

A request to the Queen of England regarding restoration of Ireland's Forests

When we examine the current dire financial circumstances Ireland now finds itself in, in relation to the visit of the UK head of state, Queen Elizabeth II and in particular her planting of an Irish Oak tree in Áras an Uachtaráin in the Phoenix Park on Tuesday 17th May, it is worth reflecting on the golden period of Ireland's great history. This was the era of the Gaelic order, which existed for over 2,500 years, it's varied communities bound together by the Brehon Law system, the second oldest written law system after Sanskrit of which it shares many similarities.

By comparison the much lauded Egyptian, Roman and Greek civilisations lasted a meagre 1,000 years. The economy of that time, underpinning this rich society, that produced such extraordinary art as the Book of Kells, the Ardagh Chalice, the Tara Brooch as well as renowned centres of learning and wisdom, was centred upon the wise utilisation of the Great Oak Forests of Ireland. This is while Europe was still in the dark ages and sending it's nobility to Ireland to be educated.

The wealth emanating from these vast cathedrals of Oak, was regulated and managed for the common good under the Seanchas Mór (the compendium of all accumulated knowledge), via the Brehon Laws. It was the destruction of Ireland's Great Oak Forests which contributed to the collapse of the Gaelic Order and the subsequent spiritual, cultural, and material impoverishment for many on this Island. Elizabeth II is today the representative Head of a State and part of a banking system, which have benefited enormously from the wealth generated by the exploitation of Ireland's forests at the time.

We know that the records relating to this great tragedy for Ireland, still exist in the inventories of England's main ports and adventurer trading companies (such as the East India Company), as well as in the Royal Naval records held at Greenwich, documenting how much Irish timber was used to build English fleets. These ships in turn facilitated the creation of a vast empire of riches. "Trees" said Sir Jonah Barrington, quoting the saying as the sentiment of the Irish landlords of his day, "are an excrescence provided by nature for the payment of debts", circa 17th century.

Unfortunately these sentiments have echoed down through the centuries forming the basis for current Irish forestry policy, a product of the UK Forestry commission, introduced in 1906 to start the reforestation of a denuded country. Timber production and primacy of profit were the main aims, using fast growing non-native conifer trees. No serious attempt has been made to restore the Great Oak Forests since then, even after the achievement of limited Independence in 1922. The same UK forestry model is being followed today and is now heavily industrialised and dependent on chemicals.

The Woodland League call on Elizabeth II to sanction a gesture of peace and goodwill to mark her visit to Ireland, in this year of 2011 (UN, International year of the forest), by offering compensation from the UK for the loss of Ireland's forests over many centuries of English rule.

This compensation could then be used towards the establishment of a fund for the purposes of the restoration of the forests of all Ireland via a trust administered by the People for this purpose. This project would be dedicated as a living memorial to all those who suffered loss and grief throughout the turbulent centuries of Irish - English history. The Trustees would be

made up of a cross section of the children from all denominations of the whole Island of Ireland. This gesture of restorative justice would go a long way toward continuing reconciliation between the two Islands and their traditions. The new forests managed wisely would again ensure that the Irish people would have the benefit of real wealth to secure theirs, and their children's futures.

The Woodland League's "Save Ireland's Forests" campaign, against the threat of the sell-off of Ireland's forests to satisfy the IMF/EU bailout terms, has an on-line petition with over 30,000 signatures and more than 5,000 on paper. There are thousands of statements on our petition, in response to questions regarding public participation and management of Ireland's forests, which have led the Woodland League to broaden our campaign objectives to include the 'Three R's':

Restoration of the Indigenous forest culture of Ireland,
Regeneration of the Great Forests of Ireland,
Reform of current State forestry policy, (mostly unchanged since 1906).

The Woodland League campaign has the backing of the following musicians, artists and actors, as well as Diarmuid Gavin the well known garden designer:

Christy Moore, Glen Hansard, Dick Massey, Bronagh Gallagher, Angeline Ball, Andrew Strong, Liam Ó Maonlaoi, Jack L, Luka Bloom, Tommy Hayes, Wally Page, Johnny Mulhearn, Matt Spalding, Tim Booth, Jim Fitzpatrick, Adrian Dunbar, Ciarán Mc Menamin and many more.

The award winning Scientist, ethno-botanist, ancient woodland specialist, and best-selling author Diana Beresford Kroeger, who was recently in Ireland promoting her latest book "The Global Forest", is the consultant scientist to the Woodland League and has stated publicly that the forests belong to the Irish people and in particular the future generations and must never be sold for short term profiteering. She has called for a million signatures for the petition.

The Woodland League.

Visit our website for more information at www.woodlandleague.org

Join us on facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Woodland-League/198560882580>

Save Ireland's Forests petition <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/2/help-save-irelands-forests/>

Contact Andrew St. Ledger (P.R.O. The Woodland League) on 087-9933157, or e-mail stledgerwood@gmail.com

Woodland League - [Walk and talk, Easter](#), with Diana Beresford-Kroeger (.pdf format)
For more information on Diana Beresford-Kroeger [click here](#).

Woodland League - [Alternative vision for forestry](#) in Ireland (.pdf format)



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