

Wider application

In the UK, a considerable volume of small diameter hardwood timber is currently being pulped. Much of this is of a size which could be converted to small-section boards, laminated and used for the *Welsh Angle* style of furniture, processed into end-grain floor tiles or made into other higher value products.

The role of the government-backed organisation Coed Cymru has been instrumental in promoting research, stimulating the market and engaging the commercial manufacturers. A similar approach, applied by other government-sponsored woodland initiatives could inspire a wide-scale renaissance in sustainable, productive and commercially sound woodland management.

Further information

National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU is a charitable trust and it provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on other case studies, or if you have examples of good practice to share with others, please contact:

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Coed Cymru

Coed Cymru is an all Wales initiative to promote the management of broadleaf woodlands and the use of locally grown hardwood timber in Wales. For further information, please contact:

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Further reading

Coed Cymru (1998)

Woodland Owners Handbook Coed Cymru, Newtown

Linnard W (2000)

Welsh Woods and Forests - A History Gomer Press, Ceredigion

Photographs: Coed Cymru, Kenton Jones

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Urban Forestry in Practice

Adding value to timber from small woodlands



CASE STUDY 34

Adding value to timber from small woodlands

Introduction

In many places, long established woodlands have been neglected ever since their economic value disappeared. As the demand for local timber and firewood declines, so does the incentive for regular management, and this frequently leads to serious deterioration in landscape and ecological integrity.

Much of the timber produced as a consequence of woodland conservation schemes is not of high quality and is normally only considered fit for firewood or pulp. The resulting poor financial returns on timber sales act as a disincentive to management by the landowner. By contrast, if high value products can be manufactured from the timber, then the economic case for sustainable management of the woodland is strengthened.

Specific example

Project name and location

COED CYMRU PROJECTS, including *Welsh Angle* furniture and *Woods of Wales* floor tiles, Wales, UK

Project partners

- Coed Cymru
- Countryside Council for Wales
- European Regional Development Fund (under *RETEX*)
- Forestry Commission
- Kenton Jones of Welshpool, hardwood flooring manufacturer
- Welsh Development Agency
- World Wide Fund for Nature

Coed Cymru

Coed Cymru (meaning Welsh Woods) advises broadleaved woodland owners in Wales, where the tough terrain and climate mean that typical oak woods rarely produce "good" timber. Short trunks and twisted branches are typical and, whilst these woods have great cultural value, Coed Cymru recognises the need to develop new, high value products that will help to justify more active conservation management.

Project objectives

- To link positive management of previously neglected broadleaved woodland with high value products which can be manufactured and marketed locally
- To concentrate particularly on commercial uses for timber which is typically small diameter, short length hardwood (150 x 1 200mm) with numerous small knots and short grain - rich in character but difficult to process
- To work with a relatively unskilled workforce and basic machinery to develop products capable of batch production and to work with commercial manufacturers to build manufacturing production capacity and commercial markets
- To support commercial manufacturers with training, promotion and marketing

Woodland like this has great heritage value, but new ideas are needed to give the low grade timber greater commercial value



Clever design and a modest level of skill are turning "uncommercial" timber into high value products, manufactured locally



Projects

Welsh Angle is a product brand which has been developed to produce a range of furniture from short length components, using timber which has been sustainably harvested, processed locally, laminated to add strength and cleverly machined for simple but strong interlocking assembly. *Welsh Angle* products are now being manufactured under license by a growing number of manufacturers throughout Wales, and are available commercially by mail order as well as through garden centre and furniture retail outlets.

Floor Tiles Small roundwood timber from a range of species, including oak, sycamore, alder and birch, is used to manufacture a unique end-grain floor tile. Whilst traditional parquet flooring is made of blocks cut along the grain, these Welsh tiles are cut across the grain and are much more hard wearing. They also have the added visual appeal of being patterned by the annual growth rings in the timber.



End grain floor tiles made from small roundwood timbers are extremely hardwearing and very attractive

The innovative aspect of the manufacturing process lies in the kiln drying, which has greatly reduced the risk of the thin cross-cut slices of greenwood splitting. These floor tiles are now being used in prestigious, heavily trafficked buildings such as museums, restaurants and civic offices throughout Wales and England.

Results

A number of manufacturers (mainly small) now make and sell *Welsh Angle* products. The output is growing steadily and there is strong commercial potential. The largest collaborator, Prison Enterprises, is gearing up for the production of a range of *Welsh Angle* office furniture - desks, chairs, shelving - and other products made from FSC certified Welsh wood.

Kenton Jones of Welshpool is a successful manufacturing company, making and selling *Woods of Wales* floor tiles. It processes 500 tonnes of Welsh timber annually and it currently employs 18 people.