grabbing as many as he could, stuffing them into his pockets. He was so busy being greedy and grabbing he didn't notice as the green, glowing light began to fade. He didn't notice as the doorway began to close. Until... too late!

To this very day, that greedy neighbour is still inside that great, old oak.



START BY FINDING ANOTHER STICK...

Take the stick on a journey and attach different objects found along the way. It could be a feather on the forest floor, an empty snail shell dug out of the soil, or a couple of red berries hanging from a hawthorn bush. Tie on with coloured wool wrapped around the stick to make the whole thing more decorative. Encourage the journey-makers to make mental images of each place they stop to collect the different objects.

At the end of the journey you can gather together to tell stories of your adventures using the collection of objects on your sticks! An environmental artist called Gordon MacLellan called these 'map-sticks', and it is a great way to explore and map out any woodland with personal discoveries and connections.

More adventurous storytellers can also use the finished journey sticks as the basis for creating improvised, imaginary stories: each object enters a part of the tale. The feather becomes a little bird flying through the woods, the little bird eats an enchanted red berry and turns into stone, the bird is rescued by an elf with a snail-shell cap who uses the wand to bring the bird back to life!

Judy Ling Wong is the UK President of Black Environment Network, with an international reputation as the pioneer in the field of ethnic participation in the built and natural environment. Judy lives in Llanberis, a village in Snowdonia, Wales.



VIKING BRITAIN 793AD

Yggdrasil (the World Tree or Tree of Life) plays a prominent role in Norse mythology, which travelled to the British Isles with the Viking invasion, connecting the indigenous Anglo culture with the nine worlds of Norse cosmology. The branches of this ash tree extend into the heavens.



THE ANKERWYCKE YEW

Rivers and trees were sacred to the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. Witans, or King's Councils, were often held under important trees. Alfred the Great (Wessex King 871 - 899 AD) held Witans at Runnymede ('Rune-Mede' or meadow of magical charms), possibly under the branches of the Ankerwycke Yew, which took root at Runnymede around 2,000 years ago. This tree still stands at Runnymede today, rooted by the Thames in Surrey.

Judy Ling Wong shares the story of Khalsa Wood in Nottinghamshire, planted to celebrate the values of the Sikh community.

OUR TREES, OUR CULTURE

Trees mean a lot to all of us, way beyond the practical. Human beings form attachments to trees, finding multiple meanings and beliefs in their branches. Almost every culture has a tree in its mythology. All the significant events in Buddha's life are marked by the presence of trees. The people of Mesopotamia marked the Tree of Life into bowls, textiles and sculpture over 6,000 years ago. In Hinduism, Yakshi is the name of a tree goddess who, as well being the guardian of trees is also the spirit who lives inside it. Scandinavian mythology conceives the Universe as *Yggdrasil*, the World Tree. And where would Christianity be without the apple tree in the Garden of Eden!

Today, we live in a fast world, unlike any other century. There is no longer any cultural isolation. We meet on screen and for real, swap ideas in religion, art, politics and food. This, the great gift of the twenty-first century, is something to celebrate! Trees also follow the movement of people, as they carry with them what they love and need as they migrate. A prime example is the horse chestnut, an ornamental tree popular in our parks, gardens, town and village squares (and of course essential to the game of conkers!). It feels completely British – does it not? But the horse chestnut is from the Balkans, it is not a native tree. Nor is the apple, if we trace it to its wild ancestor, *Malus sieversii*, found still growing in the mountains of southern Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Xinjiang in China. This movement of physical things is also true of beliefs and ideas.

One year, working with the Black Environment Network, the Sikh community in Nottingham wanted to find somewhere to plant 300 trees to commemorate the three-hundredth anniversary of Guru Granth Sahib, their scriptures, and to create a new patch of woodland for everyone.

People in the Sikh community are very motivated by faith. This includes a reverence for nature, a commitment to family and community life, and a tradition of 'sewa' (altruism and volunteering). The Sikh community in Nottinghamshire were looking for an appropriate way to express these values and mark this important occasion. What better way than a

Carly and Martin from Nottingham got in touch with *LEAF!* to share their woodwork story.

UNICORNS ARE REAL!

When you step out into the wild wood carrying a few simple tools, a ball of twine and some nails, magical things can begin to happen. Under the shelter of an awning at The Iona School in Sneinton Dale, Nottingham, the laughter and chatter of young folk mingled with serenading birds to make for a really beautiful Family Making Day. Where do you find art? Art is in the soil, the gallery, the garden, the morning, noon and night! It's in us all, every day. For the whole of your life. We love to make and learn, and love to make and learn with others too.



'What better way to express the enduring values of your culture than by cultivating a living monument?'

ceremony to plant 300 trees!

As a result of this Khalsa Wood project, came the idea of 'marking a place with memory': marking the present and future with trees as a symbol of connections with the past. This is a process that we all experience without thinking,

'Almost every culture has a tree in its mythology.'

as many of us remain in the places we grew up in, surrounded by the echoes of layers of memories. However, displaced peoples who are having to 'begin again' have no such connections; for them it is very important to 'mark a new place' with their memories and so create a sense of belonging and meaning. Khalsa Wood, open to all, is now maturing, while its 'invisible' meaning lives on within the community.

A native tree is at present defined as one that was on these islands around 10,000 years ago, when the land bridge to Europe 'broke' as the last Ice Age receded, and the sea level rose. Trees began to appear in a line below just about where Bristol is, and began their march northwards.

Going even further back, there was a time when all continents were one (Pangaea) and shared nature as it was before it broke apart 175 million years ago into the 'modern' continents of today.

What a journey the earth and humanity has travelled!

Under the pressure of our present world, trees here in the UK need our protection. Native and non-native trees play a significant role – in our landscapes, in our industry and in how we live and feel as sentient beings. As humans play a greater and greater role in configuring where nature can be, more than ever we need to think through how we express our love for the tree, a prime symbol for all of nature, and act on it!

Of course, trees are a wonderful symbol of sustainability. Children will remember the special day in Nottingham when Khalsa Wood was established, and in the future they will reflect on the meaning of that occasion for their community. And in years, maybe centuries to come, people will look back with pride at the contribution these families made to creating a beautiful green space and conserving the environment. What better way to express the enduring values of your culture than by cultivating a living monument to stand as a legacy for the future. 🌱

A catalogue of the things we made:

- 3 rustic stools.
- 1 spoon.
- 1 bowl.
- 2 mallets and 1 almost marking gauge.
- Half a motorbike.
- Rabbit playground (with ramp and tunnel).
- 3 juggling clubs.
- Assortment of pictures and sculptures.
- 1 unicorn with rainbow mane (fully rideable).
- Many new friends.

An incomplete list of happy happenings:

- Three generations working together.
- Making tools from scratch, then using those tools to make something else!
- Parents and children sharing time and skill.
- Children teaching adults.
- Families supporting each other, taking joy in each others creations. 🌱



By our hands

For over a decade Carly and Martin have been running creative workshops, sometimes therapeutic, sometimes educational, always with a love of making and learning: wemakeourway.co.uk



Southwark residents gather in south London to have their say about the future of their local woods.

Save Southwark Woods are on a mission to conserve the memorials, woods, meadows, fields, allotments and history of Camberwell.

OUR WOOD

Camberwell Old and New Cemeteries in south-east London are full. However, instead of preserving the woods, wildlife, graves and history of these cemeteries, Southwark Council is in the midst of the largest grave excavation and mounding programme in UK history, felling woods and trees for burial space inside the hot, polluted inner city.

In January 2015, the Save Southwark Woods campaign was founded in order to protect the Camberwell Cemeteries, and their woods, graves, allotments, playing fields and meadows, which the Council wants to use for new burial spaces.

Our fast-disappearing woods are a haven of habitats for bats, owls, bees, butterflies and other species. The restorative solace of the woods, graves and history are invaluable to residents – for coming to terms with bereavement, managing ill health and stress, exercise and simply witnessing the beauty of nature.

