

The New Carbon Prints

Jack Everett



'heart to heart'

Tree talk

35 years of living under trees has made me realise how little I know of their lives.

When I ceased referring to a tree as 'it' and instead used 'her', a whole dynamic shifted:

I very soon became far less detached, much more related.
That's pronouns for you.

These papers tell of a search between the over- familiar and the surprising.

Where I become the hands of the woods; I tabulate what I'm shown.
Recording events; like a kindred tree stenographer.

By using one language; solid geometry, can I translate "a cube" into a language through printing its texture?

What do trees; so essential to ourselves, have to say?

If we can't hear what is being said, perhaps we can better see.
I keep looking and recording; these prints are 'insights revealed'.
It's all a journey between dimensions into a wood wide web.

There's a backstory to these large blocks of wood and the images they leave on paper. Control of the process from offcut, to machining, to burning and brushing out varies wildly; even the mapping out on rough paper often obscures the image that eventually sings. It is not until the inked block arrives on the paper do I suspect that the grain can reveal a new way of understanding the language of "tree talk".

These insight prints, refresh my belief that we can re- read the importance and significance of trees with fresh eyes and see what they have to reveal from within.



'first cut'

Ash

750 x 690mm



'diamond within'

Ash

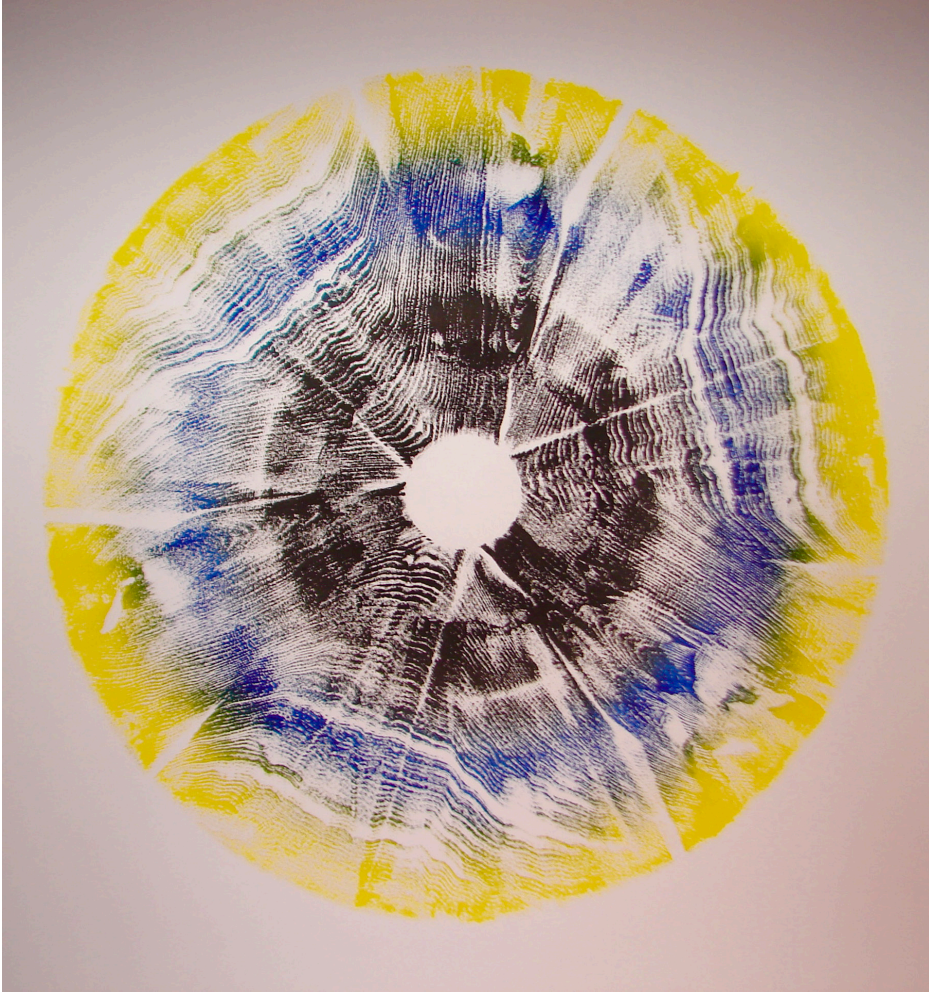
1170 x 1070mm



'cone'

