

Living Heritage



WOODLAND
TRUST

The Woodland Trust legacy newsletter No 7 Spring 2006

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Children playing amongst the bluebells

WTP/Nick Spurling



Joan Fox

Courtesy of Mrs. Fox's estate

Miss Fox's lasting gift

Legacies are of vital importance to the Woodland Trust and play a huge part in our achievements. One of the most generous legacies received in 2005 was from long-standing member and *Nature's Calendar* recorder, Miss Dorothy Joan Fox, who died in 2004 aged 91.

We'd got to know Miss Fox over the years through her delightful chatty letters, occasional phone calls, and, more recently, her pledge to remember the Trust in her will. She was determined to do all she could to help protect our woodland heritage, and told us how she fell in love with trees from an early age.

'I have had a thing about trees and the country since I was three.'

We learned that one of Joan's greatest passions was music. She was a talented

singer, pianist and music teacher. On her seventh birthday Joan was given a silver thimble by her piano teacher, Miss Beatrice Lillyman, which linked her back in time and tradition to Clara Wieck Schumann, wife of world-famous composer Robert Schumann! Mrs Schumann, who was an accomplished musician in her own right, had been given the thimble in 1826 on her seventh birthday in recognition of her musical skills, and she later presented it to Beatrice Lillyman when she was seven. Joan later had the satisfaction of keeping the tradition alive by presenting the thimble to her own protégé, classical pianist Anthea Fry, on her seventh birthday.

Joan was also an enthusiastic and imaginative gardener, developing her woodland garden from scratch and going on to win a BBC competition for garden design. And it was from this garden she recorded the first signs of spring for the

Trust's *Nature's Calendar*. One of her letters describes how the wood pigeons used to call to her and her mother whilst they were weeding with what sounded very much like:

*'You poor fools,
you two,
you poor fools,
you two'*



Colin Varnell

Another records a visit by a lone heron, with the accompanying comment: 'Neighbour has a carp pond!'

Joan's passion for trees was later reflected in her talent for painting – the picture above right being just one example of the many woodland scenes she depicted. And if that wasn't enough, sport was something else she excelled at, particularly athletics and table tennis, the latter keeping her fit right into her late seventies.



Picture painted by Joan Fox

'I once put all my treasures in a little tin box when I was seven and buried it in a little copse.'

None of these accomplishments come as a surprise to us. Everyone who leaves a legacy to the Woodland Trust has a passion for nature and wildlife and many, like Miss Fox, make the most of their talents and are especially committed to helping future generations. Miss Fox left the Trust an unrestricted legacy which will enable us to use the money where most urgently needed, without conditions. Legacies like these are of particular importance because they allow us to respond quickly to a threat to an area of woodland, or to an opportunity.

Miss Fox lives on in all the lives she touched with her music and in the achievements her legacy to the Woodland Trust will make possible. We are indebted to her, and all others like her, who remember the Woodland Trust in their will and help to keep our woodland alive. ■

A wonderful way to celebrate a life



Michael Bolton

Margaret Bolton is a very proud woman, and justifiably so! Her husband Michael was an extremely talented artist – potter, silver-smith

and jeweller – and the legacy he left behind when he died last year will live on, and on. We first heard about Michael when Margaret decided to mark his life in a very special way by dedicating an acre of woodland in his name.

She chose the Trust's Ash & Luckhurst Wood in Stone, Isle of Oxney – a place where both Margaret and Michael had spent many happy times together.

As a long-standing Woodland Trust member, Margaret wanted to honour Michael in a way that would link his name, and their lives, for ever to something they were both passionate about – nature, trees, and woodland.

Margaret sent us a picture of a beautiful goblet crafted in silver and adorned with precious jewels – to show us what a talented man he was – and we had to agree!

He became a huge name in the world of silver and was commissioned by royalty, theatre, film, celebrities and clergy, and anyone else who appreciated the beauty, originality and craftsmanship of his pieces.



Images courtesy of Margaret Bolton

A fine example of Michael's craftsmanship Michael was influenced by Celtic metal work and the ethics of the 20th century British Arts and Crafts movement, combined with the magic and romanticism of the King Arthur legends. He also nurtured the talents of aspiring young people and told them:

'If you ever need inspiration... look at leaves, branches and flowers.'

And true to his word, that's what Michael always did himself – taking off into the woods with his dogs to find inspiration amongst the trees.

That's why Margaret was so keen to dedicate woodland in his name – not just to remember him where they were happiest, but to help the Woodland Trust conserve Britain's woodland heritage for future generations to enjoy and be inspired by. As we said, a wonderful way to celebrate a life.

