

Roundwood Timber Framing

East Meon in Hampshire provided an appropriate venue to celebrate both building with roundwood timber and the launch of Ben Law's new book -

Roundwood Timber Framing.

East Meon features some of England's oldest standing timber-framed buildings some of which have provided continuous domestic accommodation since the early 14th century.



The Duchess of Norfolk chats with Tim Green (BBC film maker)

Author and roundwood timber-framer Ben Law invited the Duchess of Norfolk to cut the ceremonial ivy garland ribbon to declare the new Sustainability Centre Woodland Classroom building open. This roundwood building stands in a woodland setting and Lawson Cypress timbers cut from that woodland were employed by Ben Law to construct the classroom building.

The book provides a highly illustrated insight into Ben's development and promotion of the concept of building using roundwood timber i.e. tree trunks that have neither been hewn or sawn. Apparently this results in timbers being up to 50% stronger in service since none of the fibres of the wood have been cut by a timber conversion process.

As the owner of a woodland that has blocks of Larch, Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar (all of which were planted by Kenneth Rankin - founder of the Economic Forestry Group) I find myself keen to examine any application that will potentially allow me to fell and employ these trees in a manner that both respects and takes full advantage of the properties of those trees and this appears to be Ben's earnest aim.

The book is not a standard "how to self build" reference book. Instead, Ben has selected and drawn many photographic examples from his growing catalogue of completed roundwood building commissions that include woodland based houses, barns, shops & now a classroom !

As a Chartered Engineer with a Master's degree in timber building conservation I find myself questioning some of the practices illustrated in the book but apparently that is no bad thing. One of Ben's declared aims is to draw architects and engineers into discussion in order to help formulate an acceptable roundwood building recipe or code of practice that will help obviate the need and cost incurred by roundwood builders in having to employ professional input into the design, construction, testing and inspection of roundwood buildings. I'm in!

The book is published by Permanent Publications (ISBN 978-1-85623-041-4) and is priced at £19.99 in hardback form [162 colour pages - 215 x 250] and is well worth the investment.

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