Ash

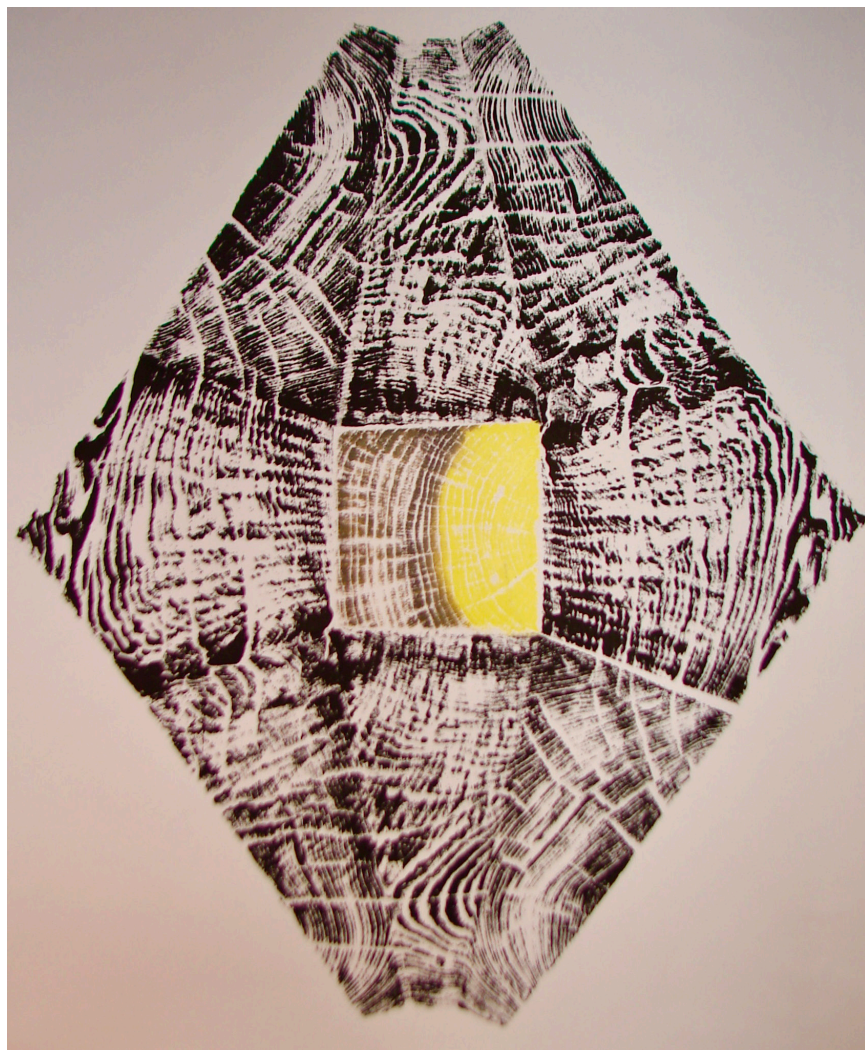
790 x 770mm



'colour cone'