In February 2016, two acres of woods and trees in the Old Cemetery were cleared for new 'dormitory-style' burial plots. Church of England

permission was required, as this is consecrated ground, but Southwark Council, which owns the land, went ahead before the Church hearing could take place. Ten more acres are set to follow.

In the New Cemetery, the beautiful oak woodland on historic One Tree Hill has a breath-taking view of the City and St Paul's. But Southwark Council is soon to fell up to sixty trees (including eight oaks) to build a new access road.

We have held demonstrations, marches, tours and open days. More than 2,500 written objections have been made to Southwark Council's plans, with over 11,000 people having signed the petition.

Last year, the London iTree assessment valued London's urban forest at £6.1bn, for flood prevention, air quality and urban cooling. It included the Camberwell Cemeteries' woods. This is not just a battle between a tiny community group and Southwark Council – all the woods, wildlife, history and heritage of every one of Britain's old city cemeteries will be at risk. 🌿



Stand up for your local trees, woods and community. Start a 'Charter Branch' in your community, or find out if there is one near you: treecharter.uk/charter-branches

Jane Mether hopes for a future where woodlands are part of everyday life.

EVERGREEN DREAMS

My dream for woodland would be that we not only preserve the natural woodland heritage we have, but invest in the future, by regenerating our green spaces, reclaiming brownfield as wilderness garden. Patrick Geddes, the pioneering Scottish biologist, sociologist and town planner, argued that people need green spaces to thrive. 'By leaves we live,' he wrote in 1895, during which time he was also helping revive the slums of Edinburgh's old town, ensuring green spaces were at their heart.

For over twenty years now I have worked with people experiencing mental health needs. I now work with SEASONS, an organisation in Edinburgh offering support with mental health and well being. The many different people participating in our activities enjoy the experience of being in nature, finding it relaxing to be amongst trees, and are revitalised by the simple



Woods for the mind and body in Edinburgh.

things, like breathing fresher air and being near wildlife.

Our group often teams up with a variety of nature experts, such as The National Trust for Scotland or Edinburgh Community Parks rangers, who have helped us plant trees and hedgerows in the grounds of a local care home. During our

BAFTA-winning actor and director Mackenzie Crook shares his London tree story.

A MUSWELL HOOT

Outside my window in North London is a huge old tree. I've been told it's the oldest horse chestnut in London, at about 400 years. It's not very pretty. It looks as though three or four smaller trees have been mashed clumsily together: boughs as thick as regular trunks stick out at all manner of ugly angles, and on a stormy winter's night it cuts a particularly sinister silhouette. Do you remember the tree in *Poltergeist* that reaches in through the window and grabs the kid? Like that.

But, far from being evil, the tree is always buzzing with life.

It's as if it has its own gravity that sucks in wildlife to live in its atmosphere. At any one time there will be a squirrel chase going on in its upper reaches, a fox skulking around its base, a woodpecker drumming out a proposition.

A couple of times a day a banditry of assorted titmice stop off for a meal break, swarming its branches for a minute or two before continuing on their way. At the height of summer the tree is enveloped in a cloud of flying insects, and evening pipistrelles are drawn into its orbit. The tree plays host to the entire food chain. From aphid, moss or fungus, to a tawny owl and the occasional sparrowhawk. And all the while blasting out free oxygen for the Haringey area.

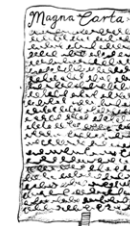
In the 1940s my dad collected its conkers, and once spent an afternoon collecting a whole bucketful of prize-winners only to trip on the way home and watch them all bounce like madmen down Muswell Hill.

One night last spring I was Skyping with a friend who lives in Los Angeles. It was a warm evening so the window was open, and as we chatted the owl started to hoot in the tree outside. My friend does a spot-on tawny owl impression, so I moved my computer nearer to the window and he whistled a low 'terwit-terwoo'. Immediately the owl responded, and for a few moments after it went back and forth: my friend hooting, the owl replying. Now that's quite a thing to get your head around: a North London owl communicating, via the web, with a human in Hollywood. 🌿



ROBIN HOOD

Nobody knows who the thirteenth-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.



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.



FOLK WOOD – HAZEL
In Celtic mythology Hazel signifies learning and knowledge. Dowsing rods are traditionally made from hazel and 'to crack a nut' refers to solving a problem.

visits to the woods, each and every participant enjoys experiencing the cycles of nature: the scent of leaf litter, or the signs of fresh, new growth. The textures of all that flourishes in the woods, the sounds of bubbling streams and bird song. An experience of the senses which allows us all to relax into nature's rhythm, to be in and truly experience the moment. This, I believe, is beneficial for everyone's wellbeing.

Today, we need woodland and green spaces at the hearts of our communities more than ever. We all need to connect with nature, from the youngest age. Millions of years of evolution have prepared us for life in nature, from hunter gatherers to farmers, always in tune with the rhythms and cycles of the natural world. It is only in the past few hundred years that we have become increasingly detached. We will always suffer a restless discontent until we make this reconnection. Now with the competing influences of digital technology, my woodland dream is that today's young, digital natives are given access to woods and green spaces, so they can learn to communicate without the latest app and go instead into the woods. 🌿

Find out a more about SEASONS activities in Edinburgh by visiting seasonsedinburgh.co.uk

Trees and woods are wonderful places for telling tales, says the **LEAF!** storyteller-in-residence Martin Maudsley.

THE STORY TREE

Twelve years ago, when I was first cutting my teeth as a storyteller, I regularly helped with an adventure play scheme in the countryside near Bath. With rucksacks filled with provisions we'd set out, like hobbits leaving the Shire, rambling across the wooded valleys. On one occasion, at the edge of a neglected wood, we came across an old ash tree that had fallen into the field, uprooted by a violent storm. With several of its limbs now wedged against the ground, the tree was more accessible for the children to climb and perch along the horizontal trunk, like rows of chirpy sparrows. As we basked in its boughs, the tree became a natural habitat for storytelling – at first by myself but eventually by the children themselves, each revelling in the magic of the moment.

Over the course of a few more trips this particular ash became 'the story tree'. Every time we passed its familiar shape we would stop and climb into its branches for another story; the tally of told tales accruing over time like growth rings in the trunk of the old tree. After a while, I began to notice that the stories were often about trees: our story tree was becoming both the context and content for our storytelling.

The very language we use to understand ourselves is suffused with tree metaphors. We take root, branch out, go out on a limb, we bear fruit. The Anglo-Saxon word 'treow' was originally used to denote both 'tree' and 'true': trees as pillars of truth, truth with the strength and longevity of a tree. In Ireland, there was once a written alphabet of runes (the Ogham) with each character based on a different native tree species. Celtic culture in Britain also venerated trees, and left a legacy of spirituality and symbolism that still survives today in tree folklore. In old Norse mythology, which is deeply permeated into British landscape and literature, *Yggdrasil* – the World Tree – was the dwelling place of the gods, while the land of the dead clung to its deep dark roots. J.R.R. Tolkien famously drew on these Northern European myths when he created the 'Ents' of Middle Earth – a fabulous (but somehow easily believable) fusion between treekind and mankind, oaks and willows that walk and talk like us. Even now, coming across a gnarled and knobby tree deep in the woods, it is easy to imagine 'Treebeard' stirring to life amongst the leaves.

When we walk into a woodland we open a door into a world of stories, a place of myth and mystery. Here we can leave the orderliness of lives and step into treetime. From my own experiences as a storyteller, something magical happens while telling tales amongst the trees. The atmosphere of the woods feeds the creativity of the storyteller and the listeners are able to let their own imaginations merge with the sensory richness of the setting. Often the living, breathing forest itself takes part in the storytelling: a crow caws loudly above; a leaf drifts down slowly in front of us; a twig snaps from somewhere else in the forest. Serendipitous moments that are woven into the thread of narrative, summoned into being by the story itself. 🌿

Host a Tree Party

Celebrate special trees by telling stories under them or hosting your own 'Tree Party'. The Woodland Trust is giving away Tree Party boxes full of fun activities! They'll be sent out after June 27. Sign up for yours at woodlandtrust.org.uk/treeparty



Whispering Woods dazzle the audience with their magical performances.

