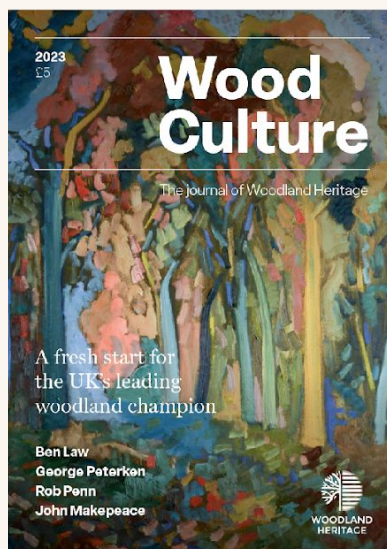


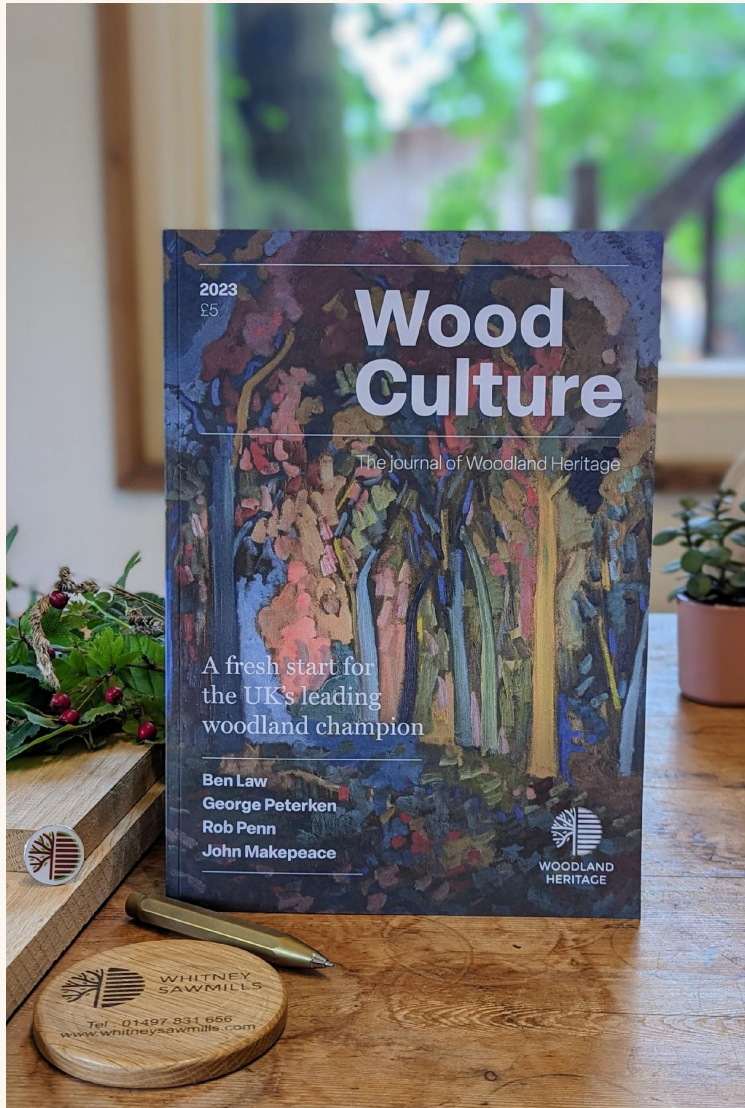


WOODLAND  
HERITAGE

# About

This beloved 100+ page coffee table style journal was redesigned and relaunched for 2023 and is taking a further leap forward in 2024.





The journal is thought-provoking and inspirational, covering every part of the timber supply chain.

So, if you love to read about forestry but want to know more about how timber is used, from seeds to sawdust, *Wood Culture* is for you.





# Coronation seat

Nick Wright



Photo: Leanne Punshon

British oak timber from Whitney Sawmills was used in the making of chairs for the Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort's Coronation at Westminster Abbey in May 2023.