Ash

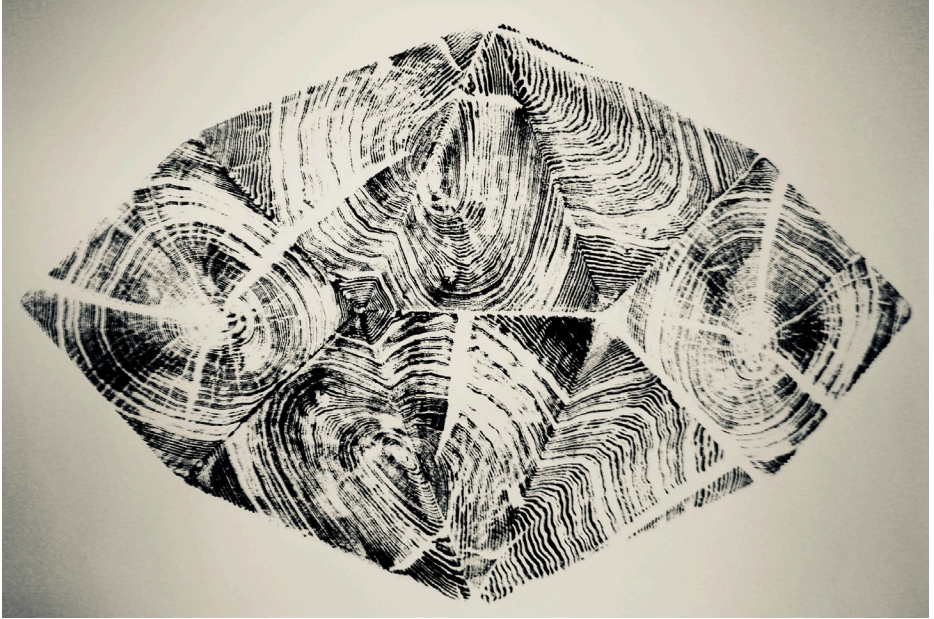
790 x 770mm



'within'

Ash

950 x 780mm



'cut stone'

Ash

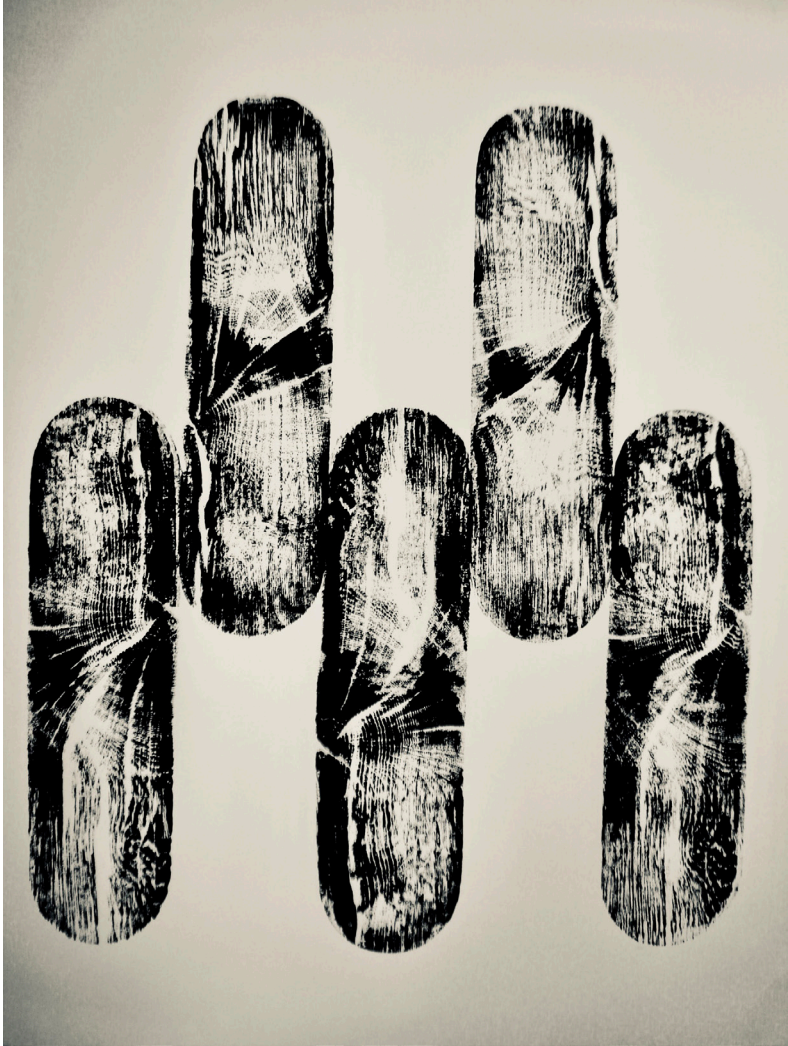
780 x 1100mm



'stack'

Oak

900 x 560mm



'offset'

