

£5.00 | Free to members

MAGAZINE OF The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum



Westonbirt

AUTUMN/WINTER 2022/23

New beginnings at the arboretum

The Queen's Green Canopy

Wood wide web

How seeds become trees

Why dogs love shopping at Westonbirt!

Life at Westonbirt gets back on track

Our theme for this issue of the magazine is 'new beginnings' as the arboretum gets back into rhythm after testing times.

Over the last two years, it's fair to say life has been challenging for everyone in our community. Along this journey, we've learnt how to adapt in both our personal and work environments, adopting new processes as a result of the pandemic experience.

At the arboretum there have been a number of new projects and fresh starts. The Quarantine House is now up and running, and you can read about how rainwater is harvested on page 30. Our other exciting project, The Community Shelter – built by the community for the community – is now standing in all its glory in Silk Wood, connecting people from all walks of life with trees. Read more on page 18.

Finally, Westonbirt is now operating a booking system whereby pre-booking is only essential for key dates. This new system ensures we continue to offer the best visiting experience, as well as protecting the Grade 1 registered landscape now and for generations to come. This change has been most welcomed by our members.

Jane Shute, Head of Supporter Engagement, The Friends

Through the magazine you will find these icons highlighting how we are incorporating our 10-Year Vision themes into our work.

Conservation:

Protecting our trees for the future



Education:

Sharing knowledge to create change



Participation:

Connecting people with nature



In this issue

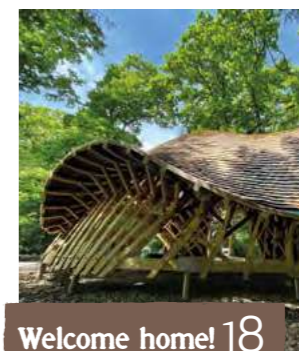
A year with the Visitor Services Team	5
The journey back for volunteers	6
Events	8
Sorbus: a genus under threat	12
Membership benefits	14
Supporter stories	16
Welcome home! Our new Community Shelter	18
The wood wide web – The woodland's underground network	20
Why dogs love shopping at Westonbirt!	22
Autumn & winter seasonal highlights	24
Your support is so important	30
Life in the forest	32
Family fun	34
A wonderful new facility for the protection of our collection	36
The Queen's Green Canopy	38
News	40
Fantastic catering choices for all tastes	42
Westonbirt walkies	44
John Muir Award	46
Financial overview	48
Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum Team	51

Contents

Sorbus: a genus under threat 12



The Queen's Green Canopy 38



Welcome home! 18



Westonbirt walkies 44

the friends
of Westonbirt
Arboretum



Westonbirt

Issue 120, autumn and winter 2022 – 2023:
September – February
© Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum.
Reg. Company 4965522
Reg. Charity No. 293190

Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum,
Tetbury, Glos. GL8 8QS.

Cover image:
Paul Groom

Design:
Oyster Marketing and Design
www.oysterdesign.co.uk

Print:

Stephens & George
stephensandgeorge.co.uk

Printed on Woodforce, sourced
from responsibly managed
forests. Mailed in recyclable
FSC material.

Editorial team:

Jane Shute
Alison Cobb
Jo Murray
Ellie Davis

Views expressed in the
Westonbirt magazine are
not necessarily those of
The Friends of Westonbirt
Arboretum or Forestry England.
Every effort is made to check
factual accuracy, but no
guarantees are expressed or
implied. In particular, readers
should satisfy themselves
about the authenticity of
products advertised.



A year with the Visitor Services Team

The Westonbirt Visitor Services Team has weathered some challenging times but always adapted to meet the needs of our visitors and the arboretum.

Ashleigh Horton, Recreation Supervisor, Forestry England



Since the pandemic a lot has changed, but we are still here come rain or shine working to give everyone a wonderful visitor experience. As well as a place to enjoy dog walking, playing and relaxing, Westonbirt is a nationally important tree collection and home to some of the tallest, broadest and most unique trees in the country!

Over the last two years we have managed to navigate through varying pandemic restrictions, adapting to a new normal in this beautiful landscape. With the pre-booking system we were able to continue to remain open and provide visitors with a change of scenery from home life. The Visitor Services Team worked tirelessly to adapt to new restrictions, ensuring as many visitors as possible could experience the stunning summer displays and magnificent autumn colours.

In the car park and at the Welcome Building, the team greet visitors. A lovely benefit the pre-booking system provided was to meet and greet every visitor face-to-face, enabling the team to develop our relationship with our regular visitors. As well as keeping the site clean and managing the admissions desk, our team are trained first aiders and were there to help with anything from bee stings to broken bones.

Thankfully our Enchanted Christmas event was able to go ahead as planned and lit up the woodland during a dark and uncertain winter. We set out the trail, keeping it clean and safe every day. We loved seeing so many happy families enjoying the lights, colours and of course the elves dancing around the trees.

Perhaps the biggest challenge we face today is finding a balance between providing the best visiting experience whilst protecting this incredible landscape. The introduction of pre-booking on essential key dates, such as bank holidays, autumn and Christmas will certainly help.

In developing the system we have spent considerable time developing our processes and systems behind the scenes so that visitors can access the site easily. Although the barrier system that used to scan membership cards is no longer operational, it is lovely to greet every member with a warm welcome each time you visit Westonbirt Arboretum!

To find out more about pre-booking at peak times please visit fowa.org.uk/pre-book



A bright future ahead

By the time you read this, I will have handed over to our permanent Chief Executive, Emma Griffiths, previously CEO of Gloucestershire Counselling Service, who brings with her extensive community and voluntary sector experience.

I know you'll join me in welcoming her and I look forward to seeing the future of The Friends under her leadership.

We have a bright future, having largely resolved our concerns around the proposed Forestry England national membership scheme. We've worked tirelessly to demonstrate the negative impact this could have had onsite, and have developed an alternative way for Westonbirt to be involved that would not threaten The Friends. It has been a positive outcome working with our Forestry England colleagues to find a solution that is in the arboretum's best interests.

To new beginnings!

Felicia Willow
Interim CEO, Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum



Progress in difficult times

I'm delighted that we have completed two really important projects this year that were planned prior to Covid-19 but halted at its onset. Both projects have been possible due to the commitment of Friends' individual giving, grants and a legacy gift.

The Community Shelter is remarkable in its design, which involved participants at both concept and during construction. Resulting in a beautiful finished structure. It will be used to help transform life for many people.

Our Quarantine House is an essential pre-requisite for the ongoing development of the tree collection. The state-of-the-art facility will enable us to pursue with confidence our conservation work, such as that described in this issue on *Sorbus*. The water recycling system demonstrates our commitment to sustainability and will give us valuable insight in how to employ this technology to future projects.

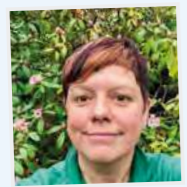
Andrew Smith
Arboretum Director, Forestry England



Westonbirt's new volunteer guide trainees

The journey back for volunteers

After the disruption of Covid-19 our volunteer numbers are growing and new recruits are joining the team.



Claire Bradley,
Volunteer Co-ordinator,
Forestry England

Early in 2022, as Covid-19 restrictions started to ease, we were pleased to increase volunteer activity as we increased our operations and services at Westonbirt. Following such a long break, we took a cautious approach with volunteers, as many people's routines had been broken and in some cases confidence was severely knocked.

Re-training was organised for a lot of volunteers including our guides, Welcome Building volunteers and shuttle drivers. Our team ran a series of briefings to explain how some processes had been revised and facilities changed in light of Covid-19. We also organised one-to-one orientation sessions where needed to provide individual support and reassurance. With everyone's support, we were pleased to begin to fall back into a familiar rhythm of volunteering activities. By late May it felt like life was returning to normal as we worked together through some busy days on-site with multiple volunteering teams operating again.

Early in 2022 our volunteer numbers had dropped to less than 240 people compared to 280 in 2020. Many of our volunteers left due to the inevitable impact of Covid-19 and some subsequently decided that after giving their support over the years it was a good time to hang up their hat.



Bee ID training



Volunteer BBQ

“ The feedback we have received from volunteers overwhelmingly tells us that they really missed volunteering at Westonbirt, and were so glad when activities restarted. ”



HRH visit

With numbers down, we ran a recruitment event in late 2021 and were delighted with its success! During the first half of 2022 we successfully inducted and trained new volunteers. Changes had naturally occurred and in some cases training requirements needed updating as it had been a while since we were able to recruit volunteers. Also roles had changed due to Covid-19 restrictions in areas such as the Welcome Building.

I'm delighted to say that we now have about 40 new volunteers helping in a wide variety of roles. We have an exciting new volunteer role helping with the maintenance of our signs on-site. We also have a much-needed influx of Bumblebee ID Experts on our Fauna Monitoring Team amongst many other crucial volunteer services.

Volunteering at our special events such as the 10K Run and Forest Live proved to be really popular with a full cohort of volunteers signing up to help. We were also able to hold more social events such as coffee mornings and the annual volunteer summer celebration.

One particularly memorable event was the attendance of HRH The Prince of Wales, who visited Westonbirt to plant a tree for The Queen's Green Canopy. This was probably one of the first in-person gatherings we'd had since the start of the pandemic and what a wonderful event to start with!

The feedback we have received from volunteers overwhelmingly tells us that they really missed volunteering at Westonbirt and were so glad when activities restarted. Despite the many challenges, temporary arrangements and a lot of training to catch up on, everyone is glad to be back running activities again, catching up with colleagues and enjoying being at Westonbirt.

