

Colin's Blog

GOOD FRIDAY 30TH MARCH 2018

Now, I really feel that Spring is in the air, and I look forward to some long walks across our wonderful English countryside, to take in the marvellous views, and the emergence of new life!



Many of you know, that I am passionate about our native broadleaf trees and our ancient woodland. There are hundreds of quotes about trees, here are just two of them: -

“What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another.” – Chris Maser, *Forest Primeval: The Natural History of an Ancient Forest*

“The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Imagine – A World Without Trees



As a child, having been raised in Walthamstow, I liked nothing better than to walk and explore in Epping Forest, staring in amazement at some of the ancient trees, and admiring the wonderful array of wildflowers, and grasses that once grew in open meadowland on the edge of the forest. What a joy it was to watch the comings and goings of the then abundant wildlife, and what a wonderful resource to stimulate childhood imagination. **There are currently around eight hundred different diseases currently affecting trees, and most of our Elm, Larch, Ash and Oak trees have been either killed, destroyed or infected.**

Have you ever wondered what a world without trees would look like? Close your eyes and try to imagine a desolate Earth. There'd be no more paper, and everyone would have to resort to technological use---that is, if anyone was left. Trees are a crucial factor to our existence not only because they produce paper, wood and chewing gum, but because they serve an important role in the carbon cycle. And because of our ever-increasing population of 7.6 billion, that seemingly distant future is nearing each and every day.

People have proposed many solutions to this environmental issue called deforestation, including either shipping everyone to the Moon or...to just stop cutting trees! Like an umbilical cord to an unborn child, ***Trees are our lifeline!***



LATEST FROM THE WOODLAND TRUST

New wording in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) **could significantly increase protection for ancient woodland** if the Government's latest proposals are taken up.

England has been haemorrhaging these incredible habitats for too long. Weak planning policy has allowed huge chunks to be lost to development which was simply not necessary in that location - like car parks, holiday lodges, golf courses and paintballing centres - often despite staunch local opposition. In 2017 the Trust had to challenge more development threats to ancient woods than ever before in our 45-year history. In the same year, tree planting rates also stalled. England is surely slipping unnoticed into a state of deforestation, while our existing precious woods and trees - the richest land habitats we have - continue to be unnecessarily destroyed. So, we're thrilled that the Government is prepared to take action - and not before time!

Not everyone will agree.

Our natural heritage has been badly let down by the planning system for years. In many cases, the lack of clarity in the current policy wording has led to devastating mistakes. Some decision-makers prioritise short-term benefits over the long-term value ancient woods and trees provide. Worse, some developers and consultants exploit the loopholes in current policy, knowingly pushing forward proposals that will permanently damage ancient woodland.

So, this could be a huge step forward. Biodiversity across the country will benefit and people will too, as it will help speed up the planning process and encourage well-designed, sustainable development. It's a change that should make an immediate mark on the planning system, and a lasting difference for England's last remaining ancient woodland. We need your voice to make it happen.

Ancient trees have been left out in the cold.

Bizarrely, the same proposals also detach aged and veteran trees from ancient woods as 'irreplaceable habitat'. This is the first time the two have been separated in the NPPF.

It just doesn't make sense to improve the fate of one but not the other. But it's **wrong** to suggest that aged and veteran trees are not also irreplaceable, and it's **wrong** to give them different levels of protection. If this is not addressed, England's oldest and most impressive trees would actually have less protection from development than ancient woodland in future. It's a huge step backwards.

Everyone makes mistakes but if we all stand together we can put this one right. We must take this chance to show support for the new wording for ancient

woodland, and to reject the suggestion that aged and veteran trees are not also irreplaceable. Otherwise our ancient habitats could truly become part of history.

Have your say

The Government has launched a consultation on the proposals. Our form will help you respond by email to the consultation question around ancient woodland and aged and veteran trees. **All you need to do** is add your details, and your views about why both habitats deserve equal protection from insensitive and inappropriate development. For further information and to learn more about why this is important click on the [green box](#).

Please stand up for ancient woods and special trees and respond to the consultation **before 10th May 2018**. **Thank you - GO TO: -**

<https://campaigns.woodlandtrust.org.uk/page/20990/action/1>



Don't forget to allow yourself more time to travel, if you are out and about this Easter weekend.

If using a vehicle, check your tyres, oil, brakes, lights and top up your screen wash, before you set off.

When walking around, make sure that you have nothing in your back pocket, and, where possible, that your other pockets are secured.

Do not use your mobile phone, whilst walking in crowds, and especially, on footpaths adjacent to roads (*Risk of phone snatching*).

For your own safety, do not wear headphones that impair your hearing of those around you, especially when crossing roads and in crowded areas.

Never Text or use you phone, whilst crossing roads. I am concerned to see so many people who put themselves at risk by doing so.

It's amazing to see some cyclists who think that it's OK for them to use a mobile phone, and even text, whilst cycling. They are not in proper control of their bicycle and are therefore could well be breaking the law. (*Unless they are using a proper hands-free system*).



Many young people and even adults, feel that it is not cool to wear a cycle helmet, and that their '*street cred*,' is more important than their own safety. It is better to wear a cycle helmet, than to lose your life or suffer brain injury, through not doing so, there's no '*street cred*'

Children, and even those of us who are still young at heart, love to receive gifts of Easter Eggs.

Sadly, these days, in their rush to get to the chocolate, the Easter egg boxes, are often destroyed, then thrown away or recycled.

During my time as a Club Scout Leader, then a Youth Group leader, I encouraged children to bring along their empty Easter Egg boxes, and we then made many different things, using the otherwise discarded boxes. All you need is a good imagination, and some basic handicraft materials.

So why not get thinking, and when the children come out with the classic phrase 'I'm bored,' set them to work creating some good items, from the materials to hand!

For example, using the egg boxes as lifts or ski lifts, all you need is some string or twine, sticky tape, safety scissors, and handmade pulleys (you could use unsharpened pencils). The idea works even better with battery powered 6-volt motors that can often be purchased from a hobby shop.

I am sure that many of my readers will have their own ideas, and, that they can fuel the imagination of their children or grandchildren, after all, the children won't need to use a television, computer, tablet, mobile phone, PS4 or Xbox.

Oh, what joy that could bring to the adults!



As an eight-year-old boy, I was the proud owner of an autograph book, and, one day an 'Aunty,' wrote this little ditty in my treasured book: -

Oh, how I wish I was a little egg,
High up in a tree,
Lying in my nest,
As bad as bad, could be,
And one day you would come along,
And stand beneath that tree,
And I would up and spill myself,
And cover thee with me!



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reside, so that, I know from which to list remove your contact details. Thank you.

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