Oak

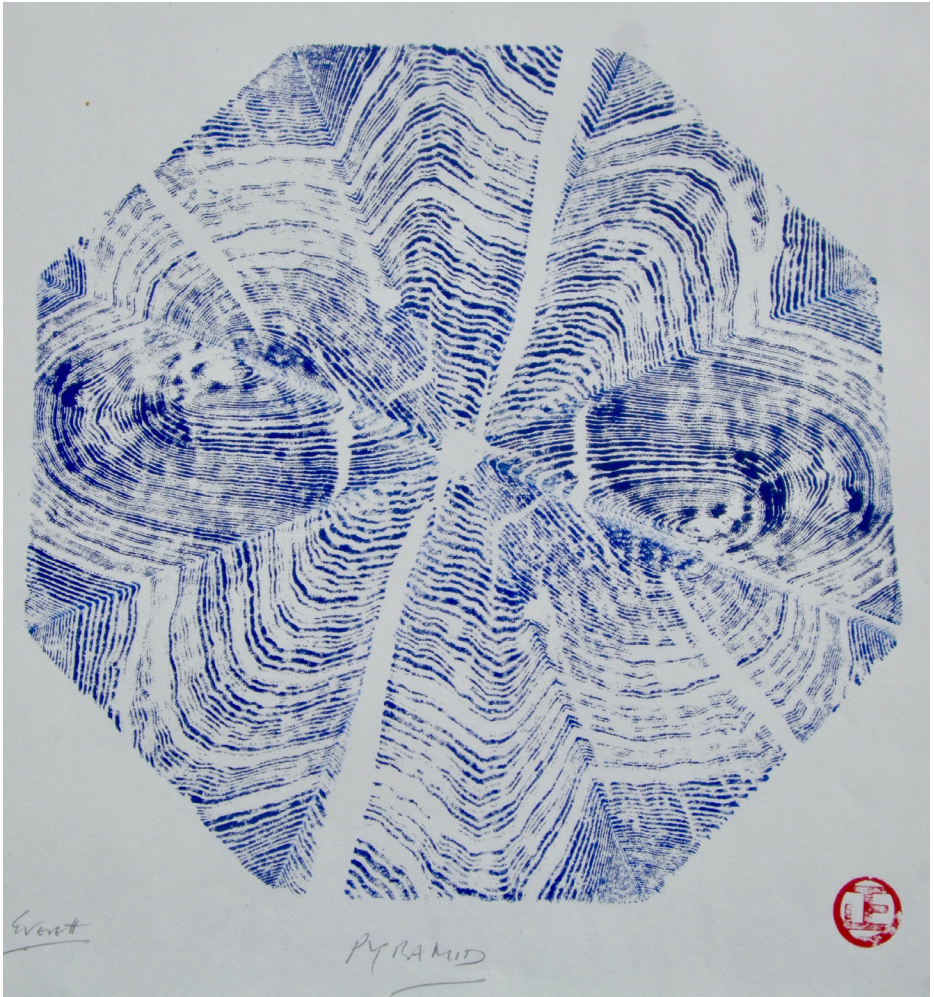
800 x 608mm



'oloid trail'