Being in a woodland evokes strong emotions in people. **Nina Brambrey** pours these feelings into her performances.

THEATRE OF THE FOREST

Do you remember finding yourself in the forest on certain nights where there is an intangible sense of magic around? One of those evenings in summer when the air is cool and the sky cloudy, when the trees have something to say. Listen and perhaps you can hear the call of trumpets and laughter bubbling amongst the leaves.

I remember precious evenings like this, full of magic, sensing a playful excitement deep in my belly, and that feeling then taking me with a hop, skip and a taste for adventure into a feeling of enchantment. I wanted to go deeper into that feeling and make it last longer, but all too quickly I found myself back in the ordinary world.

Forests lend themselves well to folktale narratives; many favourite childhood tales such as *Little Red Ridinghood* or *Rapunzel* are set in woods perhaps partly because of our ancestral past where much of Northern Europe was wooded, but also because of the rich language which trees provide, and the way woods stir our imagination. Someone once said to me that forests are 'both alive and rotting at the same time': new growth emerging from the decomposition of what

was once alive and networks of birds, rodents and creepy crawlies which are supported by this.

This cycle of life, death and rebirth has informed much of the work I have done with the Whispering Woods, a performance group of aerialists, musicians and storytellers that create one-off shows out in the landscape. Our stories are of initiation and transformation, the paradox of finding one's uniqueness and one's connection to life. To do so, our protagonists often make a descent into darkness in order to emerge renewed and empowered.

Whispering Woods uses performance to take us on such a journey through the woods themselves, from innocence, through darkness or struggle into a place of greater maturity or wisdom. The story echoes Joseph Campbell's hero's journey and traditional rites of initiation where young men are often taken from the safety of the village to perform difficult tasks in order to return as a full adult member of the tribe.

Telling these tales is important medicine in our times. These stories also connect us with the cycles of the seasons: the dark descent of vegetation in the winter months and renewal in the spring. Woodland theatre is a wonderful way of providing something exciting and heart opening to those of all ages. The use of aerial in the performance offers something outside of our everyday, drawing us further into the emotional landscape of the character as well as providing an element of spectacle. It is quite breathtaking to watch aerial performances amongst ancient trees: such power and grace through the light and dark of the leaves, in and out of the fairy kingdom. 🌿



INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 1760

In the Industrial Revolution, wood starts to be replaced by metal, brick and steel as Britain's main building material, and by coal as its principal fuel. Copses of hazel and sweet chestnut start to be neglected. Workers leave the land for the cities, while native woods and forests begin to recede from British life and memory.



ENCLOSURE ACTS 1773-1882

A legal process in English Parliament begins enclosing small landholdings and commons to create larger farms. Land – including woodland – becomes restricted to the owner and is no longer available for communal use. In England and Wales this process ends an ancient system of agriculture, becoming a widespread feature of the English landscape.



JOHN CLARE 1793-1864

The most important poet of the English landscape is born in Helpston, Northamptonshire, and raised as an agricultural labourer. His genius is recording the minutiae of English nature, rural life and the emotional impact that Enclosure had, transforming the landscape and sweeping away centuries of traditional custom.

Nina Brambrey is founder of Whispering Woods who create performances in woodlands using circus acrobatics, live music and narrative to weave a transporting journey for the audience amongst the trees.

Sian Atkinson is a senior conservation advisor at the Woodland Trust.

Sian Atkinson went for a walk one morning and discovered an ancient woodland at the end of her street.

ANCIENT WOODS

At the end of my street is an ancient wood. It isn't officially recorded as such because it is too small, but from looking at old maps, and from the nature of the wood itself, I am pretty certain it has been there for hundreds of years.

To many of my neighbours it is an unremarkable, rather down-at-heel patch of boggy land with a few scruffy trees, often waterlogged, a bit untidy, a dumping ground for garden rubbish. But in spring it lifts my spirits as it bursts into colourful life, with bluebells on the drier patches and the bold yellow blooms of marsh marigold in the wet zones beneath twisted, elderly alder trees.

This little acre of wet woodland is soggy enough to have escaped both the plough and house builders – not an unusual story; ancient woods have tended to survive over centuries either because they were too useful to be destroyed, or because the land they stood on was no use for anything else. But most of the people who walk past my wood every day have no idea of its value.

Ancient woods are those that have survived continuously since at least medieval times, with a threshold date of 1600 (1750 in Scotland) used for the practical purpose of identifying them on a map. The concept of ancient woodland first arose in the second half of the twentieth century, when it was recognised that woods with this long continuity were generally richer in biodiversity than more recent woods.

Over hundreds of years, complex communities of animals and plants have had time to develop. Some of these are specialists, species that are more likely to be found in ancient woodland than anywhere else because they need the particular conditions these habitats provide, such as the relative lack of disturbance, including in the soils. Only around 2 per cent of the UK is now covered with ancient woodland, and if this disappears it will be lost forever. You simply could not recreate the ancient woods we have now.

Over time, the woodland that once covered large areas of the UK has been cleared for farming, and for other land uses. Our remaining ancient woods are mostly small and fragmented, making vulnerable species more prone to local



Colin Varndell's photograph of a veteran oak in Powerstock, Dorset, a direct descendant of wildwood.

extinction. Increased isolation of small ancient woods within a relatively hostile landscape makes it more difficult for species to move and adapt in response to environmental change. Many have been planted with non-native conifers that have a detrimental effect on their wildlife value, others are deteriorating because the traditional management that shaped them has lapsed, and because of a wide range of pressures from pollution to deer grazing and browsing.

Increasingly people are recognising the importance of the natural environment, of habitats and the species they support, to underpin everything we need, from production of food to clean air and water. Ancient woods are key to this, the reservoirs of biodiversity from which we can begin to restore degraded ecosystems.

As well as being beautiful and rich in wildlife,

ancient woods are therefore essential for our own quality of life, now and in the future. Not just big or well-known areas like the Forest of Dean or the New Forest, but the little scraps of an acre or less, like my own local wood, the bits that are more vulnerable, but, because they are right there on our doorsteps, are more relevant and meaningful for those who take the time and trouble to get under their skin and discover their secrets. 🌿

Share your ancient tree story

Have you experienced the natural wonder of an ancient wood? Or do you know of an ancient wood that's been lost or is under threat? Share your story and ensure that the value of ancient woods is reflected and protected in the Tree Charter: treecharter.uk/share-your-story

in Scotland, the ancient ash pollards of the Lake District and Cotswolds, the ancient oak, hawthorn, holly and beech medieval Royal Forests and deer parks, the ancient yew forests of the chalk.

Ancient and veteran trees and their associated wildlife may be regarded as indicators of old growth, providing the structure and host species found normally in old primary forest. Concentrations of ancient and other veteran trees where there has been long continuity of these structures reaching into the past are therefore of special biodiversity value.

Recording special trees is nothing new. The first written records of some of the largest trees are described in John Evelyn's *Sylva or Discourse of Forest Trees* written in 1662. A few of the trees he cites such as the ancient yew in Selborne churchyard still exist, albeit now no longer alive.

