



**BODY-FOREST
SUMMER
SCHOOL**

Leigh Woods, Bristol

July 2022



We're a group of young people who live in Hartcliffe, South Bristol and are part of the Club for Young People and Heart of BS13.

In this zine we're sharing a project we recently did with Spike Island, in Leigh Woods, as part of the Body-Forest programme.

We explored the histories connecting Hartcliffe, Leigh Woods and the tobacco industry. We also explored our relationship to the more-than-human and developed speculative fiction as a way to think about the future...

Leigh Woods



We began our project mapping ourselves in relation to Hartcliffe and Leigh Woods.

We talked about places that are important to us, and mapped these out on the forest floor, finding connections.



Clifton Suspension Bridge

Hartcliffe

River Avon



Dundry

The flats

home is where the heart is

Youth Club

School



Spike Island

Perigran falcon
Ruby North Devon cattle

Insects - caterpillar
- wasp
- butterfly

Bees
Beetles "false darkling beetle"
Ants

Mice - golden (doormouse)
- brown

Fox - King
Badger

Squirrels
Pigeons

Hedgehog

Deer
Birds - woodpeckers
- sparrow
- Robin
- Magpie + crows

Grass snakes
Slow worm
Moles
Earth worms

Tr
Whitebeam
↓
Bristol whitebeam
Willmot's whitebeam

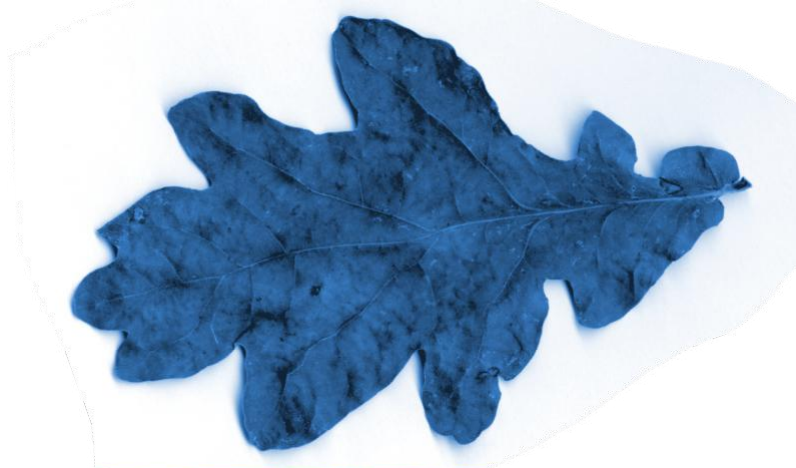
Ash Oakes
Bristol rockcress
Bristol onion