If you would like to find out more about becoming a volunteer please visit forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/volunteering

Coming up



Credit: Johnny Hathaway



Guided walks and tours

Westonbirt Guided Walk

Explore the seasonal highlights of Westonbirt's Old Arboretum.

Check forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/events for dates & times

Price: Free after admission

Themed Walks

Take the path less travelled and delve a little deeper into our captivating trees.

Every Sat, 2pm

Price: Free after admission

Wild Flower Guided Walk

Discover the fascinating world of wild flowers and other flora at Westonbirt Arboretum.

Tue 06 Sep, 10.30am

Price: £1 booking fee

Sensing Nature Guided Walks

Let our visually impaired guides lead you through an immersive and interactive sensory experience.

Fri 09 & Fri 23 Sep, 2pm

Price: £1 booking fee

Active Forest events

Forest Runner

Choose between a 5K or 10K run and enjoy some beautiful autumnal surroundings.

Sun 11 Sep, 4pm

Price: From £18

For children and families

Tots and Twigs Forest School

Encourage young children to develop their outdoor knowledge through nature-based learning sessions.

Mon, Thu or Fri mornings and afternoons during term time

Price: Please refer to forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/events

Wild Westonbirt

Westonbirt's youth forum and practical conservation project for young adults aged 14-18.

Saturdays, monthly, 10am - 4pm

Price: Free - Booking essential, please email westonbirt@forestryengland.uk

Meet the Machines

Come and meet the machines that help us to care for the arboretum and find out more through discovery play.

Sat 24 Sep & Sun 25 Sep, 10.30am - 4pm

Price: Free after entry



Credit: Johnny Hathaway

Participation

Wonderful World of Fungi

Join us to explore some fascinating fungi through discovery, microscopes and crafts.

Mon 24 - Fri 28 Oct, 10.30am - 4pm

Price: Free after entry

Extraordinary Evergreens

Wander amongst the winter wonder of conifers with our spotter sheet and use their leaves and cones to create a craft.

Tue 21 - Thu 23 Feb, 10.30pm - 3.30pm

Price: Free after entry

Evergreen Explorers

Sign up for a family activity walk exploring these great trees, their stories and discover the wildlife that need them.

Sat 25 Feb & Sun 26 Feb, 11am - 12pm or 1.30pm - 2.30pm

Price: Free after entry

Workshops and courses

Windsor Chair Making Course

Create your very own Windsor chair using traditional skills.

05 - 10 Sep, 03 - 08 Oct, 10 - 15 Oct, 9am - 5pm

Price: £425

Hand Tied Bouquet Workshop

Learn a simple florist technique to make and gift wrap a hand-tied bouquet.

Sat 10 Sep, 10.30am - 1pm

Price: £85

Impressions of Westonbirt - Creative Abstracts Photography Workshop

Look beyond the obvious and develop your creative eye.

Tue 06 Sep & Tue 11 Oct

Price: £140

Failsafe Garden Plants

Discover how to select the right plants for your garden plus top tips to help them flourish.

Wed 14 Sep, 10am – 1pm

Price: £85



Framed Hurdle Making

Make a framed hurdle from coppiced sweet chestnut and hazel in the beautiful surroundings of Silk Wood.

Sat 17 Sep, Sun 18 Sep, 9.30am – 5pm

Price: £120

Willow Sculpture Workshop

Create your very own wonderful willow sculpture in a relaxed and fun environment.

Sat 17 Sep, Sat 15 Oct, Sat 12 Nov, Sat 03 Dec, 10am – 4pm

Price: £85

Spoon Carving Workshop

Learn to make a spoon out of a branch from a tree at the lovely Silk Wood Barn.

Sat 24 Sep, 10am – 4.30pm

Price: £75

Two-day Willow Sculpture Workshop

Spend two days creating something special from willow.

Sat 01 & Sun 02 Oct, 10am – 4pm

Price: £160

Autumn Leaves in Watercolour

Experience the colours of autumn whilst learning the basics of botanical watercolour illustration.

Sat 08 Oct, 10am – 4.30pm

Price: £85

Beginners Digital Landscape Course

Aimed at the beginner who has a digital camera but lacks confidence to move away from Auto Mode setting.

Mon 10 Oct, Fri 14 Oct, 10.30am – 3.30pm

Price: £65

Planning Garden Borders

Learn the planning methods professionals use to keep your planting looking great all year round.

Wed 19 Oct, 10am – 4pm

Price: £135

Intermediate Digital Photography Course

Develop your photographic skills and understanding with this one-day course.

Fri 21 Oct, 10.30am – 3.30pm

Price: £120

Christmas Wreath Workshop

Take some time out and enjoy a mince pie while you create your own Christmas wreath.

Wed 07 Dec, Wed 14 Dec, 10am – 12.30pm or 1pm – 3.30pm

Price: £85



Exhibitions

70 Years 70 Trees Affordable Art Exhibition

Featuring trees in wonderful autumn colour plus iconic specimen trees.

Sat 22 & Sun 23 Oct, 9am – 4.30pm

Price: Free after entry



Enchanted Christmas

Set out on the illuminated trail and discover a magical world of breath-taking light spectacles and interactive displays amongst the magnificent trees of Westonbirt Arboretum!

Fri 25 – Sat 26 Nov

Fri 2 – Sat 3 Dec

Fri 9 – Sat 10 Dec

Fri 16 – Wed 21 Dec

Adults: £19*

Concessions (students & job seekers): £17*

Children (aged 3 – 16 years): £11*

Infant (aged 0 – 2 years): Free, but will require a ticket

Access: Personal assistant goes free

**All tickets include £1 non-refundable booking fee*



Credit: Johnny Hathaway



Find out more

Visit forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/events or call Westonbirt Arboretum on 0300 067 4890 to find out more information about any of our events.

Sorbus: a genus under threat

As highlighted in the *State of the World's Trees*, published by Botanic Gardens Conservation International in September 2021, 30% of the world's tree species are threatened with extinction in the wild. Though the UK has only a modest number of native species, proportionately we are home to the eighth highest percentage of threatened species. Of 84 native trees, 33 (40%) are threatened. All of these belong to the genus *Sorbus*.



Dan Crowley, Global Conservation Consortia Manager at Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)

Sorbus is a taxonomically complex genus, comprising the groups known as whitebeams, rowans and service trees. In Europe there are 170 species, and more than 75% of these are threatened. Twenty-two are not yet well enough known to assess their extinction risk, and are currently considered Data Deficient on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

In the UK, we have 40 native *Sorbus*, and with all but seven threatened with extinction, their conservation has been a priority for botanical organisations for several years. Threats to these trees include potential mismanagement, climate change and disease. The threatened species also have highly restricted populations, which increases their vulnerability.



Working in partnership to protect *Sorbus*

Many threatened native *Sorbus* occur naturally in areas nearby Westonbirt, including Gloucestershire, Bristol and Somerset, and given their plight, in addition to the arboretum's international aspirations, here at Westonbirt we are increasing our contribution to native *Sorbus* conservation, working both *in situ* (where they naturally occur) and *ex situ* (in collections like Westonbirt), with an initial focus on those occurring locally to us.

“Several target species are part of the arboretum landscape, and visitors to the arboretum may be familiar with the group of Bristol whitebeams, *S. bristoliensis*, along Broad Drive, which include the UK champion tree.”

Other notable native *Sorbus* here at Westonbirt include young specimens of Rich's whitebeam, *S. richii*, grown from seed collected and donated to the arboretum by native *Sorbus* expert Tim Rich, for whom *S. richii* is named.

A significant threat to local *Sorbus* populations is a currently unknown pathogen, which is heavily impacting populations in the Wye Valley, Avon and Cheddar Gorges. The disease killed the 'type' specimen of White's whitebeam, *S. whiteana* – the individual from which the species was described. The species occurs in the Wye Valley and Avon Gorge and is known from less than 50 mature individuals, with that number decreasing.

This year, in collaboration with our colleagues at Forest Research and local stakeholders, we will be working to establish the identity of the pathogen as a first step towards conserving these species. The threats in the wild highlight the value of backing up wild populations in botanic gardens and arboreta, and Westonbirt will be working with other botanic gardens to develop a coordinated approach to enhancing the quality of the *Sorbus* collections both here at the arboretum and within the UK botanic garden network. Our intention is to contribute towards ensuring that our native *Sorbus* are conserved in the wild, with species also grown here at Westonbirt as part of an *ex situ* network to act as an insurance policy and to support research and education of our threatened native trees.

Credit: Tim Rich



Two of our *Sorbus* are included in *The Little Book of Disappearing Trees*. Purchase your copy from the Westonbirt Shop for £4.95. Members receive a 10% discount.

Credit: Tim Rich

Threats to these trees include potential mismanagement, climate change and disease

Membership benefits

The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum charity works in partnership with Forestry England to support conservation, education and participation programmes at the arboretum, for all to enjoy. As a member your donation supports this incredible work. In return, you receive a host of membership benefits!

Please note that to visit Westonbirt Arboretum during key dates it's essential to pre-book your free time slot.

Key dates are:

- Autumn – Saturday 01 October – Sunday 13 November
- Christmas – Saturday 24 December – Monday 02 January
- All Bank Holiday weekends

Time slots are released 7 days in advance and can be booked **online at fowa.org.uk/prebook** or by phone on **0300 068 0400** between Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Pre-booking is optional for all other dates.



Kids go free! Bring up to 4 of your own children or grandchildren free of charge (age 18 and under)



Free, fun, seasonal, educational activities



10% member discount off your purchases at the Westonbirt Arboretum Shop

Simply show your valid membership card when making your purchase (applicable to named card holder only).