In 2085, only seventy years away, it will be the millennium anniversary of the Domesday Book, the great survey that William the Conqueror undertook, and from which we are able to glimpse the landscape of the time. We still have the potential to protect and restore the remnants

of this outstanding medieval landscape across the whole of the UK. A rich, historic, beautiful ancient treescape unlike any other country in Europe. Nowhere else has such abundance of ancient trees in medieval Royal Forests and deer parks, ancient commons, hedgerows and upland wood pastures and the interest in rare breed stock and large wild herbivores to graze and maintain them. We can all play our part in conserving this special landscape, ensuring that its veteran, notable and ancient trees continue to be valued. 🌿

Join the Ancient Tree Hunt

The Ancient Tree Inventory, a database of ancient trees around the UK, is still growing every year because people are becoming citizen scientists, helping to locate and record ancient trees in their local area. Why not use the map to organise an ancient tree walk in your area? You could also help conserve a local ancient tree or woodland by listing any that have not yet been recorded. To find out more about the Ancient Tree Inventory visit: ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk



TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS 1834

In 1834 six agricultural labourers gather under a Dorset sycamore tree to form the first Trade Unions in Britain, bargaining for better pay and working conditions.



THOMAS HARDY 1840-1928

"Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat."

With its title borrowed from Shakespeare's 'As You Like It', Thomas Hardy published 'Under the Greenwood Tree' in 1872. It was the first of his 'Wessex Novels', which also included 'The Woodlanders' published in 1887.

FOLK WOOD - OAK

The King of the Forest, oak is associated with masculine deities such as Zeus and Thor. It is a symbol of courage, durability and strength (as in 'hearts of oak'), and in stories represents a doorway into the secret heart of the forest.

Jill Butler campaigns for ancient trees on behalf of the partnership between the Woodland Trust and the Ancient Tree Forum.

Jill Butler tells us about a tree mapping project that is helping conserve our oldest trees.

A MAP FOR ANCIENT TREES

Tree lives are usually much longer than human life spans and for some species can be measured in millennia, therefore their ancient characteristics cannot be replaced other than over very long timescales. They are extraordinary living, mega-organisms in their own right but they also uniquely embody a wealth of other values – biodiversity, heritage, landscape and culture. Ancient and other special trees are challenging our concepts of ecology, biology, history, management, distribution and how to develop resilient landscapes.

Ancient trees define our most charismatic treescapes, such as the Caledonian pine forests

MERRYN GILLBARD FROM CORNWALL SHARES HER TREE STORY:

"I was a bit fearless as a child, and I remember climbing up our really tall tree in the garden with my dad. We went up really really high and my poor mum was down on the ground fretting about me falling while me and my dad just laughed at her for worrying (sorry mum!). I spent many moments of my childhood in that tree. It was free and harmless fun. I was devastated when my dad cut it down but at least he did replace it with an orchard."

Share your tree story: treecharter.uk/share-your-story

Jack Cooke asks why adults don't climb trees and reminds us why they should.

THE ART OF CLIMBING TREES

'Get down from there this minute!'

So said a thousand mothers to a thousand sons and daughters. As children we never listened, scurrying out of sight along a high branch or disappearing into the undergrowth.

Why don't adults climb trees? This question is all the more poignant in light of the recent study by the University of North Florida, which demonstrated that tree-climbing can actually improve our working memory. That fail-safe expression – 'I've got better things to do' – is the common excuse. Our imagination shrinks as we get older and the instinct to explore is diminished. It takes dedicated immaturity to fight back and climbing trees is a great beginning.

If we return to the branches, another world awaits us. High in the crown of a beech, oak or cedar, we take a step back from the twenty-first century. By ascending we enact a form of time travel, climbing into a space that is ruled by an arboreal clock. Nowhere is this escape more keenly felt than in the heart of a modern city.

The urban environment can be a deeply alienating place. Everything is in constant motion and vying for space. In a landscape of tarmac and tower blocks, daily interactions with nature are limited; the shadow of a fox behind a dustbin or mice skipping along rail lines. Yet every city tree is its own floating metropolis, insect, animal and bird life co-existing in a maze of branches. From the less shy occupants – squirrels and pigeons – to the rarely observed – colonies of beetles and bark-hugging ants – trees play host to myriad wildlife. If we spend long enough aloft we become invisible by degrees, bird and beast returning to the branches around us.

Climbing is a way of bridging two worlds and can have a profound impact on our human psyche. Finding the courage to reach for the first branch liberates the escapist lurking in all of us. By removing ourselves ten or twenty feet above the street, we break the constrictions of routine and habit. Tree-tops provide a rare space in which to reflect, and five minutes alone in the canopy is enough to change your outlook. So the next time you find yourself rushing from A to B, pause for a moment and look up. A thousand green towers await your ascent. 🌿

Jack's climbing tips

The best trees to climb are those with strong, load-bearing branches. But not ancient or veteran trees which you wouldn't want to accidentally damage because they're so rare and special in our landscape. Watch out for rotten branches, too. And just remember that you're not a cat so don't climb too high, and as you're going up start thinking about the best route down.



POOH STICKS 1928

The game of Pooh sticks, played on a bridge over running water, was invented by AA Milne in his famous book *The House at Pooh Corner*. Each player drops a stick upstream of the bridge and the owner of the first stick to appear on the other side is the winner. World Poohsticks Championships are now played annually on the River Thames at Day's Lock in Oxfordshire.



LORD OF THE RINGS 1937-1949

In Tolkien's *The Two Towers*, the peaceful Ents, a race of tree-like beings rise up to fight Saruman at Isengard. Tolkien's inspiration for the Ents is rumoured to have been a group of beech trees at Avebury. The tree roots snake across the chalky banks, creating a magical image.

Barry Falls is an illustrator living in Belfast, Northern Ireland. His work is an exploration of hand-drawn marks, textures and imperfect repetition, inspired by the tiny details half-remembered from everyday life.

Jack Cooke is an author and explorer. His first book, *The Tree Climber's Guide*, is out now with Harper Collins.



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.



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.

Tobias Jones is a best-selling writer of novels and non-fiction. His most recent book, *A Place of Refuge*, tells the story of Windsor Hill Wood in Somerset, a working woodland which he founded for people who are experiencing bereavement, addiction, separation, depression or homelessness.

Simon Pemberton's studio overlooks London Fields, where he makes his living as an illustrator and created a wonderful series of paintings based on Epping Forest.

Tobias Jones knows from experience just how much woodlands can help people through difficult times.

LIGHT IN THE DARK WOOD

In July 2015, I was walking in a mature woodland on the steep valleys outside Hebden Bridge. You could hear the river Calder as it smashed through the rocky gullies and under cobbled bridges. I was walking to ponder the impending death of someone very close to me. As I shuffled amongst the giant beeches and oaks, I saw a small, neat sign which explained the importance of leaving fallen timber in place: 'In a healthy woodland', it said, 'you should be able to see deadwood from wherever you're standing.'