Spruce

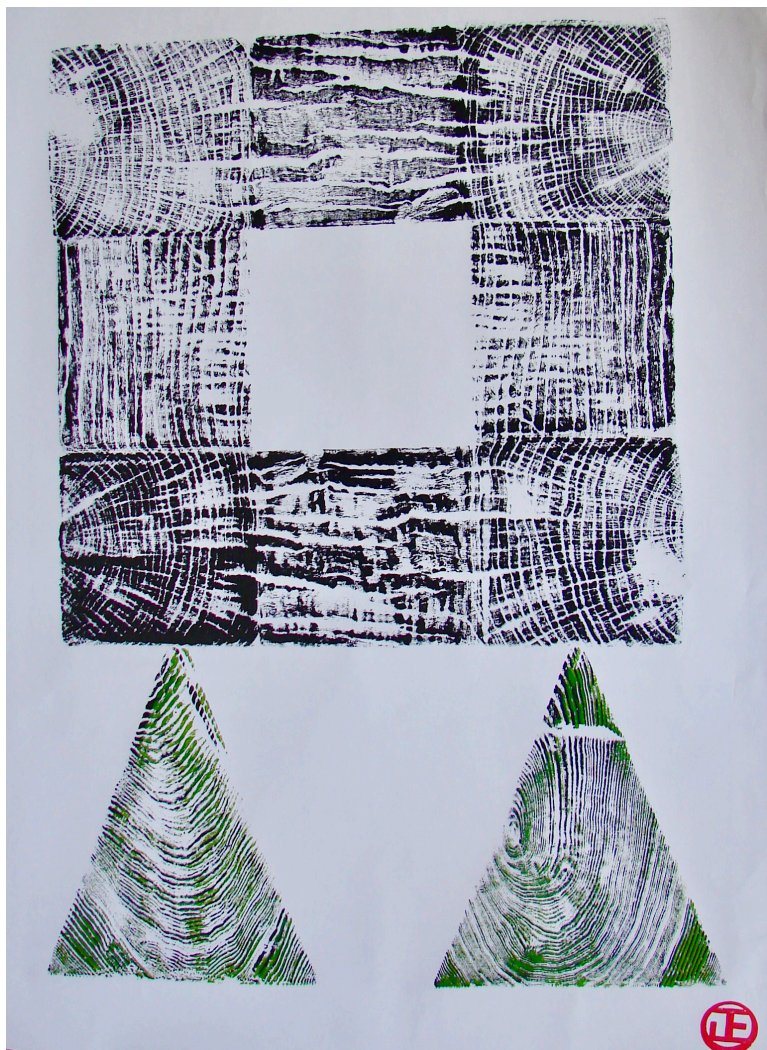
1000 x 410mm



'pyramid'

Ash

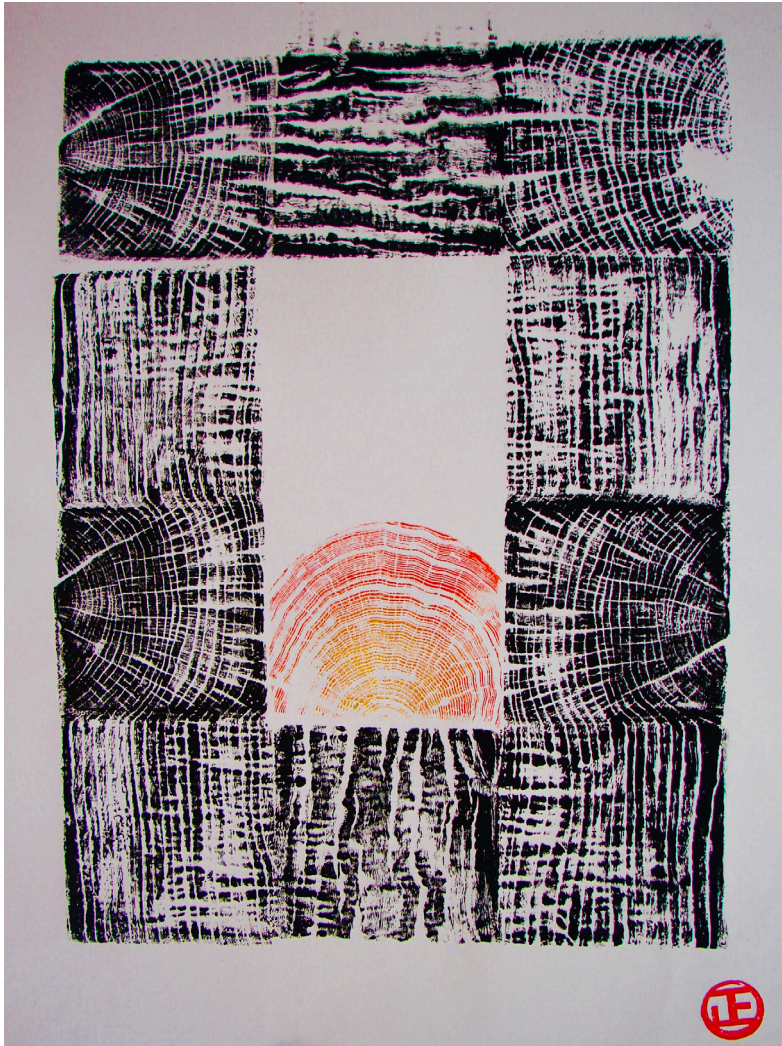
80 x 80mm



'over'

