

Badgers, Beeches and Blisters

Badgers, Beeches and Blisters

Getting started in your own wood

JULIAN EVANS

With illustrations by JOHN WHITE *and* STEPHEN EVANS

In partnership with Ownwood Ltd.
www.woodlands.co.uk

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Foreword

We are delighted that Julian has offered to write this book. He has a unique combination of unrivalled silvicultural knowledge and personal hands-on experience. He was for many years the Forestry Commission's Chief Research Officer. This he combines with twenty years of personal ownership of a small wood, where he has experienced many of the pleasures and tribulations that affect other owners. With his background knowledge he was able to overcome most (though not all!) of the obstacles, and to enjoy more deeply the satisfactions. Here, he shares with us his expertise and his enthusiasm.

Our company aims to make available affordable small woodlands for conservation and enjoyment. In the past few years, we have been seeing local authorities, English Nature, and the Forestry Commission increasingly value the contribution made by small woodland owners to the proper management of native woodlands.

Our purchasers come from varied backgrounds, but all share a love of the natural world and a wish to own and preserve part of this country's rich natural heritage. We have worked hard to build up a library of useful information and contacts on our website. This book will be the jewel in the crown. We recommend it to all with the interests of woodlands at heart. It is also freely available in full on our website www.woodlands.co.uk

Margaret and Alastair Hanton,
Directors of Ownwood Ltd.

*Owners of a small wood
in East Sussex for
the past thirty years.*

Preface

Margaret Hanton and I were chatting in the 'Woodlands for Sale' tent at the Weald Wood Fair in 2004 when the idea for this book arose. She was there as proprietor meeting past and future purchasers of her company's woodlands and I was kindly given space to sell *What Happened to Our Wood*, the second book about my own wood. I was also someone who could tell enquirers what owning a small wood was really like. We complemented each other. As we mulled over the usual questions people asked, the idea grew that a readable, accessible book could not only meet many of the queries new or aspiring owners would encounter, but, importantly, set them on the right path towards woodland management.

We teamed up: Ownwood (www.woodlands.co.uk) as the sponsors, I as the author and publisher.

What we hope to achieve is a short book that, first and foremost, is enjoyable to read. The book must be factually accurate as far as we can ensure and address just the sort of questions an owner starting out might wonder about. More than that the book should become a friend as the adventure of buying and caring for your own patch brings the fun as well as vicissitudes of ownership. So we hope you will find this book full of information but not overly full of endless lists and instructions; we want to help get you started, not prescribe everything in manual-like detail. You will need more information and so we have provided plenty of suggestions for further reading, organisations to join, and websites to visit.

Enjoy your wood. Both the Hantons and I have owned our woods for many years, which is why we are so enthusiastic and want to help you in the best way we can.

Julian Evans
March 2006

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to Esmond Harris and Alex Argyropulo for reviewing the draft of this book and making many valuable suggestions. Margaret Hanton's comments were invariably encouraging but also constructive in helping, we hope, to achieve the right tone for our readership.

The title was undecided until a survey at the Weald Wood Fair in September 2005 clearly identified 'Badgers, Beeches and Blisters' as the one that got most votes.

I am again very grateful to John White for his wonderful illustrations although the fine ones of the tractor (page 31) and of the logs (page 84) are by my son, Stephen.

Finally, I would like to thank Margaret my wife who not only took me on after the sudden death of my late wife four years ago, but has now seen at first hand what an author and publisher does and how vexatious it sometimes can be!

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