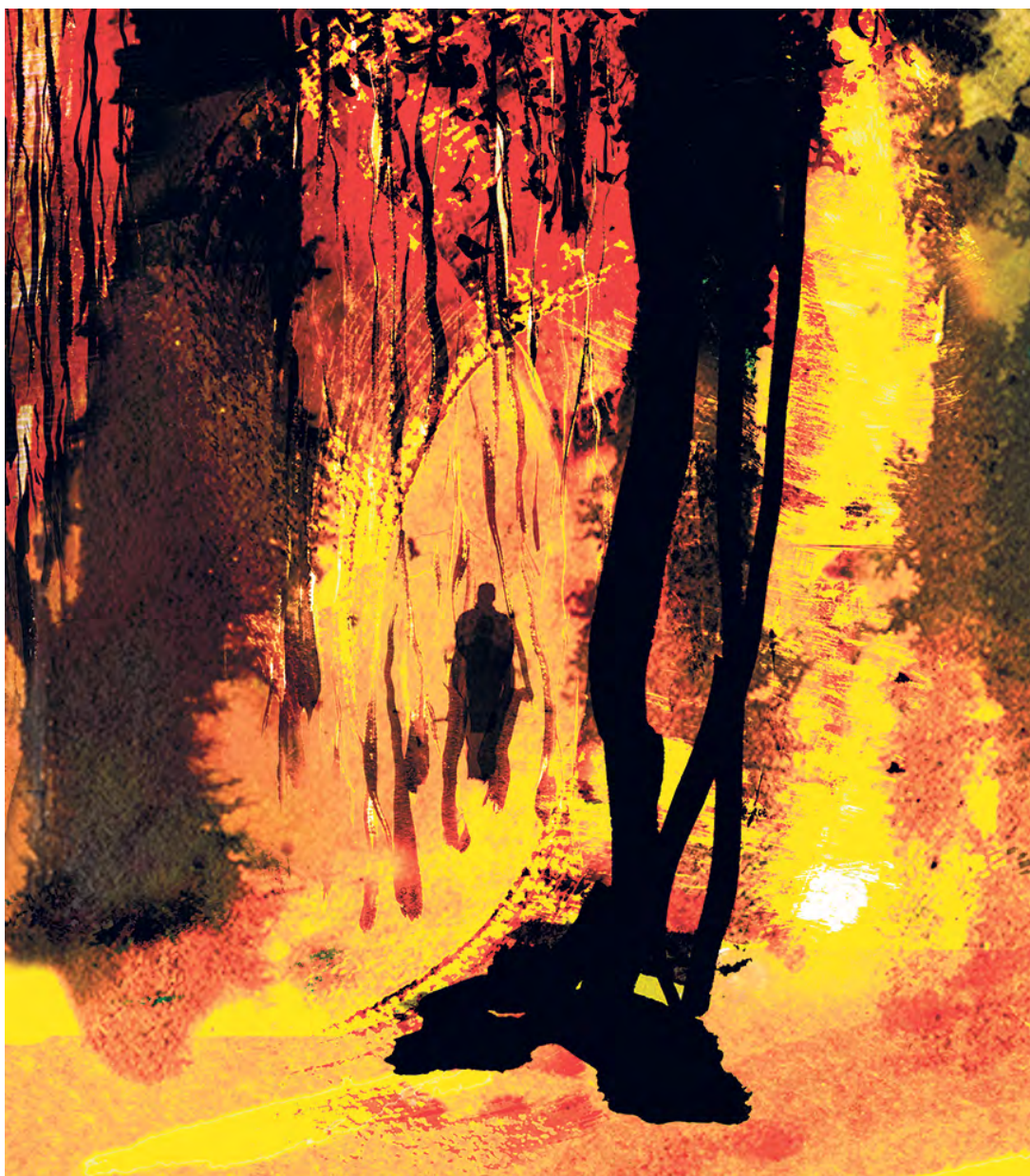
It was one of those strange moments in which unrelated words seemed to speak precisely to my own situation. I was considering the demise of my mother, far too young and fit to be buried; and there, in a neutral, educational rectangle, was advice that, in sylvan spaces, health depends not on taking away the dead, but allowing them to be seen from where they fall, leaving them to release vital spores for the invigoration of their descendants.

Those strange moments of sudden insight and understanding happen more often, it seems, under the canopy of trees. John Stewart Collis, in his lyrical book *The Worm Forgives the Plough*, with a chapter about coppicing in Dorset during World War Two, advised those young men and women who were 'ambitious only for peace and sanity' to 'learn the craft of forestry, enter the woods, and happiness may yet be yours.' What we nowadays call mental illness has, in the past, been given other names: shell-shock, melancholy, hysteria or insanity, amongst many others. But throughout mental turmoil in human history, woodlands have always been offered as a place of succour and serenity, providing what Edward Thomas called 'simply an uplifting of the heart'. In a much more recent book, Robert Penn spoke of how working in a woodland 'whittled away' at his grief at his father's death.

Within mental health circles, some scoff at the sudden appearance of endless new disorders which categorise unease and disease, but one of the most convincing (and also obvious) of recent times is 'Nature Deficit Disorder'. It's the idea that our alienation from the natural world creates everything from depression to behavioural disorders. Many would argue that such healing happens anywhere within nature or, as those of a religious bent have it, within Creation. But those of us who make a part of our living through working a woodland believe that it's particularly trees which soothe, heal and make whole. It's telling, for example, that Richard Louv, who coined the label Nature Deficit Disorder, spoke of woods in his title: *Last Child in the Woods*. It's woodlands, more than moors or mountains, which offer us mortals repose and rapture.

It's hard to know why that's the case. Certainly there's a primeval pull towards the shelter they offer: shaded in summer, protected (albeit dangerous) in high winds, they absorb if not solve flood issues, they're surprisingly dry in rain and, of course, warm us when cut and burned. Within myth, the wild woodland has been a place of outlaws and adventurers, the place where outsiders gathered because they were well-hidden or simply exiled: think Iron Hans, Grimms' most intriguing man of the dark forests. There's something counter-cultural amongst trees, however cultural you are.

Until the frantic enclosures of the sixteenth and



Simon Pemberton's artworks explore the transformative power of the light and textures of Epping Forest.

seventeenth centuries, the English forests provided commoners with immediate access to their 'bote': the timber necessary to repair houses or ploughs. Some of the loveliest lost words of the English language – 'affuage' and 'estovers' – described rights we used to have to forage for firewood. Take away that connection to such ancient and extraordinarily generous woodlands, and it's not surprising an epidemic of depression ensues. We're now self-congratulatory about the access commoners have to forests and woodlands; we

'Those of us who make a part of our living through working a woodland believe that it's particularly trees which soothe, heal and make whole.'

proudly boast about the great walks the public can enjoy within sylvan glades. But the vast majority of us still have to go to Travis Perkins or Mole Valley for our timber and that isn't, I suspect, so good for the soul.

The age and longevity of woodlands also put into perspective our mundane concerns. They encourage us to forget about the worries of today. We're diminished in woodlands by the might of the trunks, examples of both rigidity and flexibility. They're not places of quick returns. The length of time between planting and productivity – of fruit, or firewood, lumber, syrup or nuts – is long, and means that the woodland is a place you

can keep coming back to. If you have set aside some firewood, the value of your stock is safe for no-one can really steal it, and it won't crash or, certainly, make you rich. It's simply a solid, reliable investment of your muscles, and there are ever fewer of those in our slippery, virtual world. Help someone plant a hundred whips in a day and it's simply inevitable that they'll feel a whole lot better about themselves, discovering in their own way the truism that the meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you will never sit.

The aesthetic of sylvan spaces, too, are breathtaking: the minute red flower of the spindle tree which drops ecstatic orange seeds; the scarlet elf cups which speckle the woodland floor in January if you've left sufficient deadwood visible; that brown rice on the beech trees before the leaves unfold; the witch's claws of the ash, the winter catkins on the hazel – it's hardly surprising that we should be uplifted here. Which isn't to say the woodland is a serene or always relaxing place: part of the attraction is that it's sometimes frightening. There are loud noises, especially after dark. Branches creak and groan. A woodpecker will machine-gun a trunk or a fox slay your flock. It's unsettling, as well as warming. Our woodland is unnerving, perhaps, because it's a brownfield site, and there are long, dripping railway tunnels, abandoned buildings and rubble. There's a sense of the post-apocalyptic out here, as if civilisation has really retreated. But it's also unnerving because our subconscious associates woodlands with danger. Many fairytales begin with the command not to leave the safe path, and when an innocent loses themselves in this dark space they meet strangers and deep lakes which change their lives.

So part of the curative effect of being in a woodland isn't that it's a safe place of succour, but actually that it brings to the surface our innermost fears. 🌿

What did Patrick Barkham discover when he and his son visited a Forest School in Norwich?