Acorns into mighty Oaks

When I leave this world I hope
I leave a better place
where deeds I've done
and paths I've trod
have helped the human race;
where seeds I've sown will blossom still
and trees I've planted grow
from acorns into mighty oaks,
I hope I've made it so.

For to leave the world
without a trace,
no footprints in the sand,
no memory in a loved one's heart,
no mark upon the land,
no legacy to show you cared,
no promises to keep,
must surely make it hard to face
an eternity of sleep.

SBW



"He was a wonderful man who became a dear friend"

When I wanted an extra special present for my late husband's birthday, I commissioned Michael to make a silver water colour box. It was exquisite yet practical, and I have it to this day. He was a wonderful man who became a dear friend, and I shall miss him.

Dame Judi Dench,
Woodland Trust Supporter

Five natural gems

1 Beaulieu Wood ...into the light

Beaulieu Wood is a vital piece in a complex mosaic of ancient woods in the Wye Valley, completing a vast natural haven of around 1,173 acres (475 hectares). We acquired Beaulieu in



Beaulieu Wood

2001 with a generous legacy from Dr Vivian Mary David. Like many other woods, Beaulieu had previously been planted with conifers, casting it into darkness. We identified 14 'hot-spots' – pockets of ancient woodland around which rescue efforts can be targeted – and are now starting to make real progress.



Removing conifers, October 2005

Last autumn, as the picture (left) shows, we began gradually removing the conifers. Slowly, these will be replaced with broadleaves such as oak and beech. Instead of the stifling shade of the towering conifers, the native trees will enable life-giving dappled light to penetrate through to the woodland floor, turning Beaulieu back into the wild paradise it once was. ■

2 Tinney's Firs ...oak aged and full of character

Set on the northern tip of the New Forest National Park, Tinney's Firs borders the rolling chalk downs of West Wiltshire. Small streams punctuate stands of towering mature trees that give the wood its majestic character.

Mr G R Munday must have been very proud of his wood. When he passed on he kindly left his house and Tinney's Firs to the Woodland Trust. The house has since been sold, providing important funds for the wood's ongoing care.

We will honour his wishes by protecting and enhancing this stunning site. Facilities have already been improved, and we are giving nature a hand, for example, by ensuring that the native trees are encouraged and the varied ground flora is not suffocated by rhododendron.

With our support, nature will do the best work herself. The old oaks already standing will become veterans, providing a home to a myriad of species that only these ageing trees can support. Some will naturally fall to the ground, punching holes in the canopy and allowing the native broadleaves to regenerate. As the wood ages, like a good wine, it will get even better. ■



Tinney's Firs

3 Stray Head Banks ...where the heart is

We are always looking to do the very best for the woods we care for and, as size is important, we are keen to extend our woods where appropriate. We're delighted therefore to announce that Stray Head Banks – the restoration and planting of which was supported by a legacy in 2002 – is getting bigger!

Set in the North York Moors National Park on banks leading down to the Little Beck, Stray Head Banks formed a beautiful patchwork of small improved fields and tiny remnant ancient woodlands. Since we acquired the site we have planted native trees to link the most important sections of woodland on the site whilst retaining valuable open grass areas to maximise wildlife value.

We are delighted to say that Alan and Hazel Cope, who live in Pittsburgh, USA, gave the Trust significant support which has enabled us to create a wonderful new extension to Stray Head Banks.

Alan and Hazel wanted to create a living memorial to Alan's sister Kathleen. The family have many links with Yorkshire and Kathleen loved the North York Moors, so they felt that the new extension would be a worthy tribute to her.



4 Great Knott Wood...lakeside treasure

Spectacularly beautiful, the Lake District has one of the highest densities of woodland cover anywhere in northern England. This includes a high proportion of ancient woodland, the UK's richest natural habitat.

In this environment, quality goes hand in hand with quantity as species need space to thrive. This makes the abundant woods in the Lakes precious indeed, as ancient woodland covers just two per cent of the UK as a whole. So when the opportunity to

acquire Great Knott Wood in Cumbria arose, the Woodland Trust grasped it, thanks to a generous legacy from Mrs Frances Marian McDonald for the Trust to spend on the purchase of 'a wood in North Lancashire or South Cumbria'*.

Offering sublime views of the surrounding countryside, Great Knott Wood lies on the south west shore of Lake Windermere. But like so many ancient woods, it had been planted with exotic conifers that suffocate the native broadleaves and flora.