Six alumni from across the Snowdon Summer School and Create programme came back to workshops at Highgrove to help with the construction of the furniture.

It was special that they've all gone on to have great jobs in different areas of making but brought back and shared the skills they've developed to help make the chairs.

As a maker myself I'm immensely proud to have made furniture for this historic event, and to make them with such a friendly and skilful team at Highgrove is truly unforgettable.

For my part, I am proud to have championed the use of British timber on this project, for all 100 chairs. I am always trying to ensure that our students leave for industry with a strong message about the benefits of British timber. It was nice on this project to lead by example.

I'm grateful to the Prince's Foundation for giving me the opportunity to make this project happen. To Dermot at Whitney Sawmills for supplying the British oak used and Grown in Britain for their certification and provenance of this wonderful material. Also, to photographer Leanne Punshon for capturing the making process with her wonderful pictures.

Above and opposite: Timber supplied for Coronation Chairs project for Snowdon School of Furniture / Create programme at Highgrove

Applications will soon be open for our next 16 week Create programme. Details can be found on The Prince's Foundation website.



## INTERVIEW

# I fought the law and the Law won!

**David Cracknell** meets woodland craftsman, coppicer, timber framer, charcoal burner and author Ben Law at his Sussex hide-out Prickly Nut Wood

I didn't expect to find Ben Law on his mobile attending the fuse box of a such a thoroughly modern piece of kit as a Wood Mizer mobile sawmill.

"Sorry, David, bear with me for a bit," he says as I approach. Ben is standing at the head of the dormant machine, tinkering at the fuse box with a screwdriver in one hand, mobile phone in the other. "I'm just on the line to the Wood Mizer help line!"

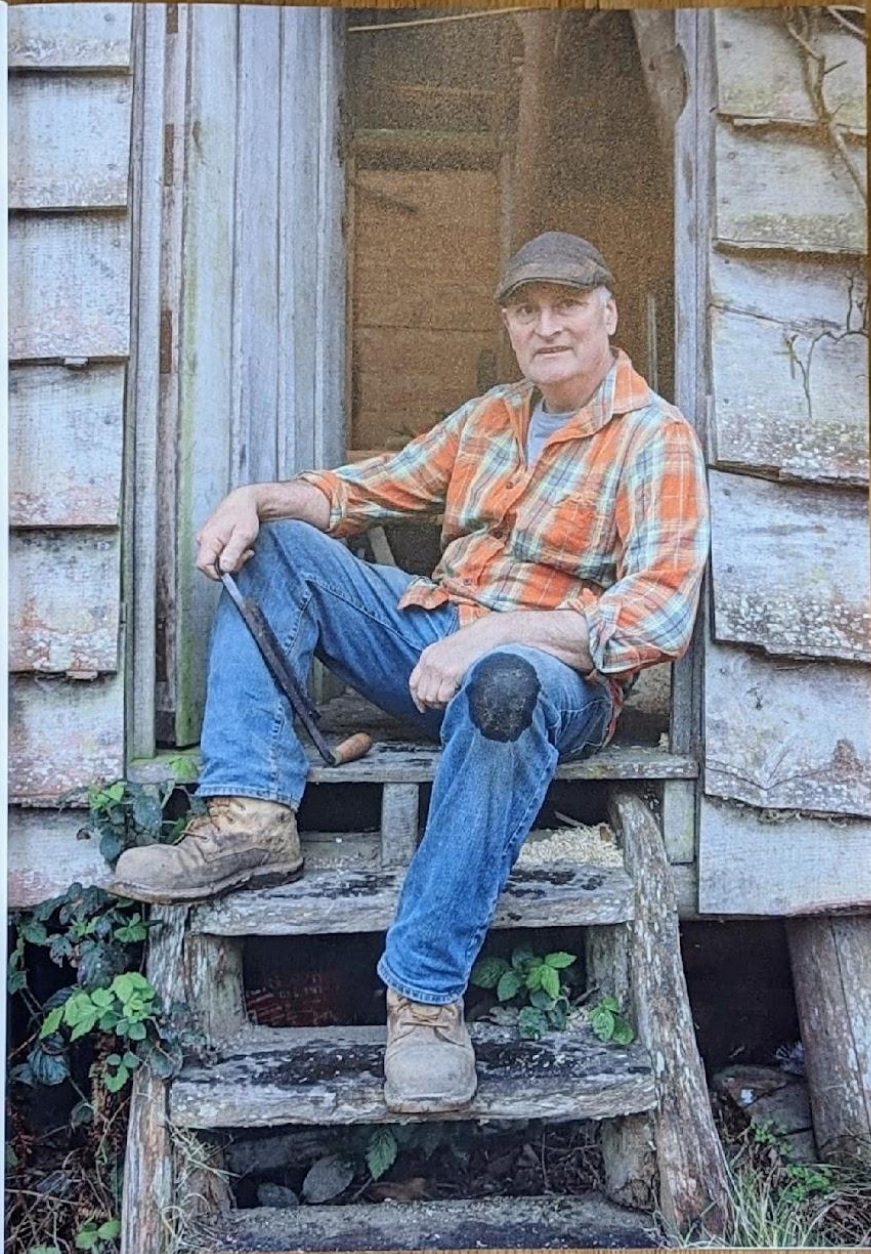
I take the opportunity to survey and nose around the small woodland clearing, its sheds with stacks of sweet chestnut poles and logs, and the thousands of roof shakes and shingles.