THE FOREST WAY

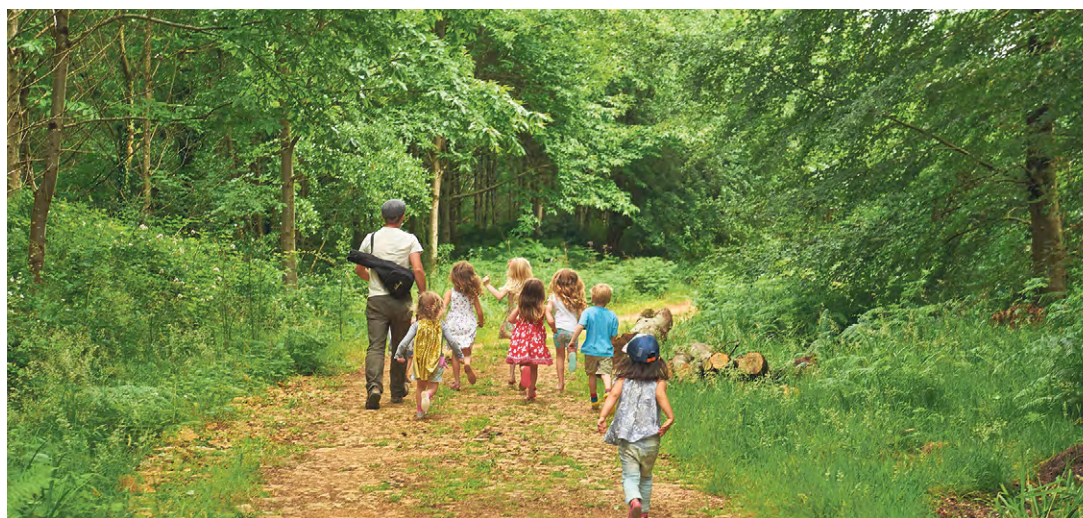
A waft of woodsmoke rises on the summer breeze in a tranquil meadow as Emma Harwood claps her hands and sings a song. Suddenly, the fifteen children of Dandelion Forest School and Enquiry Led Nursery spill onto the scene from all directions: bursting from dens in the hedge and jumping off a home-made swing under a birch tree. I am here with my two-year-old, Ted.

Forest Schools are an increasingly popular concept, and for some they conjure hippyish images of children roaming wild and climbing hazardous trees. The reality is very different. Forest Schools challenge conventional schooling and are far more radical than we might think.

Forest Schools are the result of more than 100 years of debate over how our increasingly sedentary, indoor society ill-suits the development of happy, healthy children. Influences include the Woodcraft Folk, Robert Baden-Powell's scouts and the outdoor nurseries of Margaret McMillan, who said: 'The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky.' The modern movement in Britain was ignited by Bridgewater College, which set up the first Forest School in Somerset in 1993 after visiting Danish nurseries run according to the principles of *friluftsliv* ('open air life'). Since then, a charity, The Forest School Association, has helped 12,000 teachers and other professionals undertake Forest School training. Indeed, many orthodox primary schools now have 'forest school' status, typically giving pupils one woodland learning experience each week.

Some nurseries, however, are more ambitious. Dandelion, which opened in 2014, is entirely open-air and off-grid. Its half-acre site has an open fire, composting toilets, vegetable beds, an orchard and trees – hazel, oak, willow, field maple. On a gloriously sunny day, the cosy yurt, with a woodburner for cold, wet weather, stands empty. 'Mostly it's not used,' says Emma Harwood, one of two experienced teachers who quit conventional primary school education to run Dandelion. 'Obviously children can ask to go in it at any time but as long as they are dry and warm everybody wants to stay outside.'

This simple act is revolutionary. When I visit



Outdoor classrooms can enrich the curriculum with learning inspired by the seasons and local landscapes.

my four-year-old twins' excellent conventional nursery, its toy-filled interior is hectic. Dandelion is full of extremely busy children – a Scottish study found activity levels 2.2 times higher during a Forest School day than during a school day that included PE lessons – and yet does not have a frenzied feel.

'All your senses are stimulated outside and I'm sure that the children are calmer,' says Harwood. 'They use up so much energy outside and they're not looking at fast-moving images on screens.'

'Forest Schools are far more radical than we might think.'

We start the day with eggy bread and a story around the fire. The children sit quietly and ask – and answer – sharp questions. Then everyone scatters to play, and a bigger boy shows Ted how to feed goose-grass to the guinea pigs.

'It's hands-on learning. It's learning through all of your senses and through nature – you don't need to look at a book to learn about life cycles or decay,' says Hayley Staniforth-Room, another teacher.

There's a rustle. 'Arrrhhh,' shouts a small boy in the bushes, 'I'm stuck.' Emma moves into the bushes to guide him but does not simply lift him down: they have a rule – no lifting, so the children work out how high to go and how to get down.

Another big element of Forest Schools is learning about different woods – the strength and usefulness of hazel, for instance – and using tools

to make things. Dandelion has magnifying glasses, a children's microscope and binoculars but almost no plastic toys. 'If you want to build a farm,' says Emma, 'you find wood to build it.'

A four-year-old comes up, proudly, to show us the bird box he has just made. 'We use saws and drills and hammers and parents tend to panic at first,' says Emma, 'but you're teaching children to use tools as tools.'

There are no electronic devices here. But when Ofsted inspected Ashdon Forest School in Saffron Waldon, Essex they judged it 'good' but withheld an 'outstanding' rating because children had too few opportunities 'turning on and operating information and communication technology equipment'. Hopefully this attitude is changing: Forest Kindergarten in Sevenoaks – set within a National Trust woodland – was rated 'outstanding' in 2014, providing cameras and torches.

I'm not sure we need to 'teach' our children to use screens – I live in a tablet-free household but have seen how quickly my children pick up and use tablets. Nevertheless, will Forest Schools help children thrive in a world governed by technology?

Most scientific studies examining the benefits of outdoor learning focus on Forest Schools' positive impact on confidence and aptitude for learning but there is also anecdotal evidence that they aid numeracy and literacy.

I'm very struck by the Dandelion pupils' awareness of their fellow species, from earthworms and earwigs to the bug-filled old blackbird's nest which one boy has brought in. As Emma Harwood puts it, 'If you're not used to looking after worms and caterpillars, you're not going to take care of the world.'



WHOMPING WILLOW 1998

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets is published in 1998 in the UK. In this volume, Harry and Ron accidentally crash their flying car into the Whomping Willow. The tree is a very violent magical plant which uses its branches as arms to attack anything that comes within its range.



SELL THE FOREST! 2010

The Conservative Government announces proposals to sell the Public Forest Estate, including ancient woodland, into private hands. A twenty-first century revolt ensues: over half a million people sign one online petition alone, and in 2011 the Government abandons the plan.



TREE CHARTER 2015

In summer 2015 the Woodland Trust invited organisations from across the conservation, environmental, business and social sectors to join a call for a new Charter for Trees, Woods and People. Over 50 responded and are supporting a shared ambition to put trees back at the heart of our lives, communities and decision making – where they belong.

John Angus is an artist, researcher, and curator. He is director of Storey G2, an organisation based in north-west England which commissions artists and communities in Lancaster to explore the connections between local and global social issues.

John Angus reports on a community map-making project in Lancaster exploring woodland ownership.

FREEMAN'S WOOD

There is a plot of land on the edge of Lancaster, known as Freeman's Wood, where the interests of the local community have collided with those of global capital. The land has been used by local people for decades, and they have regarded it as common land. But in 2012 fencing enclosed Freeman's Wood, resulting in public distress and unrest reported in the local press.

At Storey G2, an arts organisation in Lancaster, we invited a group of artists to investigate what was going on, exploring what land-ownership issues were behind it all, and to research the social effects this enclosure was having in the community. We asked each artist to produce work to communicate what they discovered.



Layla Curtis recording local stories for the map.

The artists were Layla Curtis, Goldin+Senneby and Sans Facon. We wanted the the story of Freeman's Wood to reach a large audience, so we asked these artists to produce artworks in forms suitable for distribution on the internet, rather than objects for display in a gallery.

