



# **THE SUSSEX WOODCRAFT SOCIETY**

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Hi everyone, here is your latest SWS newsletter.

## **CHAIRMAN'S LETTER**

Our show at Henfield is fast approaching and I hope your annual competition piece is coming on well or at least in the planning stages. Thank you also to those who have offered to make something to hang on the tree at the Cuckfield Tree Festival this year.

I would also like to remind people if they have anything for the tombola please could you bring it along to the December meeting. This means Yvonne will be able to prepare the prizes before the show. Money raised from the tombola and the cake sales goes a long way to paying towards the cost of hall hire.

I look forward to seeing you all at our November meeting and I am looking forward to hearing Philip's talk on how he recycles pallets!

## **LAST MONTH'S SPEAKER**

Last month Michael Blencowe gave a very interesting talk and tour of The Sussex Nature Reserves. He had some great slides. I hadn't realized there were so many sites to look after, and I feel he and his team do an excellent job. I think although there is a lot of hard work attached to the job, it must also be very rewarding work to be involved with.

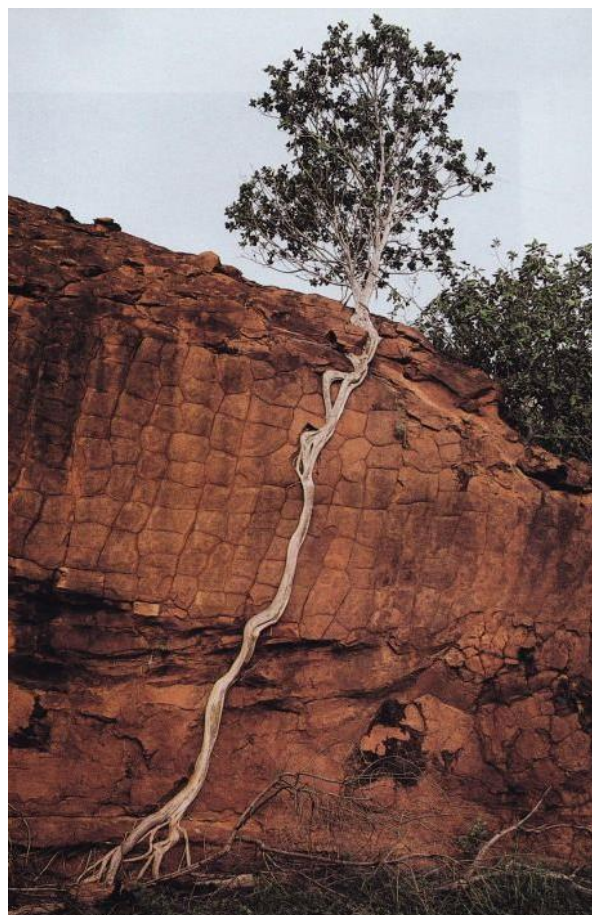
## **MEMBERS WORK**

We had four items brought in this month. A potential new member brought in a model ship he bought as a kit. Then we had Ray Osgood bring in another of his wonderful walking sticks plus the gun he has been working on.



## FEATURE ARTICLE

As most of you may be aware by now, I love trees. They give us so much, far too much for me to list here. Without trees, we wouldn't have our SWS Society and I wouldn't have met so many wonderful talented people over the years nor would I have made so many friends. Bob Jubb recently sent me some photos from a site entitled, **Trees That Refuse to Die**. It brought it home to me trees sometimes struggle for life every bit as much as we humans do. Tree seeds are sometimes deposited in the most inhospitable places and yet somehow, some of them manage to survive. They may not reach their normal size and often they grow very misshapen and stunted. But they do create a wonderful form of art that only nature can produce. So, I hope over the next few weeks to show you some of these natures' wonders.



## THIS MONTHS WOOD QUIZ

. In which county is England's largest forest?.....Answer on page 5

### AMAZING TREES

### ONLY ONE LEFT

*Pennantia baylisiana* is a species of plant in the Pennantiaceae family (Icacinaceae) in older classifications). It is endemic to the Three Kings\_Islands, New Zealand, where only one plant is known to exist. It is threatened by habitat loss. *Pennantia baylisiana* was listed as one of the world's rarest plants by *The Guinness Book of Records*. The single tree known in the wild grows on a scree slope on the northern face of Great Island in the Three Kings group off Cape Reinga, New Zealand. The species was discovered in 1945 by Professor Geoff Baylis of the University of Otago.



