



# Wood works wonders

**Milica Lewis investigates the Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World's year-long Wood Culture programme, which promotes the use of timber for modern design solutions**

Devon has more organic food producers and processors than any other county in England. Research shows that concern with our carbon footprint has become as much of a reason for us to buy food from local organic suppliers, as our concern for our health. Why is it then that few of us apply our principles of buying locally and sustainably to other major aspects of our lives, such as the buildings we live and work in and the materials used to build, furnish and accessorise them?

This is one of the questions the Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW) in Haldon Forest addresses with Wood Culture, a year-long international festival in four parts aimed at identifying

and overcoming the issues which inhibit the use of more timber, the only renewable building resource on the planet – and especially more locally sourced timber – in architecture and design.

The South West, which contains 20 per cent of the country's woodland, houses forests that have doubled in size during the last century. Due to the mild climate and fertile soil, Devon is the best place for growing trees in the country. Yet most of the timber grown in the region is exported to be manufactured and used elsewhere.

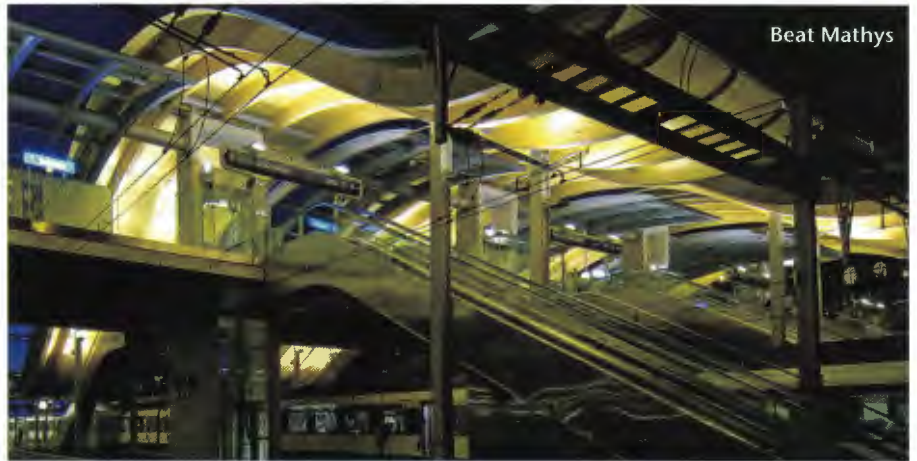
Organisations such as the CCANW which are not afraid to push the boundaries of art could play an important part in raising awareness on the role of timber for

its aesthetic qualities and design flexibility. With a programme of exhibitions, forums, talks, seminars and educational activities as well as practical demonstrations, workshops, concerts and film screenings, Wood Culture is designed to fascinate and engage both the public as well as professionals from the UK's timber, construction and design industry.

'At a time when society faces an unprecedented environmental challenge – in the form of global warming – not only is wood the only renewable building resource on the planet, it is also a beautiful material, increasingly used by architects, designers and artists in new ways,' says Clive Adams, director of the CCANW.



Wooden Church of Kärsämäki, Finland 2004. Architect: Lassila Hirvilampi, above left. Lookout Tower, Korkesaari Zoo, Helsinki. Architect: Ville Hara/HUT, above. 'Wave for Berne', Westgate Main Station, Berne. Architects: Smarch Architects, right.



Beat Mathys

One of the highlights of the Wood Culture year is undoubtedly this summer's major international exhibition Inspiring Futures, which runs from Saturday, July 7 to Sunday, September 16.

Inspiring Futures presents the 12 most imaginative and sustainable contemporary timber buildings in Europe, according to a

Wood Culture launched this May with Wood Wisdom; an exhibition aimed at re-connecting us with the rich history of timber growing in the UK, which included work made by Devon photographer Matthew Pontin during his recent CCANW residency. Also taking place this spring was the first in a series of forums, which saw leading

CCANW-led panel, which included architects, designers, engineers and experts in forestry and timber technology from throughout the region.

The 12 buildings were chosen for their imaginative use of timber and the inspirational, enabling and socially engaging effect they have had on the public.

architects, engineers and timber traders go head to head about the truth about the future of the global and local timber trade. During the May half-term, several impressive wooden structures such as an 8m geodesic dome, a traditional timber frame building, a teepee and a yurt were built and exhibited to the public outside the CCANW.

They are widely considered to be some of Europe's greatest architectural achievements of the 21st century and are beautiful, useful and sustainable as well as technically exquisite.

On Saturday, July 14, the CCANW will shake the trees of Haldon Forest with a free one-day music festival, Haldon

Inside a children's construction play area was created with unusual timber building kits from different parts of the world and specially designed building shapes from various types of locally sourced wood by current CCANW artist in residence Sean Hellman. For more information, visit [www.ccanw.co.uk](http://www.ccanw.co.uk). The CCANW is based at Haldon Forest.



Maggie's Centre, Dundee, Scotland 2003. Architect: Frank Gehry. Courtesy of Maggie's Centres, above. The Bridge at Kjearra, Lardal, Norway 2001. Architect: Arne Eggen, right.

Lisbeth Michelsen



LogJam. In addition to programming a number of regional musicians and groups that play traditional wooden instruments, the CCANW has gathered all five members of the up-and-coming experimental underground artist collective Tynder, who will be mixing bass, trumpets and drums with the sound of various wooden 12in disks played on a turntable and

several other unusual wood-based instruments designed by Devon-based maverick inventor, artist and band member David Sawyer.

On the same day, members of the innovative Devon-based Owl Project will be demonstrating their timber-made solutions to iconic modern-day pieces of electronic equipment such as a timber laptop, an 'i-

Log' – an eco-friendly take on the i-pod – and more.

Whether the CCANW will succeed in encouraging our county to take the lead in changing the future of the timber industry remains to be seen.

That a taste of Wood Culture will rekindle enthusiasm for the ancient, beautiful and multi-faceted natural resource is certain.