

Centenary Trees project to commemorate end of First World War

Natural Resources Wales' Centenary Trees project will feature creative tree planting to commemorate those who died during the War.

The project will also mark the centenary of the Forestry Commission, whose Welsh arm became part of NRW in 2013. A product of the 1919 Forestry Act, the Commission was created to replenish the nation's timber, which was at an all-time low following the War.

The project aims to reach every community in Wales, including working with young people to rebuild their relationship with trees and emphasise the important role trees play in our lives. Planting is expected to begin in 2019 and will take between three and five years to complete.

The Welsh Government will be marking the centenary of the end of the First World War through its [Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 programme](#) (external link).

Hannah Blythyn said:

"This year we mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, which tragically cost the lives of more than 40,000 Welsh soldiers.

"One of the other outcomes of the War was the impact on our tree population, which fell dramatically because of the need for timber for the War effort.

"In Wales, trees benefit our economy through our timber trade and provide recreational activities that are good for our health and well-being. They help reduce the risk of flooding, improve water quality, lock up carbon from the atmosphere and are home to much of our wildlife.

"Trees are also vital to human life, providing us with the oxygen we need to breathe. It is therefore fitting we mark the centenary of the First World War, which caused so much death and destruction, by planting many more new trees, which will help sustain life for generations to come."

Clare Pillman, Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, said:

"Rebuilding the forests after the war took an army of people, many of whom returned from the war with the skills and knowledge of the land.

“The sacrifice of so many who did not return is something we should never forget. This is why we want to engage with the people of Wales so that future generations can benefit from a lasting act of thanksgiving and remembrance.

“Trees have a special place in the lives of communities now, just as they did in 1918, and will in 2118. NRW is looking to support communities across Wales to explore their relationship with trees and the benefits they bring now and in the future.”