Ash and Oak

910 x 720mm



'inside'

Oak

900 x 700mm

Block burning

Between traditional Indian woodblock on cloth; Japanese 'yakisugi' wood burning in architectural preservation and rolling dice, I have found a fertile avenue. This has led me to a technique of printmaking that I choose to call 'blockpress print'. I make wooden shapes, largely geometrical to give myself an exacting framework from which I can diverge. This divergence is a lot like the way nature functions; variety emerging from a universal patterning.



These 3D blocks I then set on fire, removing the softer seasonal growth and leaving the harder slow growing winter rings. When these blocks are shaped on the lathe (for example) these growth rings display diagonally. After burning there is a wire-brushing out, this leaves the raised harder wood. It is this that I ink up and print by moving the blocks around the paper, inking as I go. The results are a mixture of chance, experience and an eye for the unexpected but always anchored in the patterning of nature; therein lies the resonance.



PRINTS

All framed exhibition prints are A/P (artist proofs) and are effectively monoprints.

These A/P prints are for sale.

Editions of 30 are available from each of the exhibited prints; in turn they too are monoprints.

They can be ordered/purchased framed or unframed, these ordered prints require a 20% deposit.

It is the responsibility of the purchaser to provide all necessary personal details on the forms provided.

The artist agrees to provide all ordered prints within 4 months of the date of the exhibition ending.

Price of unframed prints. £ 375.00 deposit £ 75.00

Price of framed prints. £ 500.00 deposit £ 100.00

CATALOGUE

The catalogue is for sale during and after the exhibition.

The digital illustrations used in this publication are not fully representational of the original prints.

Price £ 8.00

CARDS

A selection of cards both from this exhibition and previous shows are available.

These digital cards are not fully representative of the original prints.

Price £ 3.00 per card or 5 for £ 12.00.

5% of the proceeds from this gallery exhibition will be donated to ratifying the law of ECOCIDE.

Further details can be found at www.stopecocide.earth

TREES TREES TREES - all 13 of them

Back then in the 1988 when Stroud didn't have a supermarket and people did their shopping in the town, I was becoming a father for the second time, new wife, new life and buying a house that needed top to bottom restoration.

Busy as I was, my attention was drawn to a meeting being held in what was then, the café in the British school. The room was packed and the topic was the proposed removal of mature trees from Stratford Park to widen the road to facilitate the building of a Tesco supermarket. The campaign to save all the trees (32) had been the talk of the town for some time. A postcard objection process had amassed thousands of submissions to Tesco management with a threat of boycotting the store if it was built. The District council had backtracked; now the alternative number was 13. If the campaign against would cease then only 13 trees adjacent to the public tennis courts would be felled.

That night's meeting, led by local artist Veronica Wood, was to decide whether to accept the council's proposal or not. It came down to a vote. From my experience voting is a weak solution to finding a way forward, it has been used too many times to divide and rule, and voting would tear the heart out of the campaign. For myself there was no 'either or' - it was a matter of abstention, 'don't vote'.

The vote went ahead and the deal was done- save 19 trees and sacrifice 13 for the sake of a wider road, a quiet life and convenience shopping.

Not so fast, there were 11 abstentions; all dissatisfied campaigners prepared to fight on, seeing saving 19 trees as only 'winning that round'. They were not ready to back off; the council would have to think again. We agreed, we were in for the long haul and left the meeting with a commitment to up the pressure and fixed a date for a meeting; the 11 of us.

There are occasions when you have to nail your colours to the mast and step up, for me this was one, there have been others, but not

about trees. I had recently bought a disused quarry at an auction in a pub, which was now over grown with a mixture of trees, their growth was reclaiming the raw stone quarrying scar, like jungle growing over a Mayan ruin. Trees had started to mean much more than wall paper in my life, they were becoming companions and teachers.