I approach the timber-framed house with a sense of excitement and awe. This is the house that Ben

built 20 years ago now: a dreamy gingerbread house which he fought so hard to get planning permission for.

Having watched the two episodes of *Grand Designs* devoted to this house, I discovered that the project is the favourite of Kevin McCloud, the presenter of the long-running Channel 4 show. He describes it as "a house so ecologically sound, it breathes in time to the trees around it". I am swaying too and now this project is my favourite.

As many of us woodland owners know, building any kind of house or shed in ancient woodland is not permitted, but Law took on the council planners and after many years persuaded them to make a lifetime exception given that he is a full-time woodsman.



# The long-term development of our woods



George Peterken, renowned ecologist, tells of his new book *Trees and Woodlands*



In February 2023, Bloomsbury published the 12th book in their British Wildlife Collection. I helped to kick off the Collection with a book on Meadows (2013), but now I'm reverting to my main subject, Trees and Woodland. The book started life as a complement to Keith Kirby's *Woodland Flowers* (2020), which was mainly about what you see when you look down, whereas mine is about what stands above you. Inevitably, the two overlap: *Woodland Flowers* could hardly have been written without reference to the stands that shape the ground flora and *Trees and Woodland* includes a chapter on woodland as an environment for wildlife. Neither is principally about nature conservation, even though Keith's background and mine have been on the conservation side of forestry.

Much of the book was written during the pandemic, which was both a relief and a problem – gratitude that I had something constructive to do during lockdown, but frustration that I could not revisit the woods I once knew well during my most active period of fieldwork

in the 1970s and 1980s. This reinforced my tendency to concentrate attention on the woods of the Lower Wye Valley, amongst which I live, and Lady Park Wood in particular, where I have continued a long-term study of natural woodland development started by Eustace Jones in 1944. Eventually, COVID abated enough to permit travel, so the photographs show woods throughout Great Britain, but the biases remain. However, this may be an advantage.

The Lady Park study has given me a decades-long in-depth knowledge of a single wood at the individual-tree level which complements the superficial understanding I gained from the many woods I visited just once or twice.



Top (left and right): Long-term ecological studies of woodland require repeating observations over decades. Here two recorders measure a small-leaved lime in 1984 and return exactly 32 years later wearing almost the same clothes to measure it again.