Behind the scenes Westonbirt magazine and regular Friends' eNews



Earlybird presale for Enchanted Christmas illuminated light trail and Forest Live concerts

Partner Gardens

As a member, you can also benefit from discounted entry into selected partner gardens.

Visit for free:

Batsford Arboretum
Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos batsarb.co.uk

Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Glasshouse, Edgbaston, Birmingham
birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk

The Yorkshire Arboretum,
Castle Howard, York
yorkshirearboretum.org

National Botanic Garden of Wales,
Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire
botanicgarden.wales

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
(including Dawyck, Benmore and Logan),
Edinburgh rbge.org.uk

Receive 2 for 1 entry into:

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew,
Richmond, Surrey kew.org

Receive 2 for 1 entry into:

Royal Botanic Gardens Wakehurst Place
Ardingly, Nr Haywards Heath,
West Sussex kew.org/wakehurst

Please check the partner garden's website ahead of visiting, as you may be required to pre-book a time slot to gain entry.

Member Tuesdays

This wintertime, Member Tuesdays gives you the opportunity to bring a relative free of charge to Westonbirt Arboretum on Tuesdays during the winter dates of 22 November – 28 March 2023 excluding Tuesday 27 December.

Valid for one relative per member visit only.

See fowa.org.uk/member-benefits for full details.

Partner discounts

15% off at Cotswold Outdoor

Get expert advice and the best brands in-store with your membership card, or shop online at cotswoldoutdoor.com with discount code **AF-FOWA-22**. Valid until 31 December 2023 (T&Cs Apply).



15% off Runners Need

Visit the running specialists and present your membership card in-store, or shop online at runnersneed.com with discount code **AF-FOWA-22**. Valid until 31 December 2023 (T&Cs Apply).



15% off Snow + Rock

Huge range of ski, snow and climbing clothing and equipment from the world's best brands. Shop in-store with your membership card, or online at snowandrock.com with discount code **AF-FOWA-22**. Valid until 31 December 2023 (T&Cs Apply).



10% off Go Ape Tree Tops Challenge and Forest Segway in the Forest of Dean

Book online at goape.co.uk using the discount code **GAARB22** until 31 December 2022. Excludes Saturdays, bank holidays, gift vouchers and corporate bookings. Participation and supervision ratios apply.



For up to date details on your membership benefits please visit fowa.org.uk/member-benefits



What does Westonbirt Arboretum mean to you?

Over the years many of us form precious memories of our time at Westonbirt. In this edition we are featuring David's very touching story of his wife, Kate's, love of Westonbirt.

Kate

As a student, I drove past the sign for Westonbirt Arboretum on the M4 many times, going from Bristol to my parents' home. I never thought it would be so significant for me in the future.

I first visited Westonbirt with my son many years later to see the Christmas lights. Soon afterwards I came with my son and my new wife, Kate, for a walk through Silk Wood, and this was the beginning of Kate's love for the arboretum. We visited at special times to see the magnolia flowers, the autumnal acers and the spring blossom. Since her own student days, Kate had always had an affinity to trees.



We'd love to share more of your supporter stories about what the arboretum means to you. Please contact Jane Shute at magazine@fowa.org.uk

In December 2018 everything changed. Kate was diagnosed with terminal bowel cancer, stage 4 – incurable, palliative care only. The chemotherapy stopped her career, so she took to coming to Westonbirt more frequently, walking, sometimes twice a week, sometimes more, sometimes alone, sometimes with me, sometimes with others. She took the chair making course in the Westonbirt Woodworks; making an unusual style chair which now sits under the table I am now writing at.

2019 passed. The drugs worked, but not well. We went on more vacations than usual and visited more people. In 2020, the pandemic ended our foreign vacation dreams and Kate never left the UK again. She took up strength training, regularly running around Silk Wood.

“In 2021, we frequently visited Westonbirt in spring, summer, and autumn; walking, picnicking, jogging, having coffee and hugging trees. The Old Arboretum became our favourite; easier to walk around, and more peaceful somehow.”

In the late summer of 2021, I also joined the chair making course at Westonbirt Woodworks. I made a similar chair to Kate's, on which I am now seated. The lovely kind man, Paul Hayden, running the course had read Kate's letter to Philippa Perry in the Observer and was very moved by it, as were many others it turns out. I felt genuinely heartbroken leaving that course, having to stop on the way home because driving and crying don't mix.

Kate's health deteriorated. In mid-November, her penultimate day trip out was to the arboretum. We sat on a bench on Holford Ride and admitted to each other that we didn't believe the drugs would hold the cancer at bay anymore; and that her death was approaching. I think we both knew that it was the last time she would visit, and we took extra time for her to say goodbye to her favourite plane tree. On December 15th she died aged 47. The arboretum is an intrinsic part of my wife's life, and death. That is what it means to me.

David Norman, member of The Friends



Share your Westonbirt Arboretum memory...

“I love to wander among the tall trees and the smaller bright coloured acers when the sun is shining through the mist and taking photographs of the beautiful effects. Once I went to Westonbirt in the snow. It was magical.”

A lovely memory shared by one of our Friends.

Welcome home!

This spring the new Community Shelter in Silk Wood was completed providing a permanent base for the Westonbirt Community Programme.

Together with over 26 local community groups the new shelter was built for the community, by the community in every sense. If you've already seen it, you may consider the name 'shelter' to be too modest. The unusual design is based on ideas and prototypes created by the individuals using the shelter to create a welcoming, cosy, organic shaped shelter built entirely from timber sourced from our sustainable woodland management.



Karen Price, Community Co-ordinator, Forestry England



Credit: Martin Phelps

A shelter and so much more...

When we first thought about building a new shelter, the easy option would have been to buy a prefabricated structure or employ someone to build it for us. But we wanted to use 'the build' as a tool to enable, engage and empower often under-represented audiences, involving them from design to construction. Our aim was to engage participants with a high-profile activity that gave them a voice, listened to their opinion and provided an opportunity to learn new skills: empowering them to believe 'if I can build this - what else am I capable of achieving?'

Shelter design

The community groups all had similar requests for the design team. To create a shelter without walls, to feel a connection to the surrounding trees, and a space without corners so no-one could be excluded. A central fire creates a gathering point to share a cup of tea, concerns and anxieties whilst being offered support and friendship. It's an accessible, welcoming space.



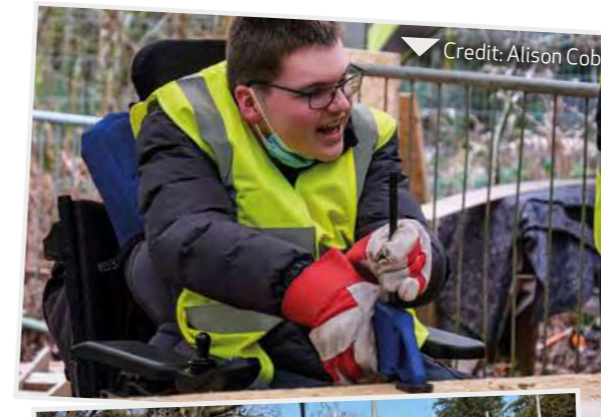
Credit: Martin Phelps

Through the build we've all learnt new skills from shingle making to steam bending. We have supported a wide range of audiences to be part of the project and worked towards the same shared goal. We have expressed the same level of pride at what they have achieved and what they have been part of. Participants have ranged from young people with complex needs and adults in addiction recovery programmes to NHS staff and even a former Prime Minister.

We've also had the opportunity to work with a team of highly skilled experts, who had both the patience to share their knowledge with us and the creativity to adapt tasks so everyone could participate equally and feel valued. This was a project in which so many different teams worked together and, in the end, created more than a shelter - we created a home. A home from which we can continue to build upon the achievements of the Westonbirt Community Programme and offer many, many more people the opportunity to connect with trees and improve their quality of life.

Next time you are passing, and if it's not in use by a group, please do pop in and have a look.

If you are part of a local community group and want to find out more please see forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/community-programmes or email westonbirt@forestryengland.uk



Credit: Alison Cobb



Credit: Graham Anstey



Credit: Piers Taylor

The wood wide web

The woodland's underground network

When you look at a tree stretching high above you towards the sky it is tempting to think of it as a solitary being. Far from it, trees have an incredible information highway that links them beneath the ground, helping them to survive, communicate and nurture their young.

Going underground

Trees can use the network to communicate, support each other and respond to threats from intrusive species.

The fungal network

This amazing network is made up of fungi that feed from sugar generated from the tree's roots through photosynthesis. The fungi links up through a network of threads called mycelium and these grow under the ground connecting large numbers of trees together. It is not unusual for a network to consist of 40 or more trees and individual trees may well be part of more than one network. These alliances include trees of different species.

Abuse on the wood wide web

Like the Internet there are some uses of the mycorrhiza networks that don't contribute to positive use. Some orchids will tap into the fungi to take carbon. On a more sinister note there are tree species that actively release chemicals to harm the chances of other species thriving, this is known as allelopathy. The American black walnut tree is one such species that releases chemicals harmful to other species and research has shown that they can use the network to further their disruptive influence.

A symbiotic relationship

There is an incredible symbiosis that forms between mycorrhizal fungi and tree roots. Large trees often produce more sugar than they need so the fungi feeds on the sugar in the roots. In turn the fungi absorbs nutrients, nitrogen and phosphates that the tree will feed on. But that's just part of the relationship. The trees can use the network to communicate, support each other and respond to threats from intrusive species.

The many uses of the wood wide web

The connection between the fungi and trees is thought to have extensive benefits. The network is not only used to share food and carbon resources but the trees can release chemicals, hormones and electrical signals into the network to communicate with the community. Invasive species can be identified and toxic chemicals released by the trees through the fungi to thwart their growth.