There have been efforts to grow new seedlings as part of an effort to increase the population.

I wonder how many other trees in the world have been lost over the past few years. I hope more is done to protect vulnerable species like this one as we have no idea of the wealth of medicinal compounds they may harbour, for such a large amount of our modern medicines come from plants and trees.

## AMAZING TREE FACTS

The Longleaf Pine, native to the southern part of the United States, does not have heartwood until it is 18 or so years old.

The world's sweetest tree is native to West Africa. It is the Serendipity Berry. It is 3000 times sweeter than sucrose.

## THIS MONTHS JOKE SPOT

A lady is waiting for a bus and is holding her parrot, but when the bus pulls up it says **NO BIRDS ALLOWED**, so she quickly stuffs it down her knickers. When the bus conductor comes up to collect the fare, he says "What a lovely day today". And the parrot shouts out "**ITS NOT DOWN HERE**"

## THE AMAZING WORD OF WOOD

There has been a lot of talk in the media recently about Artificial Intelligence. But it can't even begin to replace the human imagination or creativity. I am in awe of the different things people make out of wood and the vastly differing designs that I have found on the Internet over the past few years. I have wanted to share some of them with you on here so here are some more.



## TREE FOLK LORE

### THE BIRCH

Both the birch and Brigid derived their names from the Indo-European word bher, "shining white".

The birch has a somewhat ambiguous history in folklore. While the tree is protector of children, protects them from the weaknesses which may arise in early life and is said to ward off evil spirits, it has also frequently been used for whipping children (hence, "birching"). Possibly the link was forged that while disciplining the children the branches were also driving out evil spirits.

Birch twigs were also used to "beat the bounds" of properties so that the exact limits of one's land were known and where the boundaries lay.

The birch is known as the "lady of the woods", reflecting its association with other trees considered to represent the female principle, including the rowan and the willow. In Norse mythology the birch is associated with Freya, goddess of fecundity and Frigga, goddess of marital life. The birch is said to be associated with the planet Venus and therefore with all aspects of love. The birch was the traditional wood from which witches' broomsticks were made, as the light within the trunks helped them to fly.

The Welsh associated the tree with Blodenwedd, the owl goddess, who can be both loving and treacherous. To the ancient Greeks the association was with Ariadne, imparting the mysteries of birth and life.

The birch has a special place in the traditions of Ogam, as the first message ever written in the secret alphabet of trees was Beith, the letter of the birch, used to warn Lugh (the sun-god) that his wife had been taken into the realm of her faerie-folk, sidhu. In Ireland and elsewhere the tree is still associated with light.



### MORE AMAZING TREE FACTS

Some trees talk to one another. When willows are threatened by insect pests, they emit a chemical warning to nearby trees, who secrete more tannin to put the invaders off.

We're all familiar with the terms "hardwood" and "softwood" but have you ever wondered how the hardness of wood is measured? The Janka test calculates the hardness of wood by measuring the force needed to embed a steel ball halfway into a piece of wood. The hardest wood is the Australian Buloke which requires a force of 5,060 lbs to embed the ball and the softest is the Cuipo which requires only 22lbs of force, with the familiar balsa wood being the second softest.

## **FUTURE SWS TALKS**

### **2018**

November 14<sup>th</sup> Philip Rickketts:- "The making of me". He will explain about how he uses old pallets.

December 12<sup>th</sup> Video Tiger Safari / Paul and Katrina Reader Quiz

### **2019**

January and February **No Meetings**

March 13<sup>th</sup> Resume of Christmas Show

When you are out and about at wood shows or exhibitions, if you see any person you think might be a candidate to give us a talk, please do ask them or at least take a note of their details and pass it on to Robert Packer who has taken over from Wendy in organising our future talks or any of our committee member so we can maintain the great speakers we have had. We are always open to suggestions for new speakers and we do need your help and input to help with this.

Please also let me know of any shows or exhibitions you think may be of interest to our members so I can include them in the section below, especially events for next year.

## **EVENTS FOR 2018**

### **December**

21<sup>st</sup> Setting up at Henfield for Sussex Woodcraft Society Annual Show and Exhibition

22<sup>nd</sup> Annual show at Henfield for Sussex Woodcraft Society Annual Show and Exhibition

(9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.)

Please note - as it is possible some shows may be cancelled or have the dates changed. Please check with organisers before travelling

## **ANSWER TO THIS MONTHS WOOD QUIZ**

Answer.....The answer is Northumberland.