

Wood Culture

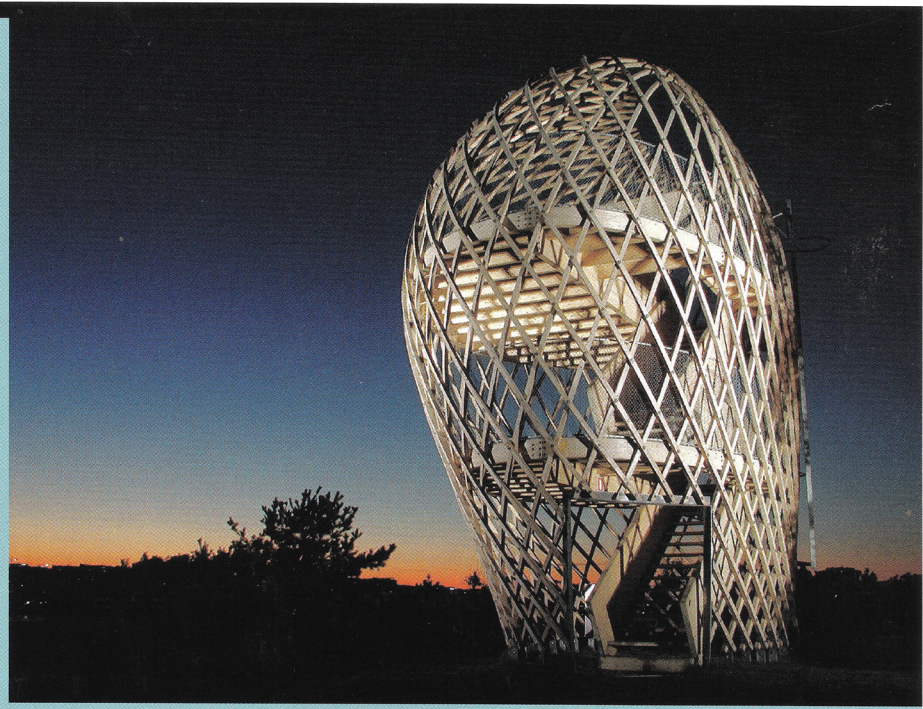
A year-long exhibition focuses on how we use timber

Many of us buy food locally as much out of concern for our carbon footprint as for our health. Why is it then that we don't yet apply these principles to other aspects of our lives, like the materials we use to build our homes? This is one of the questions that the Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW) will address with Wood Culture, a year-long international venture in four parts. It's aimed at identifying and helping to overcome the issues that stop us from using UK-sourced (and especially South-west-sourced) timber – the only truly renewable building resource on the planet.

The South-west contains 20% of England's woodland, and forests in the region have doubled in size in the last century. With a mild climate and fertile soil, Devon is also the best place for growing trees in this country, yet most of the timber that grows here is exported, while that which is used in the UK comes from Southeast Asia or South America. In these places, much is still sourced illegally and the effects can be detrimental to the economy, the livelihood and the natural habitats of these already vulnerable countries.

Based in Haldon Forest, the largest Forestry Commission forest in the region, the CCANW is aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the issues involved in our changing relationship to nature, and it does so through a programme of exhibitions, projects and activities across the art forms.

For the Wood Culture year, the CCANW has put together a series of exhibitions, forums and educational programmes, with talks and seminars as well as practical workshops, films and building demonstrations. It aims to engage and fascinate, regardless of age or level of knowledge, and rekindle the enthusiasm for the beautiful, multi-faceted, sustainable and widely available resource that is timber. Speakers include internationally acclaimed



Above
The Lookout Tower, Korkeasaari Zoo, Helsinki, designed by Ville Hara/HUT

architect, photographer and author Will Pryce (*Architecture in Wood*) and best-selling author Colin Tudge (*Secret Life of Trees*). For embryonic architects and builders, there will be a specially created construction play area, with unusual timber building kits from different parts of the world and specially designed building shapes from different types of local woods by artist-in-residence Sean Hellman.

A highlight of the Wood Culture year will be July and August's international exhibition 'Wood Culture Part 2' featuring the 10 most inspiring and sustainable contemporary timber buildings in Europe. Both beautiful and useful, they demonstrate the beauty and structural integrity of timber and were chosen for their ability to enlighten and inspire, rather than for their scale or importance.

On 14 July, CCANW will be shaking the trees of Haldon Forest with a free one-day music festival, Haldon LogJam. Including acclaimed regional musicians and groups that play more traditional wooden instruments, up-and-coming experimental underground artist collective Tynder will be mixing bass, trumpets and drums with unusual wood-based instruments designed by band member David Sawyer. On the same day, members of the Owl Project will be demonstrating their timber-made solutions to iconic modern-day pieces of electronic equipment: a timber laptop, an 'i-log' (an eco-friendly take on the i-pod), and more. □ **MILICA LEWIS**

For more information ☎01392 832277 or visit www.ccanw.co.uk. The CCANW is based at Haldon Forest Park, between Exeter Racecourse and Haldon Belvedere, 5 miles south of Exeter.

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