It occurred to me that we were low on information. Why road widening instead of traffic calming? Who was leading this initiative inside the Council? Who had the building contract? How important was this store to Tesco's national strategy?

Why, what, when, all the usual gaps.

Having just gathered as a group of activists from the ashes of a citizens campaign, we needed to get clued up.

It soon transpired that Tesco had no interest in widening the road and hence felling trees.

The push to widen the road was coming from the Highways Dept who with the head of the council foresaw a huge increase in traffic. That surprised me, but road widening was also tied into a Tesco's planning permission. A figure of £250,000 for the strip of land bearing the trees would be what Tesco would pay Stroud District Council in exchange for planning permission. On top of which the road was already deemed as dangerous because the head of the council had lost a child to traffic along Stratford Park road fairly recently; emotions were running high, there was a lot of local history rising to the surface; I had naively stepped in at a critical point in the evolution of a post-industrial Cotswold town, where I had no birth right or even had had much time to develop an affection. My feelings were mixed. Inevitably there was talk everywhere, for, against, supportive, dismissive. Lots of letters to the local press, opinions were rife even cartoons were appearing. With organised marches and demonstrations from the town to the park, numerous feelings were being fed into the clamour.

I didn't want to get drawn into the conventional approach; going to council meetings, and engagement in that way. It seemed that had already been exhausted, but we did need on the ground information about when and how the felling of the 13 trees was going to be attempted by the council; who was going to do the cutting; and what

kind of security was going to be engaged?

When I walked onto the site of the old flour mill opposite Stratford Park that Tesco's had started building on, there were two container offices, one on top of the other. I went up the steps to the top one labeled 'site manager' and knocked. We talked, drank tea; I told him who I was and why we had taken our stance; explained that we were not going to attend council meetings to understand council thinking, but we did need to know council plans. I didn't ask for anything not even his name.

Later I did, when necessary, go back for tea, we got on well, person to person, there was a mutual respect despite being poles apart within the context of the situation. This was sometime before the advent of the mobile phone so tea was a necessity, as were the times and dates of 'tree surgeons' arriving to do their worst.

By now, what with all the local press interest, to which I did passionately contribute, no self-respecting local tree surgeon would touch 'a contract to fell'. The council began to look further afield.

Meanwhile the trusty 11 had put into operation a few contingency plans of our own. In one of the easier to climb hornbeams a roofed tree house was built with a wind-up telephone. This cramped platform was occupied every night by two people. A phone-tree had been compiled and it was possible with one call to get up to 100 people to appear in the park within 10 minutes- day or night, in theory at least. The row of ten trees alongside the tennis courts were now linked together with a locked chain, making any felling highly dangerous. This was only known about by a few and was to be used as a last resort to stop a tree being felled. Our numbers began to swell as old members and new members of the campaign came to the park to support our 24 hour presence.

There were many bleary early morning arrivals at the park when we had been tipped off. Road closure signs, traffic lights and Sunday mornings became a bit of a pattern but we were always there and ready; they backed off.

After 6 weeks of sitting tight we were showing our integrity and the number of sympathetic supportive faces increased as did the threat-

ing abuse from late night revellers returning to the estates. Other tree campaigns were making contact, a tree in the carpark in Cirencester, a row of trees in Bristol. The Men of the Trees made supportive contact; the Prince of Wales office said they couldn't comment but wished us well anyway. Sympathisers and would-be councillors joined the ranks, a few people even moved to Stroud to be part of the story. The word was out and we were on our toes. The other word was; that the council were committed and determined despite the adverse publicity; reputations and jobs were at stake.

As with preparations for any confrontation, we determined not to use force. Guile yes, but violence was not on the agenda. There were a number of days spent up in the Quarry learning how to use ropes and climbing gear. Part of our approach was to be able to loop a branch from below and be able to belay up with foot loops. We started out clumsy and progressed to adequate, being on a branch and out of reach was the goal, few could do it, so some went for the other route of being locked to a tree and staying put. None of us were hardened West Coast Earth Firsters, we were making it all up as we went along which I believe was the virtue of the campaign, locals looking after the only real public amenity park in the town.