Layla Curtis, for example, produced a map which can be used on a mobile phone. This app, called 'Trespass', tells the story of Freeman's Wood from the perspective of people who have used it

in the local area. Layla held conversations with local people about their personal memories of the site and their speculations on its future. In these interviews, members of the local community gave their responses to the landowner's recent erection of a metal fence around Freeman's Wood, along with accounts of how this, and the accompanying 'Keep Out, No Trespassing' signs, have affected the way the space is now used and accessed. Memories and accounts of how this land has been used as a recreational space over recent decades are intertwined with discussions of wider issues of land ownership and common land.

The audio tracks on this app are compilations of several conversations and they form a lasting document of the local community's long relationship with this piece of land. Even if this land is developed in the future, and is changed beyond all current recognition, Layla has created a map which captures these stories forever.

In Britain about 69% of the land is owned by 0.6% of the population. In 2014, the newspaper columnist Ferdinand Mount wrote: 'In this case, the elephant is the room. There can be few enormous subjects more often dodged than land ownership. It is the great ignored in politics today.'

Radiohead bassplayer, Colin Greenwood, shares his songs of the summer

SOUNDS FROM GREENWOOD



ROCKAWAY BEACH
by The Ramones

SUMMERTIME
by Nina Simone

DOWN BY THE SEASIDE
by Led Zeppelin

DAYS
by The Kinks

THE SWIMMING SONG
by Kate & Anna McGarrigle

SURFIN' USA
by Beach Boys

THE LARK ASCENDING
by Vaughn Williams
Performed by Iona Brown,
conducted by Neville Mariner
at St Martin in the Fields.

HARVEST MOON
by Neil Young



A WILD HARVEST

Elderflower Cordial

Vegan, easy, yields
about 1.5 litres

25 large elderflower sprays
(remove flowers from stems
using scissors or a fork)

3 unwaxed lemons
(zest and juice)

400g brown sugar

600g white sugar

15g citric acid
(or another lemon)

1.5 litres of water

Combine flowers and
zest in a large bowl.

Boil the water in a saucepan.
Then remove from heat,
add sugar, stir until
fully dissolved.

Allow to cool for 10 minutes.

Pour syrup over flowers and
zest. Stir. Add lemon juice
(and citric acid if you
are using it).

Leave covered for 24 hours.
Strain the syrup through
scalded muslin cloth into
sterilised containers. Seal, label
and be sure to share with
friends!



Bees need pollen and nectar-rich flowers throughout their nesting season (March to late-September), and the blossom from trees provides essential early food for honey bees and bumblebees. Bees also use flowers beneath the trees or around the edges of orchards and woods. For the past three years, the artist-poet Alec Finlay has celebrated this relationship by creating beehives engraved with texts, either inspired by bee lore, apiculture or poetry. They are ideal bee homes in community orchards and woods. Beekeepers or community groups interested in working with Alec can contact his studio at alecfinlay.com

Forager and writer Concepta Cassar scours the woods and hedgerows in search of a seasonal feast.

THE FLAVOUR OF SUMMER

'What are all the oranges imported into England to the hips and haws in her hedges?' asked Henry David Thoreau writing in the middle of the nineteenth century. His question lingers into the twenty-first century, especially as spring yawns into summer and the last of May's heady hawthorn blossom gives way to the first sweet sprays of elderflower.

There is no better time to get to know your local hedgerow and the plants, bees and other wildlife held within. Though communities may no longer need to supplement their diets with the riches of our fields, hedgerows and woodland edges, there is a great deal of sustenance that foraging can provide both the heart and the mind. There are few greater joys than setting out on a sunny morning together to explore common ground, united in search of the trappings of a wild feast that you have found and prepared for yourselves. It is discovering what Roger Deakin once described as 'the pleasure, all too rare now in England, of eating food in its natural place'.

To name something is to know it, and to cherish it in making it distinct. Where some will only see a hedgerow, others will see ash trees, oaks and hawthorn, a tree which others yet still may call 'quick' – there may be dog roses, ivy, elder, or even hops – the bases might be strewn with nettles or cow parsley, orchids or bluebells. Each hedgerow in each town, village (and sometimes city, where they remain!), will maintain characteristics particular to that area. Each plant you learn how to name is a celebration of that.

An easy plant for people of all ages to learn how to identify is elder, given its tell-tale scent – though obviously be sure to use a good field guide before you tuck into your first wild feast!

Elderflower cordial isn't just a delicious drink, it is also a versatile ingredient that can be used to make all sorts of different dishes: from summer cocktails to Turkish delight. A bit of brown sugar gives the cordial a pleasing caramel edge, however, feel free to use white sugar alone if you don't have any. Be sure to pick on a sunny morning, and remove any bees or bugs by hand rather than washing the flowers! 🌿



BEES

by Carol Ann Duffy

Here are my bees,
brazen, blurs on paper,
besotted; buzzwords, dancing
their flawless, airy maps

Been deep, my poet bees,
in the parts of flowers,
in daffodil, thistle, rose, even
the golden lotus; so glide,
gilded, glad, golden, thus –

wise – and know us:
how your scent pervades
my shadowed, busy heart,
and honey is art.



© Carol Ann Duffy
Published by Picador in *The Bees* by Carol Ann Duffy

WHAT'S YOUR TREE STORY?

SARAH GREEN FROM SALISBURY SHARES HER TREE STORY:

"Have been through some of the most stressful events life can throw at you but just being able to look out of my window at trees helped to relieve my stress and saved my life. In every way trees are the lungs of the world. Without trees there is no us."

Share your tree story: treecharter.uk/share-your-story

Journey into the fabled forest with a new story by the writer and illustrator Jackie Morris.

HEARTWOOD

As he followed the girl deep into the heartland of the forest their voices became hushed, as if the leaves drowned their sound. Now and again a light breeze would blow through the canopy where tops of the trees met the open sky.

He asked, 'Do you live here?'

She answered, 'Yes'.

'In the forest?'

'At Mounsey Castle.'

'You live in a castle?' He imagined something from old tales of knights and dragons.

She laughed.

'You are from the sea. I can smell the salt on you.'

'Have you ever been there?' he asked.

'I live in the forest,' was her reply.

Trees thickened. So tall. He had never really looked at trees before. Where he lived the salt winds stunted and twisted and wove the trees. You could tell the way the wind blew by how trees grew. Even old trees were short of growth. Here they towered above.

'Don't you long for open space?' he asked.

'There are clearings,' she said, 'but no. Not really. Listen.'

They stopped. Around them the forest seemed to glow. He could feel the sun, high in the sky now, although invisible to them because the leaf canopy was so thickened, the sun's light was softened by the huge weight of leaves. The air was so still he could hear a leaf fall, touch the earth.

'So many trees. They all look the same to me.'

'That's because you don't look,' she said. 'The trees would say the same of people. And I would say, so many trees and each one different, unique, and so much more besides.'

She smiled, crouched down, picked up a single



Jackie Morris' *Heartwood* story and artwork were inspired by characters dreamt up by two talented primary school children, Wilf and Hayden.

leaf from the ground.

'Here, holly, spiked, deep green, evergreen, bright berried, beautiful. It grows short. This one has come from that bush over there.'

'Here, oak, see the difference of pattern. This one too, oak, but even each leaf is different.'

'So many of these trees here are oak. Look up. See how the leaves pattern the sky.'

'Here, beech, smooth, slightly glossed, smells different from oak. Like tannin. Breathe it, know it. Name it.' She handed him the leaf.

'Here, hawthorn. Smaller than oak, red berried tree, planted by a song thrush.'

She passed each leaf to him and he traced its pattern with his fingers into his memory, learning the shape and the name and the sight and the scent. Now she would stop to show him each new thing and he began to see the wood through new eyes.

Read the whole story

This extract from Jackie Morris' story can be read in full at treecharter.uk/heartwood

Lucy Holland shares her memories of the special trees in her life.

MEMORY TREES

One of the things I've discovered working across Greater Manchester is just how often trees form the backdrop to pivotal moments in urban life. In fact, come to think of it, there are trees in the story of my own life.