Now we will breathe life into the precious pockets of ancient woodland that survive, giving ground species such as bluebell, wood sorrel and greater stitchwort the chance to spread. Slowly, the conifers will be thinned, throwing light onto the woodland floor, allowing natives like oak, ash and birch to regenerate.

The revived Great Knott Wood will be a living, lasting tribute to the careful forethought of Mrs McDonald. ■

*The acquisition of Great Knott Wood was also supported by Friends of the Lake District, Tubney and other charitable trusts.



Common spotted orchids

The field will soon be planted and provide more room for the many valuable species to flourish. Despite its small size (49 acres/20 hectares with the new extension), Stray Head Banks is full of special pockets of wildlife – old oaks, mature hedgerows, orchid-rich sunny glades, and the beck itself.

The new extension also means the Woodland Trust can make the whole site more accessible to visitors. It is fitting that the joy they will derive from Stray Head Banks will mirror the pleasure that Kathleen Cope reaped from Yorkshire's wild landscapes. ■

5 Wentwood Forest...medieval miracle

You may know that the Woodland Trust was able to save Wentwood Forest near Newport; but what you might not realise is that alongside the exceptional fundraising appeal from supporters and the public, three legacies were vitally important in its acquisition, those of: Mrs Marjorie Ethel Tompson, Mrs Joan Fielding, and Mrs Phyllis Ella

Carpenter. In addition, Mr Doorne kindly varied his mother's will to create a legacy in Mrs Doorne's memory. Speed was of the essence and the ability to immediately make use of these generous legacies was key to the success of the campaign. Without them, the chance to restore the Forest may have been lost – forever. ■



Wentwood Forest

Great Knott

Poetry Woodland Reminiscences

Trees

When I first walked the countryside, the trees were – well just trees, a background or a feature of the landscape that one sees.

And then I thought I ought to know which is which – and why and so I came to see a world that I'd been passing by.

I stopped to look at mighty oaks that spread their elbows wide, at birch a-flutter in the wind and beech that shone with pride.

The sycamores that winged their way to fill up every space, the limes that line great avenues with everlasting grace.

The alders by the waterside, with funny little cones, the yews that for a thousand years guard our ancestors' bones.

I found the orange-topped Scots Pine and the oak that's evergreen, and the giant Wellingtonia that dominates the scene.

And now I see a landscape that's filled with more and more of a world that's there for all of us to cherish and explore

Mr Holly Ward
Leicestershire, member for eleven years

Nature photographs

Please let us have your poetry, woodland reminiscences, and nature photographs.

The best will be included in the next edition of Living Heritage.



Send us your caption for this photograph and we will print the best in our next issue.

Niall Beattie, images from the edge

Inheritance tax laid bare

If  = more than £275,000 – Inheritance Tax may be payable at 40p in the £ on everything above that

The current (2005/06) net threshold figure for estates is £275,000* – above this, Inheritance Tax is liable to be claimed by the Inland Revenue at a rate of 40% (40p in the £).

It may sound like a lot, but the days are long gone when only the very rich worried about Inheritance Tax. With house prices soaring over the last few years, many home owners now have houses valued at over £275,000 or estates that will reach way beyond that figure once assets such as stocks and shares, antiques and paintings, savings and investments are totted up.



A simple method is to leave anything above the tax threshold to a charity as the value of a charitable gift is deducted from your estate before inheritance tax is calculated. For example, if you leave assets up to the value of the tax threshold to a non-exempt beneficiary such as your grandchildren and leave the remainder of your estate to an exempt beneficiary like a spouse or a charity, you will reduce the potential payment of inheritance tax, unless there are other considerations to make your estate liable to inheritance tax, as referred to below.

A further option is to give some of your money away before you die. But if you give it to a non-exempt beneficiary and die within seven years of making the gift, Inheritance Tax on a sliding scale will still be payable. And of course if you give too much away you may end up compromising your own quality of life. Before considering this option you should take independent legal and financial advice.

Making a will is the one sure way of ensuring your wishes count, and can reduce the amount of Inheritance Tax payable on your estate.

Check with your solicitor or financial advisor to find the best way that you can plan for the future to maximise the amount of money you leave to your chosen beneficiaries. ■

* Yet to be ratified, the 2006/7 and 2007/8 threshold figures, announced in 2005 are, £285,000 and £300,000 respectively.

Fond Memories of Credenhill Park Wood in Herefordshire

Miss Marianne Hinchliff, Surrey. Member for six years

“In 1940 my first impression of Credenhill was rows of confusingly similar pre-fab huts guarded by a high wire fence. As assistant to the RAF Senior Accountant Officer, all the new intakes came through my office, including many

Polish and Czech airmen. One Pole named Tadex had more cheek than the rest and thus we embarked upon a rapid courtship, which often took us for walks in the wood at Credenhill. The paths were rough and being winter, it was often misty and bitterly cold.