Bottom: Eighteenth-century sweet chestnuts on the Bigsweir Estate, Gloucestershire

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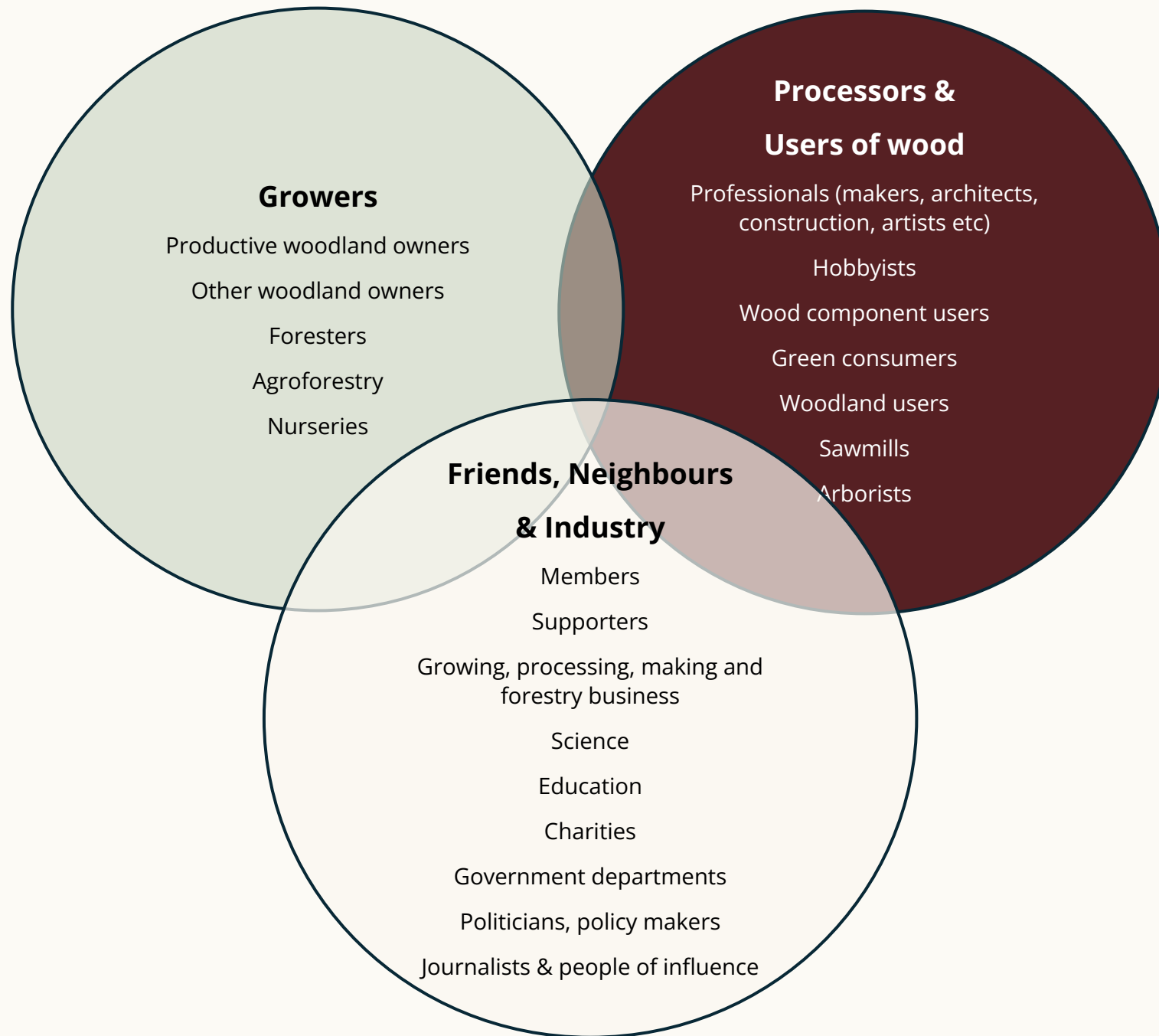
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experienced people that want  
to share their skill for people  
and planet







# In this issue

Profile with Cowdray Estate Head Forester Nina Williams by Financial Times & Guardian Journalist Lisa Wood.

Rob Penn, Author and Journalist, on bikes made from ash and growing trees from direct seeding.

From tree to table with maker Matt Estlea, Rycotewood graduate and YouTuber.



Plus, the usual mix of research and news, from seed to seat!



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# Thank you.

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