It filtered through over another cup of tea that a new felling contractor had been found from Upton on Severn, out of the area and from the other side of the river. He had said at a meeting with the Council, 'just ring-bark them and it's done', evidently, they had found their 'cowboy', but stressed that he was not to do that, as it would reflect badly on them.

As you may have noticed I have refrained from mentioning many names and dates etc. This I decided was for the best because of potential inaccuracy since it was a long time ago, the story is the story, it's not being told for the allocation of blame, all those involved know who they are.

A further cup of tea led to a new 'F day' being planned, this time we

were as ready as ever.

Initially just 10 of us and the 13 trees. We were there bright and early as their vans and a cherry picker pulled along the closed off road and stopped under the trees. This felt very different to the other rather feeble attempts to dissuade us from our purpose. To start with the posse of chainsaw carrying crew seemed to be slightly worse for wear, they were dropping their kit and not managing their ropes and harnesses too well. They felt and looked rather unpredictable. The boss man was doing a lot of shouting, telling them to climb the trees which they attempted. Distracted by their inept entertainment we held our ground either up or at the bases of the trees along the tennis courts. Suddenly a chainsaw started up, direction; the other side of the park gates where there were 3 unmanned trees.

This was the moment that months of time had crystallised into, now!

I ran down that path faster than any race, and still I was too late. When I got to him, I found he had ring barked two pines and was setting about a huge 200-year-old beech. I flattened myself over the remaining unbarked part of the trunk, right behind him as he came round spraying wood swarf. Then, surprised he bumped into me.

“Come on then” I mouthed into his ear-muffled face. “do me too”.

Whether his anger or Dutch courage had been satiated by taking out what he thought was 3 trees I’ll never know but he stopped at that point and with saw still running he left for the park gates with my hand resting on his shoulder all the way onto the road and to his van, where he switched off and. Looking satisfied he called off his men. He had fucked up royally. Why? I wouldn’t presume to comment. With his fear he had pushed his men and himself up to the wire, maybe he was compelled by the accumulation of opposing forces, probably not, more likely something much more mundane. The smell of alcohol on his breath smacked of bravado.

Now the die was cast; the headline, ‘Council ring-bark Park trees’, did not bode well for the future. The campaign had now taken the higher moral ground, and worthy of national press attention.

People power took over in their hundreds, winning the battle to SAVE

OUR TREES in late 1989.

My part in the campaign was done, I had an exhibition commitment in the Cevennes to honour. Now there were many other people to carry the flag, the turning point had been reached and the campaign flourished under the lights of TV cameras and the leadership of seasoned Stroud campaigner, Ron Birch.

Before leaving the field of battle, I returned to the old beech that had been ring barked.

Taking twigs from her low branches, I made notches either side of the chainsaw cut, sharpening either end of pieces of twig I inserted them carefully into the notches, thereby spanning the cut. This I did all round the chainsaw groove. I then doused the cut with Arnica solution and wrapped the trunk with clingfilm. I knew no precedent for this behaviour it was more of an intuitive gesture than any kind of logic. Now thirty years later this arboreal witness of the travails of men still leans gracefully over Stratford Park Road, her wounds now beautifully healed into a somewhat cheeky scar.

As a result of this campaign the District Council appointed their first Tree Officer and instead of widening the road the county's first traffic calming scheme was installed along Stratford Road in 1989.

Jack Everett 2020.



EXHIBITIONS:

Clay and Fibre Gallery Taos New Mexico.

Brinkkalan Vilakka Turku Finland.

Yew Tree Gallery UK

Mythic Garden UK

Carwinion UK

Eden Project UK

Kew Gardens UK

Stoneleigh Gardens UK

Siddington Arts. UK

Hannah Peschar Gallery UK

Halikolathi Green Art Finland.

Arlington Arts. UK

Fresh Air UK

Great Western Lights UK

Centrespace Gallery. UK

Gloucester Cathedral. UK

Lansdown Gallery UK.

www.jackeverett.org

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Detail from **'diamond within'**

Ash

1170 x 1070mm

Back Cover:

Detail from **'the wall'**

Ash

1250 x 1480mm

NOTES:

