

# A Journey of Wood

This leaflet is designed to give a brief overview of the work of Ironbridge Woodland Products. It focuses on one example - its work with CARE Community, Ironbridge - and observes the journey of the wood from its woodland source to its final form and destination.

## Value Added Timber

Ironbridge Woodland Products (IWP) is a unique project whereby timber is locally sourced on a "microscale" providing quality British hardwood to different projects in the area. Traditionally the timber industry seeks economy of scale when harvesting timber. However, sensitive management of the Gorge Woodlands means that even small quantities of timber can be used locally.

All the wood is sourced from woodland managed by the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT) and located in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. This small scale harvesting is facilitated by the development of a mobile saw bench which allows the trees to be transformed into planks before they leave the woods. This sits well alongside 'green' thinking and active sustainable management of the woodland. Ironbridge Woodland Products is not timber-driven or product-driven, but driven by what the woodland needs long term.

## Teaching Values

This approach is truly a win-win situation. Wood is supplied to education and craft training organisations who would not be able to access such high quality timber. Previously the projects used offcuts or chipboard. Hardwood is a good medium to work with as it challenges the student to learn the characteristics of wood. In many cases high quality wood motivates higher quality work, with students working harder to create products of superior quality.

Most importantly of all, the students learn the economic and ecological value of sourcing from local woodland where they may have walked rather than using imported wood. This makes a huge difference in its environmental impact.

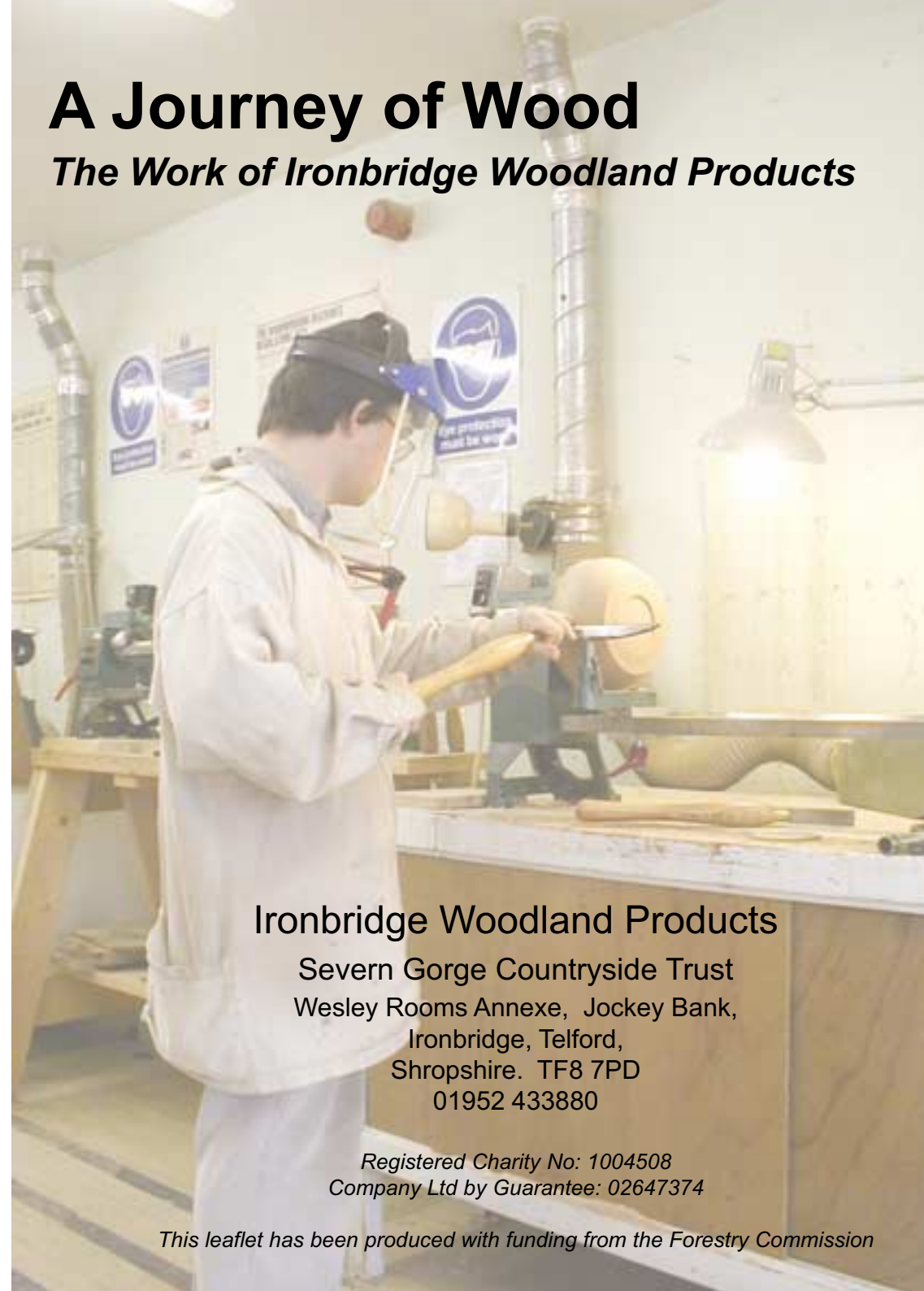
## Future Values

"Conservation is about active management. It is about having a clear plan for the future of the woodlands and delivering that through appropriate management. For us that means small scale, low impact with no major disruption to woodland habitat and landscape. We have a duty of care not just to this generation, but to future generations.

"And with Ironbridge Woodland Products, there is lots of potential for us to add to what we have already achieved." Jim Waterson, Ironbridge Woodland Products.

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## *The Work of Ironbridge Woodland Products*



## Ironbridge Woodland Products

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### Stage 1a - Locally Sourced Wood

The wood is all sourced from local woodland managed by the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT).

*“Every inch of land we manage has free open access.” Jim Waterson, Ironbridge Woodland Products (IWP) and SGCT.*



### Stage 1b - Focus on Ability

CARE Community at Ironbridge opened in 1987 and is currently home to 32 people with learning disabilities; its facilities are used by many more as a day service.

*“Our aim is to focus on abilities, not disabilities.” George Badiali, Manager of CARE Community, Ironbridge.*



### Stage 2 - Mobile Saw Bench

Trees are cut down and the trunks are sawn into planks on site using this modified bench. It is a return to traditional methods of saw milling and is suitably “small scale, low impact”.

*“It enables us to efficiently convert small timber into usable form while still in the woods.” Jim Waterson, SGCT.*



### Stage 3 - A Visit to the Woods

The link to local woodland is important. CARE have been out and seen the mobile saw bench in action. They have helped put up over 200 dormouse nesting boxes which they made.

*“People should know the economic and ecological value of sourcing from local woodland.” Jim Waterson, SGCT.*



### Stage 4 - Into Storage

The wood has to be air dried – one year for every inch of thickness. This has led to a problem on-site with storage. IWP has funded the building of a new wood store with steel rack storage system.

*“Before IWP, we begged and borrowed offcuts – now 80% of wood used comes from IWP.” Harold Taylor, CARE.*



### Stage 5 - In the Workshop

A large range of products have been made and sold to raise funds for CARE Community in Ironbridge, but more importantly, to create a sense of accomplishment for the workers.

*“Everybody can join in, no matter what their ability.” Harold Taylor, Project Manager at CARE Community.*



### Stage 6 - Great Job, Great Team!

Garden furniture of the highest quality made from locally sourced wood. Any takers?

*“When people buy a product, they do not just buy the product, but the whole ethos – from tree to process to product.” George Badiali, CARE Community.*



### Stage 7 - A New Home

Finally, the furniture finds a new home and a very satisfied owner!

*“Timber is locally sourced, not imported or mass produced, and the products are very well made...Great value in every sense.” Tamsin, new owner.*