To start with, there is that row of sycamores in the park where my dad taught me to ride my bike – when I could cycle without stabilisers from the first sycamore to the last, I got a prize of £5. There was another sycamore tree outside my parents' house, where I had my first kiss. And the cherry trees on the street where my parents still live. . . . When my sister and I were small, we would make Mum 'perfume' from the cherry blossom, and though she always accepted it with great enthusiasm I don't remember her ever wearing it! Then there is the hedgerow where my grandmother and I went blackberrying all the time – we'd always make jam with the berries afterwards, and the first time I ever made the jam without her there, I was so busy chatting to her on the phone that I burnt it all. Oops!

How can I forget the beech woodland where my husband and I used to go walking when we were saving up to buy a house and get married? We didn't have much spare cash to go on fancy dates so we started going walking together instead.



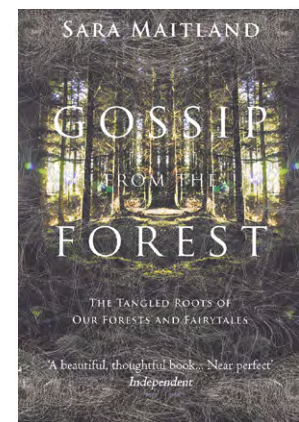
The artist Romy Blumel has also told the story of her city through personal encounters with trees.

Finally, with me as I write, there is the Japanese maple tree that my husband bought for my thirtieth birthday and the olive trees given to us as a wedding present. I don't have a garden so they live in pots in my back yard.

Heritage Trees

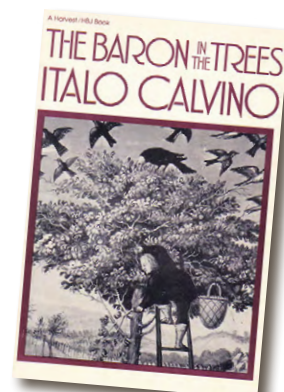
Lucy works for City of Trees, where she has started a new project to celebrate, record and protect trees in Greater Manchester. Find out more about the project at heritagetrees.org.uk

Classics from THE WOOD SHELF



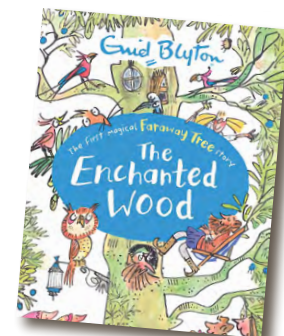
*GOSSIP FROM
THE FOREST*
by Sara Maitland
Published by Granta

Fairytales are one of our earliest and most vital cultural forms, and forests one of our most ancient landscapes. Both evoke a similar sensation in us – we find them beautiful and magical, but also spooky, sometimes horrifying. In this fascinating book, Sara Maitland argues that the forest and the fairytale are intimately connected.



THE BARON OF THE TREES
by Italo Calvino

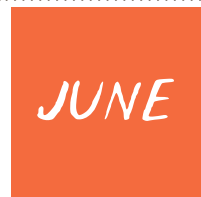
After refusing to eat a dinner of snails prepared by his sister, twelve-year-old Cosimo climbs up a tree and decides to spend the rest of his life living in an arboreal kingdom.



THE ENCHANTED WOOD
by Enid Blyton
Published by Hodder



Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People



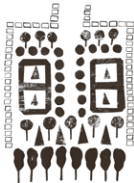
TREES, WOODS & THE GREEN MAN
COMMON GROUND
IMAGE BY BEN NICHOLSON



AN ALMANAC

ROYAL
HIGHLAND SHOW
23-26 June, Edinburgh
Scotland's annual
countryside showcase
at the Royal Highland
Showground.
royalhighlandshow.org

SUMMER
SOLSTICE
20 June



for Trees, Woods
and People

WOODFEST WALES
24-26 June, Wales
Traditional woodcraft
in Caerwys, North
Wales, with beautiful
and functional art,
sculptures, objects,
buildings and more.
woodfestwales.co.uk



Summer 2016

VETERAN TREES
22 June, Surrey
One-day training
course in valuing and
managing veteran trees,
Astead Common.
ancienttreeforum.co.uk

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



JOHN CLARE'S
BIRTHDAY
13 July
In 1793 the poet
John Clare was
born in Helpston,
Northamptonshire.

ANCIENT TREE
SUMMER
7-8 July
Ancient trees summer
event at Kingston
Maurward in Dorset.
ancienttreeforum.co.uk

TREE CARE CAMPAIGN
Until September 2016
Highlights the need for
better care for all trees
to ensure their survival
and increase the number
reaching maturity.
treecouncil.org.uk



MIDSUMMER
DAY
24 June

HOLLOW
All summer long, Bristol
Visit Katie Paterson's
new sculpture in the
Royal Fort, created from
10,000 different tree
species.
situations.org.uk



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celebration or find
out more about what's
happening near you.
treecharter.uk/events-calendar



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



LOVE PARKS WEEK
15-24 July
Thousands of park lovers
to join forces in the
UK's largest celebration
of green spaces.
loveparks.org

BIG
BUTTERFLY
COUNT
15 July - 7 August
Join Big Butterfly Count
in a woodland near you.
bigbutterflycount.org

SUMMER WOOD FAIR
16 July, Buckinghamshire
Discover the wonder
of woodlands at the
Summer Wood Fair in
Penn Wood.
woodlandtrust.org.uk

SWAN UPPING
18-22 July, Along the
River Thames
Traditional ceremony
dating from the 12th
century, starting at
Sunbury on Thames and
finishing at Abingdon
Bridge, Oxfordshire.

TREE STORIES
23 July, Dorset
Celebrate summer with
an evening of good
food, folklore and
tree stories with LEAF!
resident storyteller
Martin Maudsley
kingcombe.org

ARBOREAL LONG
DISTANCE WALK
31 July, London
An arboreal-themed walk
from Putney Bridge to
Twickenham, discovering
some of London's
'celebrity' trees.
ldwa.org.uk



WILDERNESS
FESTIVAL
4-7 August, Oxfordshire
Cultural spectacles
and Acadian celebration
at Cornbury Park.
wildernessfestival.com



GREEN MAN
FESTIVAL
18-21 August, Brecon
Music festival in the
wonderful Brecon Beacons
set amidst oak trees
greenman.net

SHAKESPEARE INTO
THE WOODS
14-19 August, London
A one-week course
exploring Shakespeare's
use of woodland setting
in his plays.
shakespearesglobe.com

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

FAIRY FESTIVAL
13-14 August, New Forest
Listen for the fairy
bells and watch for
gossamer wings at
Burley, in the enchanting
New Forest.

LEAF DYEING
16 August, Dorset
Join a 'Hapa
zome' workshop and
discover the natural
pigments of plants
at Thomas Hardy's
birthplace in Dorset.

PETER RABBIT IN
HATFIELD FOREST
7 August, Essex
Peter Rabbit & Benjamin
Bunny take on the perils
of Mr McGregor's garden,
with live music.
nationaltrust.org.uk/hatfield-forest/whats-on

CAUGHT BY THE
RIVER THAMES
6-7 August, London
Music, arts and books on
the banks of the river
Thames, Fulham Palace.
caughtbytheriver.com



FAMILY BUSHCRAFT
23 August, East Sussex
Join a family bushcraft
day at Brede High
Woods
sunrisebushcraft.com



SHARE YOUR
TREE STORY!
champions@treecharter.uk
treecharter.uk/share-your-story



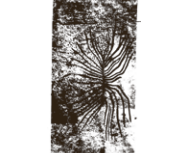
HARVEST
MOON
16 September

PARHAM HARVEST
FAIR
24-25 Sept, Sussex
Annual harvest festival
celebrating the produce
of the summer in
the surroundings of
Elizabethan Parham House
parhaminsussex.co.uk

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



THE MALVERN
AUTUMN SHOW
24-25 Sept,
Worcestershire
A celebration of food,
the countryside &
gardening at the Three
Counties Showground
threecounties.co.uk



COMMON
GROUND