Drought and insect attacks are also able to be communicated via the web, enabling trees to adapt their behaviour to help combat the threat. In turn some mycorrhizas can actively help to develop fine root growth, protect the roots from predators such as nematode worms and provide resilience in droughts.

When trees die they are able to share their resources naturally through the mycelia with their network, so the community benefits even after death. The mycorrhiza can also help to protect trees from land contamination and absorb carbon, which of course helps us all!

Our delicate planet

It goes without saying that we need to protect our trees and prevent pollution from damaging the land on which our natural world depends. When you think about pesticides or chemical treatments for your garden and your trees, please take a moment to consider what the damage might be to the natural synergy of life before making your decision.

There is still a lot of research taking place into the symbiotic relationship of the mycorrhiza and scientists continue to make remarkable findings about the incredible network often referred to as the wood-wide web.

Glossary

Fungi: the plural of fungus, a group of spore-producing organisms which feed on organic matter including yeasts, mildews and mushrooms.

Photosynthesis: is the process whereby green plants and some other organisms use sunlight to create sugars from carbon dioxide and water.

Mycelia: the plural of mycelium, a root-like structure of fungus which consists of a network of fine, thread-like filaments known as hyphae.

Symbiosis: an interaction between two or more different types of organism that are in close proximity, typically both organisms benefit from the relationship.

Mycorrhizae: the plural of mycorrhiza, the association of fungi with plant roots in a symbiotic relationship.

Nematode: also known as roundworm, are small, often microscopic parasitic worms of animals or plants.

Allelopathy: the release of chemical signals by an organism that has either a beneficial or detrimental effect on its target organism, they may influence growth, development or reproduction in other organisms.

Follow our blog for more interesting stories at fowa.org.uk/blog

Why dogs love shopping at Westonbirt!



We welcome dogs in the Westonbirt Shop. Many of our furry pals already know that we have treats behind the counter but do they also know about some of our other canine goodies available?

Tracey Burgoyne, Retail Manager, The Friends

Green and Wild's

Our friends at Green and Wild's, based locally in Chippenham, supply us with a range of toys, yummy healthy treats and chews. They really care about what goes in their glorious goodies. Where possible, they work with one sole ingredient, so the Buffalo Bites for instance consist of 100% Buffalo meat. When they do add extras they make sure it's healthy.

The naturally shed premium Antler and Buffalo Horns chews are responsibly sourced and hand finished. We often find that your four legged companion will prefer to choose their own – it's a surprisingly personal decision! It's the same with the 100% Yaks Milk chews which are smoked to form a tasty treat, the favoured bar is sniffed out!



All of Green and Wild's eco toys are made from sustainable and recyclable materials such as jute, waste cotton and suede off cuts (by-products from manufacturing, cutting down on waste), some are even filled with recycled plastic bottles. One of our quality control testers, Alfie (a super bouncy Labrador), loves Derrick the Donut, made from natural jute stitched over with soft leather. A year on after being chewed and chewed Derrick is battered but lives on.

If you produce your own local product and would like to be considered for our shop, you can email Tracey at retail@fowa.org.uk providing clear information about you, your business, products and pricing.

KJK Ropeworks

Our range from KJK Ropeworks, a British rope maker who creates strong rope and braid leads is a recent addition. They are robust but also comfortable for the human handler; available as a clip or a slip lead all chosen to compliment the colour of your coat or your outfit, from natural colours to brighter purples and reds. Our friend Maisie looks rather dapper in hers.



Lush Designs

A brand new product at the time of writing is this amazing dog bowl. Lush Designs is the work of Marie and Maria. Their love of colour and characteristic quirky prints has been applied to a range of homewares many of which are made in-house at their lovely studio at Cockpit Arts in Deptford. The very distinctive designs have beautifully fitted into the shop. This is a special gift for your devoted canine.



Growbar

To complete our nose to tail offerings for your pampered pooch, did you know that the Growbar company do a Dog Bar which keeps your four-legged friend happy with their very own herb garden? An easy to grow mix of marigold, camomile and fennel to keep them healthy!



For the humans we stock cushions, textiles and cards featuring many different dog breeds to treat yourself not just your pooch!
Members receive 10% discount at The Westonbirt Shop!

Within the arboretum, we currently care for over 100 threatened tree species and the latest edition of 'The Little Book of Disappearing Trees' introduces some of the endangered trees we look after.

We're pleased to have supported this new edition which can be purchased from the Westonbirt Shop at £4.95.



Autumn & winter seasonal highlights

Whatever the season, whatever the weather, a walk through Westonbirt is a sensory delight. For many, autumn is the highlight of the Westonbirt year with an explosion of colour before winter comes. But winter also has its treats albeit more subtle; the crunch of frost, dew catching the low morning sun, tree silhouettes and a variety of bark textures and patterns.

Seasonal map

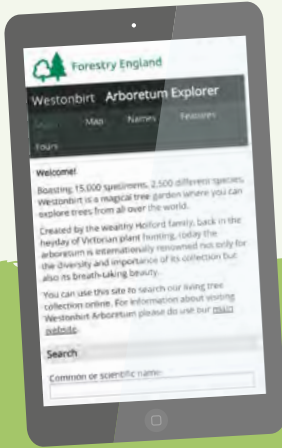
You can use this pull-out map to locate where each of the trees in the highlights article can be found.

Each tree has a coloured shape next to it. You will find the same colour dot placed on the map to show its location. You may wish to take the full article on your next visit.

The map is a simplified version of our main map. We've done this to make finding the tree easier. If you would like a copy of the full map, pick one up on your next visit.

Pull out map

The coloured dots mark some of the spectacular trees worth seeking on your next visit...



Use our Arboretum Explorer

Arboretum Explorer is a web based search facility that enables you to locate specific trees at Westonbirt. You can use as much or as little information as you choose and the website will show you a map with the location of the tree.

To use the Arboretum Explorer facility visit westonbirt.arboretumexplorer.org

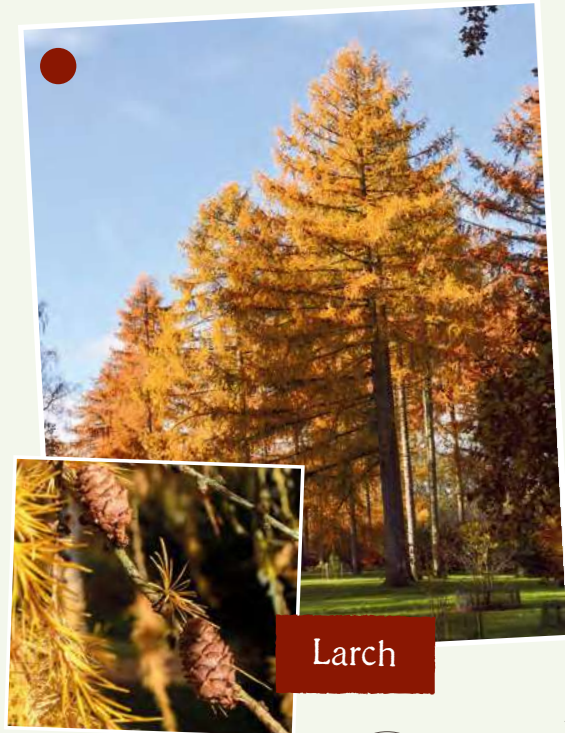
Tree guide

Autumn

- ★ Persian ironwood (*Parrotia persica*)
- Harlequin glorybower (*Clerodendrum trichotomum*)
- ★ Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
- Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
- Larch (*Larix* spp.)
- Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)

Winter

- Hartweg's pine (*Pinus hartwegii*)
- Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Pottenii')
- ★ Atlas blue cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca')
- Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*)
- Winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*)
- Birch species (*Betula* spp.)



Larch



Winter honeysuckle
The fragrance of the small creamy flowers found on the winter honeysuckle, in January and February, more than makes up for its lack of size.



Lawson cypress



Atlas blue cedar



Persian ironwood



Birch species



Autumn highlights

★ Persian ironwood (*Parrotia persica*)

Few species revel in autumn as much as the Persian ironwood; not content with one colour it often turns golden yellow, warm amber, fiery red and even deep purple all at the same time. The species was a firm favourite of Robert Holford, the arboretum's creator, and is one of our 'signature trees' – providing continuity through our Grade One registered historic landscape.

● Harlequin glorybower (*Clerodendrum trichotomum*)

In autumn, the harlequin glorybower lives up to the extravagance of its name. Its bright blue berries shine surrounded by a vivid red calyx (the collective name for the sepals, the outer part of the flower that protects it in bud). Native to China it was introduced in the 1880s. If you carefully rub the leaves you may get the scent of peanut butter; it is sometimes called the peanut butter tree.

★ Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)

In autumn the winged nutlets make common hornbeam one of our most recognisable native species. The 'muscular' trunk and flame-like bark pattern are also key identifying features. Its common name is derived from the hardness of its wood, which is said to be as hard as horn. Notoriously difficult to work, the wood was used for items that needed the same toughness, such as mill cogs and pulleys. Today hornbeam is still used to make piano striking hammers and butchers' blocks.

● Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

Who hasn't rushed to find a conker (or ten) from under the spreading horse chestnut? Sadly – those days may be numbered... today the species is considered Near Threatened in the wild and scientists are concerned for its future in the UK. Historically the humble conker was collected for reasons other than to fill people's pockets. They contain a soap-like chemical known as aescin once used for whitening linen. Aescin also aids the treatment of varicose veins and haemorrhoids. Starch-rich conkers were also collected in World War One to make acetone, an ingredient for making the cordite used in artillery shells. The MOD even recruited children to collect nuts for the top-secret project!

● Larch (*Larix* spp.)

Larch is one of just a handful of deciduous conifer groups. In autumn the needles go a soft straw yellow that look spectacular, especially on a clear evening with a blue sky beyond. In the past researchers grew specimens here to investigate its potential as a timber species. By happy coincidence, the open canopy provides the dappled shade favoured by our maples.

● Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)

The Holford family loved our native sea buckthorn for its shape and silvery colour and planted it throughout their collection – particularly in Silk Wood. The bright orange berries provide more than a splash of seasonal colour. They have been a superfood since before the term was invented. Packed with beneficial nutrients (including 12x as much Vitamin C as oranges) they have been used for thousands of years, despite being eye-wateringly tart and having a purgative effect on some people! It is said that Genghis Khan even gave them to his soldiers to make them more combat ready. Today it is an ingredient in many skincare lotions and anti-aging creams.

Winter highlights

● Hartweg's pine (*Pinus hartwegii*)

Few trees are as ticklish as this young pine from Mexico. Like many of our trees it is rare in cultivation. Mexico is home to almost half the world's pine species, many of which are endemic, meaning they are unique to Mexico. This diversity is due in part to the range of habitats present, but it has also been suggested that the high levels of solar radiation may have encouraged genetic mutation, promoting speciation. *Pinus hartwegii* is a high altitude cold-loving species, which grows right up to the snowline.

● Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Pottenii')

Native to California and Oregon, the Lawson cypress is one of the most important ornamental conifers. Introduced via the Lawson Nursery in Edinburgh in 1854, today hundreds of different cultivars are available thanks to its tendency to produce spontaneous branch sports (branches that are morphologically different to the rest of the plant). Sports with desirable characteristics such as colour, texture or form are propagated through cuttings to create new cultivars, including this sea-green columnar form.

★ Atlas blue cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauc')

The dramatic blue foliage and majestic crown of mature Atlas blue cedar trees are one of the joys of winter. Grouping trees to create variety is a key feature of our picturesque landscape and harks back to when the Holford family first laid out the arboretum in the mid-nineteenth century.

● Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*)

With just a few hundred trees growing wild, the critically endangered wollemi pine is one of the rarest species at Westonbirt. Discovered in a remote Australian canyon in 1994, it is a member of the monkey-puzzle (*Araucariaceae*) family and like its relatives it is a very ancient species – with fossil records dating back 200 million years.

● Winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*)

Most people don't associate flowers with winter. Thankfully some trees don't play by the rules! On a still day the citrus scent of the winter honeysuckle can be truly arresting. True; it is not the grandest of Westonbirt's specimens, but in January and February the fragrance of its small creamy flowers more than makes up for its lack of size. Originally introduced by Robert Fortune from eastern China in 1845, today it provides winter interest in many gardens.

● Birch species (*Betula* spp.)

Birches really come into their own in winter thanks to their beautiful bark colours and patterns. So much so we can't pick a favourite! Despite its rather delicate appearance birch bark is remarkably tough. It contains oils that have both anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties. As a result, birch bark has been used since pre-historic times as a building material, as well as for baskets, footwear, and canoes. The bark is patterned with horizontal lines known as lenticels, which act as channels for gas exchange and help the tree 'breathe'.

Don't forget to pull out the map and bring it with you to discover our seasonal picks on your next visit!



Horse chestnut



Wollemi pine



Hornbeam



Sea buckthorn



Harlequin glorybower

Credit: Alan Connor



Hartweg's pine



Your support is so important

In light of the magazine theme 'New Beginnings' and the return to relative normality following the impact of Covid-19, I thought it would be a good time to introduce myself and my new role to you. As you read this, I will have been in post for nearly a year!



Ellie Davis, Individual Giving Manager

Westonbirt Arboretum has held a special place in my heart ever since I was a little girl when I used to visit regularly with my family and on the occasional school trip. There's no denying that Westonbirt is a magical place and I'm so glad to be encouraging people to support the arboretum as an adult!

My role as Individual Giving Manager is to help drive support to fund the work of the arboretum and to recognise the support we receive from you, our 40,000 wonderful Friends.

Every time you renew your membership, pop your spare change in a donation box, buy a coffee from The Pantry or a fridge magnet from the Shop you are helping to support this beautiful Grade I registered landscape. Thanks to your ongoing support we are protecting trees, sharing our expert knowledge, and encouraging more people than ever to engage with The National Arboretum.



The Power of Donations

Over the years your support has helped to transform the site and create exciting opportunities to engage new audiences, including the Treetop Walkway, Welcome Building and the Westonbirt Woodworks to name but a few!

This year alone you have supported the completion of the Quarantine House (pages 36-37) and the Community Shelter (pages 18-19). You have enabled us to continue funding the Trainee Arborist role, and we were delighted to welcome Chrissy to the post this year (pages 39). We've also been able to purchase two new mobility scooters to update the fleet and make the arboretum more accessible. Thank you!



Gift Aid it

Did you know that you can make your donations go further? Gift Aid is a government scheme that allows charities to reclaim the tax that has already been paid on donations from UK taxpayers. If you choose to Gift Aid, the government will add an extra 25p to every £1 you give to The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum – at no extra cost to you!

Last year, we were able to claim over £280,000 in Gift Aid from membership and further giving donations alone!

All of which goes straight back to the arboretum wherever it's needed most. From pathway maintenance to planting trees, it helps us to keep the arboretum in the best condition for you to enjoy all year around.

Would you consider leaving a gift in your Will?

As a charity, The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum relies entirely on income from gifts and membership donations. One of the greatest contributions you can make is leaving a gift in your Will, protecting the arboretum for generations to come.

Your gift could help to care for over 15,000 trees and 600 acres of woodland, enjoyed by half a million day visitors and members every year.

If you choose to leave a gift in your Will, please seek professional legal advice to keep your Will up to date. If you're interested in requesting a free legacy brochure or are considering leaving a gift in your Will, please get in touch at legacy@fowa.org.uk or visit fowa.org.uk/legacy



Life in the forest

There is a myriad of life in our woodlands from the canopies to the rotting vegetation. It is all part of the wonderful ecosystem that makes Westonbirt and other woodlands such important and fascinating places.



Carrion crow

The carrion crow (*Corvus corone*) is one of eight different species of crow in the UK and perhaps the smartest and bravest of all.

Unlike the rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), carrion crows are often solitary although they will socialise in winter roosts. Like all corvids, the carrion crow will defend their territory and young from predators, putting on aeronautical displays to harass even the largest birds of prey, sometimes even stealing their meals. Widely regarded as scavengers, the carrion crow has a broad diet from fruit and seeds to small mammals and stolen eggs. Young carrion crows will sometimes stay with the parents to help feed the next generation before finding themselves a mate later in life.

Purple emperor



The purple emperor (*Apatura iris*) is the second largest butterfly found in the UK.

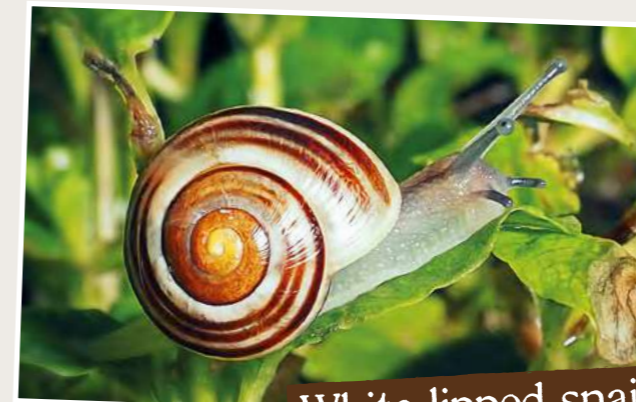
It is both delicate and beautiful in appearance. The male, often referred to as 'His Majesty', has a magnificent purple sheen to his wings. Confined largely to southern England, the purple emperor spends most of its time high in the canopies of deciduous trees where they feed on aphid honeydew and tree sap, but they will also feed on carrion and dung where they can find essential minerals and salts.

The tawny owl's (*Strix Aluco*) famous twit-twoo is the combined song of the male and female.

The female sings 'twit' when looking for a mate and if there's a male at large he will answer 'twoo'. A winter stroll at dawn or dusk in December is often the best time to hear them as they look for a mate. Tawny owls are outstanding woodland hunters with short wing spans giving them excellent manoeuvrability through the trees as they hunt for small mammals, frogs, birds and other unwary prey.



Tawny owl



White lipped snail

The white lipped snail (*Cepea hortensis*) has a smooth shell with swirls of any combination of yellow, pink, brown or red.

They mainly eat nettles, hogweed and ragwort. Breeding takes place in spring and autumn with one partner piercing the others shell with a hard harpoon like organ called a 'love dart'. The dart is used in advance of copulation and is thought to contain a compound that helps improve sperm preservation.

If you would like to contribute to our woodland seasonal update we would love to hear from you. Contact us by emailing magazine@fowa.org.uk

FAMILY FUN!

How seeds become trees



Clever ways that trees distribute seeds

Rachel Barnett, Learning Assistant, Forestry England

Almost all trees and plants begin life as a seed. Seeds come in all different shapes and sizes – some are nuts, some are stored inside fruit, some protected in a pod or cone and some simply hang from the tree for all to see.

Trees produce a huge number of seeds so at least a few of them have a good chance of growing into saplings (young trees).

Trees have lots of clever ways to scatter their seeds. It's important that they spread them far and wide so they have a good chance of growing into new trees. Seeds can be designed to scatter on the wind, cling to animals' fur and be carried away or eaten and distributed in animal poo, some may float away on water, others amazingly need fire to be released, and some pods even explode to scatter the seeds!



The acorn challenge

Collect and bury three nuts like a squirrel and then go off for a walk. Can you find them again when you get back?



Seed detective

Hunt around for different types of seeds and see if you can guess how the seed or its pod might be designed to help the seed survive and become a tree.

There are so many exciting activities that kids can get involved with to explore nature. Take a look at forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/wellbeing-activities

The journey of an acorn



Acorns are nuts that grow on oak trees. The seed is hidden and protected inside the tough acorn shell.



Oak trees use gravity to spread their seeds, with the heavy acorns falling from the branches to the forest floor when they are ready.



They also rely on animals such as squirrels and jays to help them. These animals love to eat acorns and store some of them in the ground to eat over winter.



But they often forget where they hid them, so these acorns stay in the ground and have the chance to turn into new trees.



The seeds need soil that is rich in nutrients, plenty of water and sunlight. First the seed sends roots down into the soil and then a shoot up towards the light. Eventually, a tiny, new oak tree will begin to grow!



As you spend time out in nature this autumn, keep your eyes peeled for all the different types of seeds that are waiting to begin their journey into new trees.



A wonderful new facility for the protection of our collection

The new Quarantine House is fully up and running, providing an additional line of defence against plant pests and diseases and forming an important part of our biosecurity protocol.



Sophie Nash, Programme Manager, Forestry England

The facility is now the entry point for all incoming seeds and young plants. It is here that they are monitored for pests and diseases before they are allowed into the Propagation Unit and out into the tree collection.

The new facility has two holding zones for intakes of seeds and young plants in both spring and autumn. In each zone we have work benches, fridges and sinks with hot and cold water for washing tools and pots within the facility.

“ I am really proud to be part of a team that are taking extra measures to protect our valuable historic landscape.

Penny Jones, Propagator, Forestry England



This project was partly funded by The Friends, further supported by individual donors and external funders who raised an amazing £30,000 towards this project.

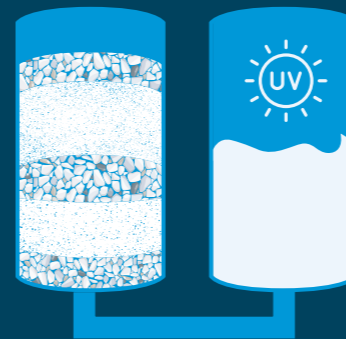
Thank you for your ongoing support that enables us to look after this special collection.

Harvesting clean water from an old tank

As part of Forestry England’s aim to be net zero by 2030, we have invested in a new rainwater filter system to reduce the amount of water we use. As any gardener knows, plants require a large amount of water during the summer months and watering our plants at Westonbirt is one of our biggest uses of water.

We were excited to rediscover an old rainwater tank underneath the existing glasshouses that was already capturing rainwater. Following a condition survey, we researched how we might clean the rainwater and use it. We were helped with advice from a horticultural specialist who designs and builds large greenhouses across Europe to grow soft fruit including tomatoes and strawberries.

Rainwater harvesting



We can store over 32 bathtubs of clean water in the filtered water tank.

The underground water tank has the capacity to store over 100 bathtubs of rainwater.

With this welcome insight, we installed a slow sand filter system for the Propagation Unit. This works by pumping rainwater into a large tank filled with layers of pebbles and sand of differing size that physically and biologically filters the water. The rainwater passes through the filters on a few cycles before being pumped into a separate tank and filtered by UV light to remove any disease-causing organisms. It is then ready to use for irrigation.

In case of extreme droughts, we are still connected to a back-up water supply, but the new system is an important step in harvesting rainwater and reducing mains water used at the arboretum.

To find out how you can support the arboretum visit our website fowa.org.uk/support



On your next visit...

...why not pop into the propagation viewing area by Keepers Cottage to find out more?



The Queen's Green Canopy

This year The Queen's Green Canopy has encouraged people from around the UK to plant a tree for the jubilee. In March this year, HRH The Prince of Wales joined staff and volunteers at Westonbirt to plant three Monarch birches, *Betula maximowicziana*.



Alison Vry, Plant Database Co-ordinator, Forestry England

The seeds for these trees were collected from Toyama, Japan in 2019, on an expedition led by colleagues from the University of Oxford. These seeds were then propagated and grown here at Westonbirt. The trees are easy to find as they are just opposite the Westonbirt Shop and Exploratree play area. Let's hope they grow as big as the 22m champion Monarch birch we have on the south side of Mitchell Drive!

HRH The Prince of Wales also presented the Royal Forestry Society's long service award to Rich Townsend, our Head Arborist. This award is only given to people who have worked continuously in forestry for the same organisation for over 30 years, so unsurprisingly it's quite a rare achievement. We are all very proud of Rich!



Introducing our new tree team members

The Tree Team looks after all aspects of managing the trees and landscape at Westonbirt. This includes tree care, propagation, sward management (mowing) and curation of the collection. We are delighted to welcome some excellent new starters to the team.



The Tree Team



Westonbirt women in forestry

Doug Weale

Doug is our new Tree Operations Manager and joins us from the commercial sector of Arboriculture. Doug will be looking after the day-to-day workings of The Tree Team and managing our highly skilled Arborists.



Rosie Anderson

Rosie trained at Cambridge Botanic Garden and Kew, she joins us as our new Dendrologist. Rosie will be making sure that our collection is correctly verified and will play a key role in our tree conservation work for *Acer* and *Sorbus*.



Nina Hiitola

Nina is our new Propagation Assistant. Originally from Finland she has a background in both forestry and nursery work, she will be learning the art of tree propagation from our expert, Penny.



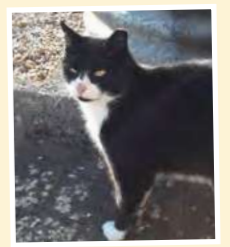
Chrissie Dow

Some of you may have met Chrissie before. She has worked on the chair making courses at Westonbirt Woodworks for some time. Chrissie has joined The Tree Team as our student arborist.



Magic

Magic has been part of the team for a while now, her duties include weekend supervision of the propagation yard and staff wellbeing!



Gift a Membership this Christmas

The perfect gift for a family member or a friend. It's a lovely gift that gives entry throughout the seasons whilst also helping to support our worthy cause to connect people with trees.

Gift a Membership at fowa.org.uk/join

Order by midnight 13 December to catch Santa's Christmas delivery! Christmas gifts of memberships will be sent directly to the member in December with a sticker on the envelope stating 'please don't peek until Christmas day!'



Meet Rosie Anderson

Dendrologist

Before joining the Westonbirt team, I worked as a Plant Health and Seeds Inspector for the Animal and Plant Health Agency.



My role involved checking plants and produce for pests and any particularly nasty diseases. Prior to that, I worked predominantly in horticulture, which has allowed me to live and train in lots of interesting places; including Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Longwood Gardens in the USA and Great Dixter Garden in East Sussex.

In 2019/2020 I completed an MSc in Plant and Fungal Taxonomy, Diversity and Conservation at Kew Gardens, which solidified my love for trees and tree conservation. Outside of work, I love going for walks and visiting gardens, drawing and painting, and I recently finished a pottery course. I am really excited to be working at Westonbirt Arboretum!

Pre-book your visit to Westonbirt Arboretum for essential key dates

Don't forget to pre-book a time slot to visit Westonbirt Arboretum on these key dates:

- Autumn (Sat 01 Oct – Sun 13 Nov)
- Christmas time (Sat 24 Dec – Mon 02 Jan)
- All Bank Holiday weekends

You can pre-book your free time slot up to 7 days in advance at fowa.org.uk/pre-book. Alternatively, you can pre-book by telephoning Forestry England's Customer Relations Team on **0300 068 0400** between Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Well done to the successful members who completed our last crossword:

Linda J Tillotson, Pat Parsons, Colin & Karen Falder, Ruth Burnett to name a few!

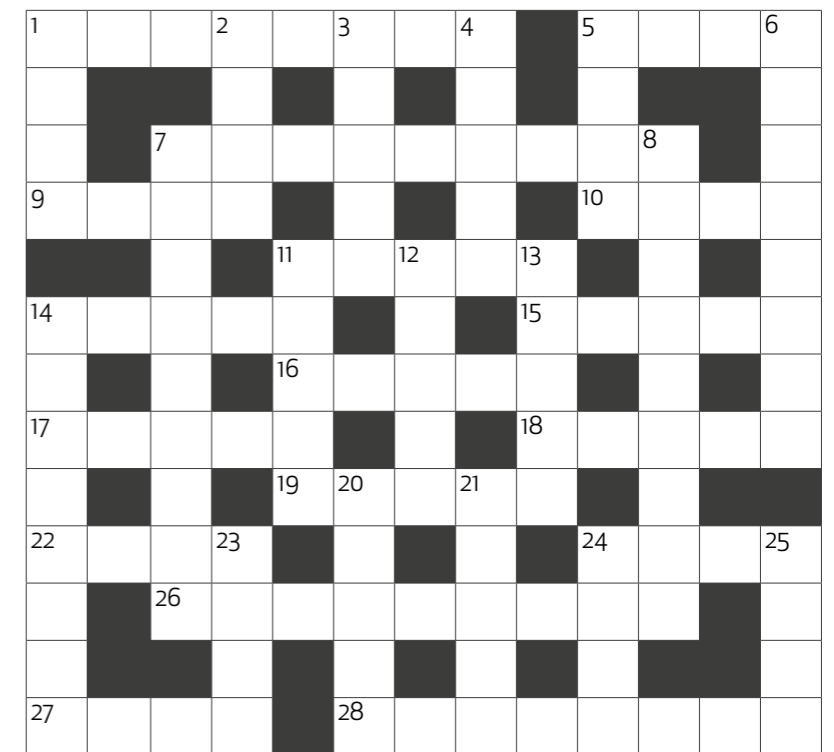
Crossword

A challenging crossword mainly about trees, material from trees, places with trees etc. A few additional helpful cryptic clues.

Thank you to our loyal supporter Roger Gorst who has once again created this brain teaser.

Across

1. North Australian gum tree with rough bark and hard wood. (8)
5. A type of Egyptian palm tree with edible fruit. (4)
7. A Chinese city with several nature parks including one with red plum trees. (9)
9. In Sudan, a dry watercourse, a bit of a dark horse! (4)
10. A distinctive part of a *Taxodium distichum*, showing above ground from below ground. (4)
11. "The rusted nails fell from the knots, That held the pear to the ---- wall". Tennyson. (5)
14. Tree providing hardwood and syrup. (5)
15. '---- Wood' a small forest in West Sussex. (5)
16. A word for wood from the SE Asian tree, *Pterocarpus indicus*, also called amboyna wood. (5)
17. A Mediterranean island noted for olive trees. (5)
18. A measuring tool, once often made from *Pinus armandii*. (5)
19. Old name for a Mediterranean port, exporting cedar and pine. Once linked with Tyre. (5)
22. River rising in Corriegairack Forest. (5)
24. A local name for mangrove palm, stem in swamp, leaves above ground. (4)
26. A mountain range that includes an area where Norway spruce is grown for the best violins. (9)
27. A bird that used to favour elm trees for nesting. (4)
28. Evergreen shrub or small tree, with pink or white flowers but could be red alone if mixed! (8)



Down

1. An evergreen oak providing material for cricket balls. (4)
2. A type of oven for annealing glass; experiments with wood firing in 2015 used ash and beech. (4)
3. A pine, sometimes known as a false monkey puzzle tree. (5)
4. Wood used for wattle, baskets and frames of coracles. Has nuts. (5)
5. In Scotland, a wee piece of wood knocked into a hole in masonry to take a screw. (4)
6. A person who may use pieces of wood to make small replicas of ships etc. (8)
7. A colour used in catalogues to describe *Acer palmatum* 'Phoenix'. (9)
8. A product of *Hevea brasiliensis* may be used to make these, laid on boards under carpets. (9)
11. A word used in biological classification, ranking above 'species'. (5)
12. "There was an old man in a tree, who was horribly ----- by a bee" Lear. (5)
13. Small fishing lake in Vaestmanland, Sweden; surrounded by silver birch trees. Found back in unraked areas. (5)
14. From palm trees and kusum trees an oil once requiring an extra cloth on the seats in 1st class railway carriages. (8)
20. A hardwood from tropical Africa. Yoruba people believe the tree is inhabited by a spirit. (5)
21. A tree in Chana, Crete, claimed to be the oldest of this species. (5)
23. City once known as Eborakon; the place of yew trees. (4)
24. An inert gas that with palm trees may provide illumination? (4)
25. Tree or shrub; fruit composed of 2 single seeded samaras fused at the ovules. (4)

Get your thinking cap on and email a photo of your completed crossword to magazine@fowa.org.uk to have your name featured in our next magazine!



Fantastic catering choices for all tastes

Fosters Events has been working with our teams at Westonbirt since January 2021 to reinvigorate our on-site catering experiences.

In that time they have created, and are now operating, three separate catering offers including a range of seasonal concessions. The Kitchen, The Smokehouse, and The Pantry welcome more than half a million visitors each year, as well as staff and volunteers.

The Kitchen is the main restaurant hub and embraces the environment in which it stands. The Kitchen has a forest garden feel and includes an abundance of plants and foliage. This same concept is at the core of the other two catering spaces. The Pantry and The Smokehouse provide a walk-in kiosk as well as an ice-cream hatch.

All the catering spaces reflect Fosters' ethos of remaining as local and sustainable as possible. Working with suppliers such as Cam Butchers and Hobbs House Bakery, The Kitchen serves hungry walkers with a wonderful range of tasty breakfasts, small and large plates, sides and desserts. Some current menu favourites are the chicken liver and brandy parfait with cornichons, Hobb's House sourdough and mixed leaves and the chargrilled lamb koftas with peas, green beans, new potatoes and mint yoghurt.

For those on the go, The Pantry serves warming coffees and hot drinks, as well as ice cream. The Smokehouse offers guests some very tasty takeaway options such as filled baps and artisan pizzas. Don't forget to keep your eyes peeled for some of the seasonal concessions too, serving anything from pulled pork and nachos, to sweet treats and delights!

Why not enjoy a meal, light lunch or tasty snack on your next visit?

Restaurant & Pantry Open 9.30am – 4pm

Smokehouse Open 12pm – 3pm during weekends, bank holidays and at varying times in school holidays.

Closed Christmas and New Year's Day

Westonbirt, The National Arboretum's threatened trees and where to find them

£4.95



On sale in the Westonbirt Shop

10% discount for members



the friends
of Westonbirt
Arboretum
Registered Charity 293190

Westonbirt walkies

Out and about with our furry friends
Live, love, woof! #WestonbirtWalkies

We love sharing your photos on Instagram @FriendsofWestonbirt every Saturday of you enjoying Westonbirt with your lovely dogs! Here's a small selection of pups enjoying their #WestonbirtWalkies...



Rescue dog 'Buster the Sprollie' is one of Westonbirt's most frequent visitors. He is so well known and liked by The Restaurant Team that he often receives a free sausage for brunch!

Dog: Buster | **Owner:** Greg
@gregtownsend75

Buster



Participation

Westonbirt is Rory's favourite place to visit. We timed our autumn visit perfectly this year and saw the trees turning the most beautiful colours! Rory loved running around in the crunchy leaves and posing under the trees.

Dog: Rory | **Owner:** Bronny
@rorythepartidood



Rory



Nelly & Willow

Having membership at Westonbirt is amazing! We really enjoy our visits with the dogs, and having membership means we can visit as often as we like. Although the car park often seems busy it never seems crowded inside due to the vast amounts of paths to follow. The dogs really enjoy the area with plenty of places to have a good sniff. My favourite time is autumn when the colours are just gorgeous, our photos don't do it justice! We always end a visit with a nice cup of coffee!

Dog: Nelly & Willow | **Owner:** Natalie
@coolnatz1

Westonbirt has been our lifeline over various lockdowns with three kids. Having Remi with us means we're all more motivated to go for walks with her and Westonbirt has given us the most beautiful backdrop. We visit every weekend (almost every day over lockdown) and always find something new. Remi has been coming since she was a puppy, we used to have her in the kid's pram when she was too little for long walks! It is her favourite place too!

Dog: Remi | **Owner:** Jess
@remithefox



More #WestonbirtWalkies stories coming soon!



John Muir Award

Encouraging people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places.

In order to receive the award each participant completes four challenges; Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share. There are three levels of award; Discover, Explorer and Conserve. Once completed, participants receive a badge and certificate.



Karen Price, Community Co-ordinator, Forestry England

Whilst taking part in the Westonbirt Community Programme, many of our participants have the opportunity to gain a John Muir Award. The award encourages young people and adults to discover a green space and take actions to conserve it.

Unlike many award schemes that focus on technical learning and knowledge, the John Muir Award supports creative ways of engaging with the local environment, leading to a greater connection with nature and a desire to protect it.

Explore

Participants experienced the arboretum during different seasons – capturing the spring colours through mindful photography and discovering scents, like the candyfloss tree in autumn. They experimented with making dyes and paints from natural materials, foraged wild garlic and created collaborative poems inspired by the collection. Some have even camped overnight, exploring the arboretum by moonlight and waking to the dawn chorus.

Conserve

Based in Silk Wood, many participants have helped restore some of the derelict coppice surrounding the Community Shelter. This teaches some of the traditional skills and techniques used in coppicing and its value to habitat management. They then use the coppiced wood to create mementos of their time at Westonbirt – reindeer being a firm favourite.

Share

At the end of an award programme, participants are encouraged to share and celebrate their achievements, feelings, and the things they have learnt with the group. For some, standing up in front of their peers and giving a short presentation can be a daunting task. But it is also an important life skill, helping people to recognise and be proud of their accomplishments.

Making new friends, when often in life they can feel excluded, trying new things, when fear of failure is scary, and helping others when they lack confidence, are all part of the experience. All their achievements are celebrated in the group with the accompaniment of some tasty pizza cooked in the cob oven and the presentation of certificates by a member of the arboretum management team.



Making an impact

During his visit to Westonbirt earlier in 2022, HRH The Prince of Wales noticed two of the volunteers wearing John Muir Award badges and quizzed them on what they had done to earn them. The badges are currently only available to award participants at Westonbirt and are highly sought after. As the patron of The John Muir Trust, I like to think he was curious why he didn't have one. Several Westonbirt volunteers and staff have also achieved their awards with the Estate Team currently refurbishing the bird hide area as part of their award.

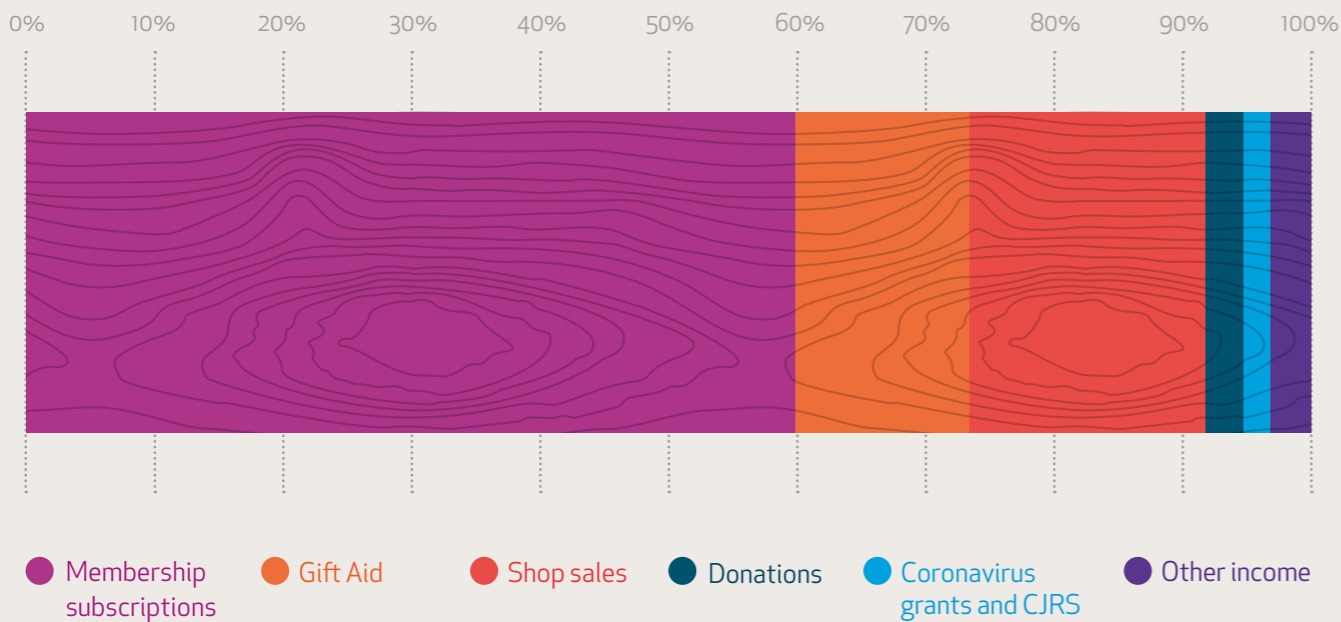
Although it is not a technical qualification, the award has importance and impact. For many participants on the Community Programme, it is often their first certificate and the personal value and pride they place on it is obvious to all. Recently I bumped into someone who had taken part in the Community Programme several years ago whilst at school. At the end of our conversation he told me he still had his certificate pinned up on his wall.

To find out more about the John Muir Award at johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award

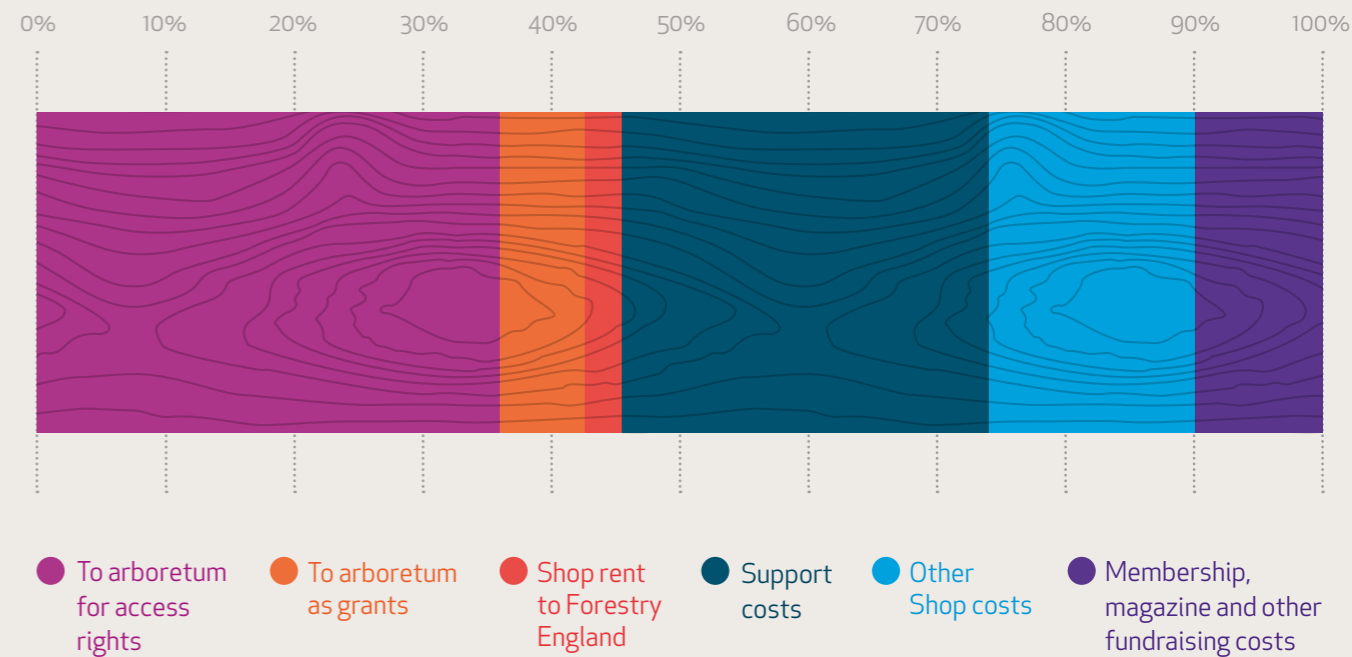
Financial overview

Overall Position:
In 2021, The Friends (FoWA) made an overall surplus of £151k.

Income – £1.9m



Expenditure – £1.7m



Income

Overall income for 2021: £1.9m

Membership income: £1.1m

Plus Gift Aid: £300k

Overall membership income including Gift Aid: £1.4m

Membership income accounts for 60% of our total income. If we include Gift Aid this increases to 74%.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure for 2021: £1.7m

Biggest item of expenditure was the Arboretum Access Rights payment of £637.3k which accounts for 37% of the expenditure.

Grants

The grants expenditure of £89.6k were grants to Forestry England to support various projects – a breakdown is in the table below:

Project	Total
Community Shelter	£47.5k
Quarantine House	£21.6k
Climate control for propagation unit	£14.3k
Mobility scooters	£6.2k
Total	£89.6k

For full information please view our comprehensive Annual Report at fowa.org.uk/2021-annual-report

STIHL



AKTIH
SYSTEM

**BATTERY POWER.
BY STIHL.
READY FOR ANY
CHALLENGE.**

AKTIH
SYSTEM



**READY FOR ANY CHALLENGE.
THE STIHL AK SYSTEM. CORDLESS POWER TOOLS
FOR MEDIUM-SIZED AND LARGER GARDENS.**

Real gardens never stop growing. They constantly present challenges. Be ready to take on the challenge with tools from the STIHL AK System. Powered by a high-performance Lithium-Ion battery that can be used in all the tools across the system, these lawnmowers, hedge trimmers, chainsaws, leaf blower and grass trimmer are designed to be easy to use, lightweight and quiet, without compromising on performance. That's real cordless power. Made by STIHL.

AVAILABLE FROM APPROVED STIHL DEALERS. SELECTED GARDEN CENTRES AND BY VISITING SHOP.STIHL.CO.UK

**Friends of Westonbirt
Arboretum Team**

Chief Executive Officer
Emma Griffiths

**Head of
Supporter Engagement**
Jane Shute

Supporter Services Manager
Julia Bartlett

Individual Giving Manager
Ellie Davis

**Marketing &
Communications Officer**
Jo Murray

**Supporter
Services Coordinator**
Kelly Hough

Patrons
HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
Giles Coode-Adams OBE
Sir Henry Elwes KCVO
Hon Beth Rothschild

President
Christopher Brickell CBE

Vice President
Roger Busby CBE

**Supporter
Services Coordinator**
Rachel Raggatt

**Supporter Services
Office Administrator**
Anne-Marie Tennison

Retail Manager
Tracey Burgoyne

Office Manager
Debbie Lyons

Finance Director
Helen Turner

Finance Officer
Maureen Nisbet

For membership enquiries:
membership@fowa.org.uk

Trustees
Mike Mintram (Chair)
Beth Bottrill
Gavin Grant
Martin Green
John Parker
Martyn Smith
Rachel Walker
Sian Troupe
Owen Forster
Alaana Woods
Paul Isherwood

Board Secretary
Linda Barnes

Arboretum opening times

9am-5pm (last paid entry March - Nov 4.30pm)
(Dec - Feb 4pm) closed Christmas Day

Please pre-book your visit for key dates at
fowa.org.uk/pre-book

General Enquiries Monday-Friday
Tel: 0300 067 4890
westonbirt@forestryengland.uk

Learning Centre
The Learning and Participation Team offers a wide range of fun, hands-on programmes
Tel: 0300 067 4856

Mobility Scooter Reservations
Book in advance, collect from Welcome Building
forestryengland.uk/westonbirt

Volunteering
Tel: 0300 067 4853
volunteer.westonbirt@forestryengland.uk

Westonbirt Shop
Open every day, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day
Tel: 01666 880 787
retail@fowa.org.uk

Restaurant & Pantry
Open 9.30am - 4pm

Smokehouse
Open 12pm - 3pm during weekends, bank holidays and at varying times in school holidays. Closed Christmas and New Year's Day.
Tel: 01666 880064

**Westonbirt, The National Arboretum, Tetbury,
Gloucestershire GL8 8QS**



Forestry England

WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM'S
**ENCHANTED
CHRISTMAS**

25 Nov - 21 Dec

Open on selected evenings

Set out on the illuminated trail and discover a magical world of breath-taking light spectacles!

**Book
Now**

forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/enchanted-christmas