Yew trees were planted on the ramparts of the hill fort 2-300 years ago.

“As the evenings lengthened we cycled further into that lovely countryside but rarely got away from the signs of war. It was not unusual to spot aeroplanes tucked into the perimeter edge of woods where wedges had been cut to take the tails and camouflage netting draped over the wings and cockpit. The camouflage experts learnt a lot from nature, especially butterflies at rest. In the spring the smell of honeysuckle, and the damp hedges dripping with jewelled spiders' webs was something I will never forget – Credenhill holds wonderful memories still. ”

Credenhill Park Wood was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 2002. With a wealth of wildlife and a nationally important Iron Age hill fort, it is well worth a visit. ■



Miss Marianne Hinchliff, 1940

Advice column

Helen Billing
Senior Legal Officer FInst.L.Ex,TEP

Q What is Probate?

A Probate is the legal authorisation confirming that a will is valid. Once granted, it authorises the executors to carry out their duties to administer the Estate and carry out the wishes expressed in the will.

Q Who can apply for Probate?

A Personal Representatives (known as executors or trustees) chosen by the will-maker to carry out the wishes expressed in the will and administer the estate following their death. Where there is no will, the Grant of Letters of Administration is applied for by the person entitled under the Probate rules.

Q Do I need a solicitor to apply for probate?

A No. There is no legal requirement to go through a solicitor. However, the process is not always as straight forward as it may first appear. You will need the full details of the assets, liabilities and beneficiaries of the estate. You will also have to consider whether Inheritance Tax will be payable. When you have completed and submitted the information and fee to the Probate Registry, you will receive an appointment to attend at the Probate Registry.

Q What is the first step for making a personal application for Probate?

A Ask the nearest District Probate Registry for the necessary forms. The address can be obtained from your local library or on-line at: www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk (search for probate offices).

It's a family affair...



Mark Hamblin/rspb-images.com

Adult Goshawk in flight

Can a love of nature be inherited? It certainly seems to be in the Hurrell family whose long association with the Trust goes way back to its creation more than 30 years ago in Devon. Henry George Hurrell MBE was one of the founder members of the Trust, working alongside Kenneth Watkins OBE, the Trust's founder.



Colin Yarnell

Dormouse in hibernation

Henry Hurrell loved woodland and was passionately interested in wildlife. He was an eminent naturalist – sitting on committees for wildlife conservation, conducting important nature studies and writing books that are still available today.

HG (as he was known to his friends) remained a Trustee until his death in 1981, and his legacy to the Trust and to wildlife is still very much in evidence.

Now, another legacy from the Hurrell family – that of Mrs Helena Dorothy Hurrell Harris – continues the family's commitment by benefiting not just one, but two of the woods in our care. Mrs Harris loved Dartmoor, so it was fitting that her legacy should help woods in that area. Half went towards acquiring Houndtor Wood (see *Living Heritage* 2003), and half will help return East Wray Cleave Wood in Lustleigh, Devon to its former glory. East Wray Cleave, once beautiful ancient woodland, was planted with commercial conifers about 50 years ago, leaving vulnerable fragments of the native habitat fighting for survival in a dark inhospitable environment.

With Mrs Harris' legacy we can now realise the wood's potential, helping it

to show its wonderful true colours once again. We've started thinning the conifers to give latent seed banks the chance to spring into life. And where it's needed, we will help nature along with replanting.

Surveys have shown that the wood also has some very special visitors. The magnificent goshawk is often spotted soaring overhead; and, despite the exotic conifers, the vulnerable diminutive dormouse nests there, feeding on the insects, berries and buds.

Which brings us full circle back to Henry Hurrell, who, with his daughter Elaine, conducted a ground-breaking study of dormice in the 1970s. Now nest boxes have been installed in East Wray Cleave Wood for its dormouse population, and their needs are taken into account in the management of the wood. A fitting legacy for what has undoubtedly been a family affair. ■

Are YOU willing to save a wood?

This newsletter shows the very real difference legacies can make. If you are now considering remembering the Woodland Trust in your will – thank you. We would be grateful if you could fill in the pledge form enclosed. It is not binding in any way but it does help us plan for the future.

Contact us

Contact us for our free comprehensive brochure which explains the will making process step by step, translates legal jargon into everyday language and gives real examples of what legacies have enabled the Woodland Trust to achieve.

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Why not have a look at our simple guide to making a will by visiting our website at:

www.legacies.org.uk