Willow
Chestnut
Holly

FUNGUS
Kings Alfreds
Cakes

Ragwort
Burdock
Hemp agrimony
Nettles
Brambles
Pineapple weed

Unicorn
Griffins
Spirits Elder woman

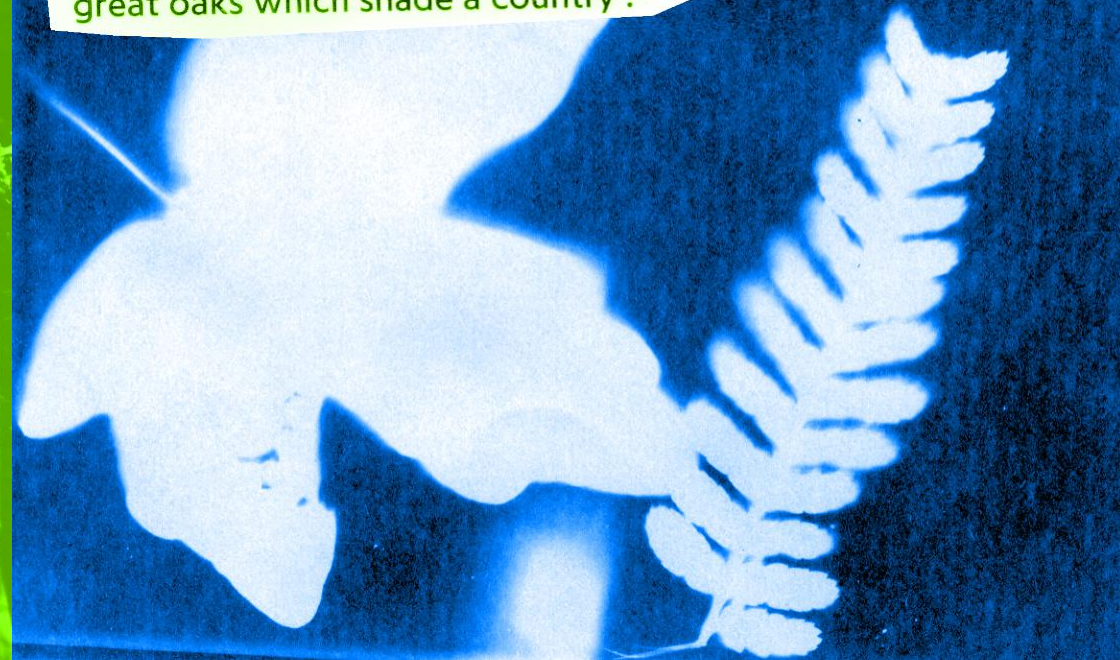


Oak

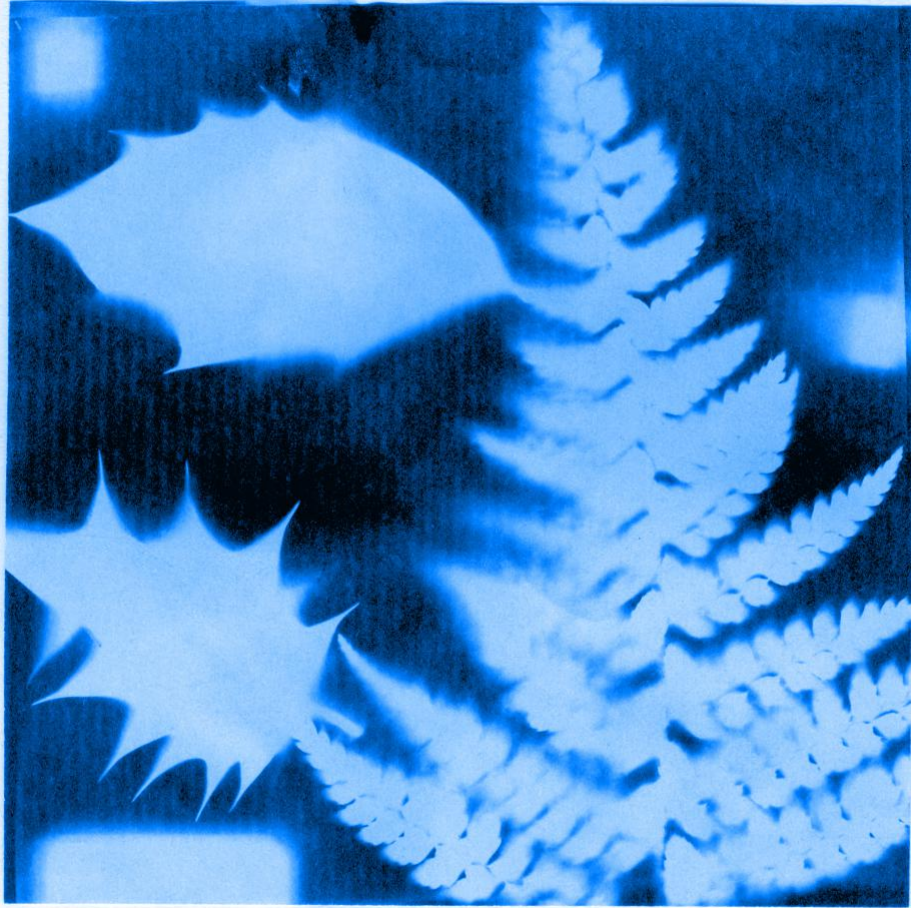
Oak has a long history of folklore throughout Europe and was sacred to many people, including the ancient Greeks, the Norse and the Celts.

Oak's association with the gods of thunder may have come from the phenomenon that oaks are often split by lightning being the tallest trees standing in the landscape.

Since 17thC qualities of oak and qualities of English nation have been linked by those in power. Edmund Burke (a conservative MP based in Bristol in 18thC) described the aristocracy as 'the great oaks which shade a country'.



Silver queen



Silver mermaid

Christmas holly

Prickly holly

Christianity

Christmas

Raspberries and cream

Tall and bushy perennial of riversides, damp woods and waysides, chiefly in England and Wales. The plant is no relative of either hemp or agrimony (though its leaves resemble those of cannabis). The flowers have something of the look of a whipped strawberry mousse.

Holy rope

Hemp agrimony



Sticky willy

Bachelor's buttons

Inventor of Velcro fastening reportedly got the idea from the seed-heads of burdock,

The annual Burry Man parade held in Edinburgh includes a man dressed from head to ankle in burs perambulating about the town, with people throwing burs at him till his entire body is encased in bur-patches.

Sticky bobs

Burdock

Ragwort

Stinking willie

Yellow tops

Looks like dandelions

There's lots of flowers on each stem

When Ragwort dies it

loses all of its petals and grows fluffy seeds

In Isle of man Ragwort is called 'cushag' and it is the national flower, though it's also used as a satirical emblem (showing ambivalent relationship)

John Clare poem (1831):

Ragwort thou humble flower with tattered leaves

I love to see thee come & litter gold...

Thy waste of shining blossoms richly shields

The sun-tanned sward in splendid hues that burn

So bright and glaring that the very light

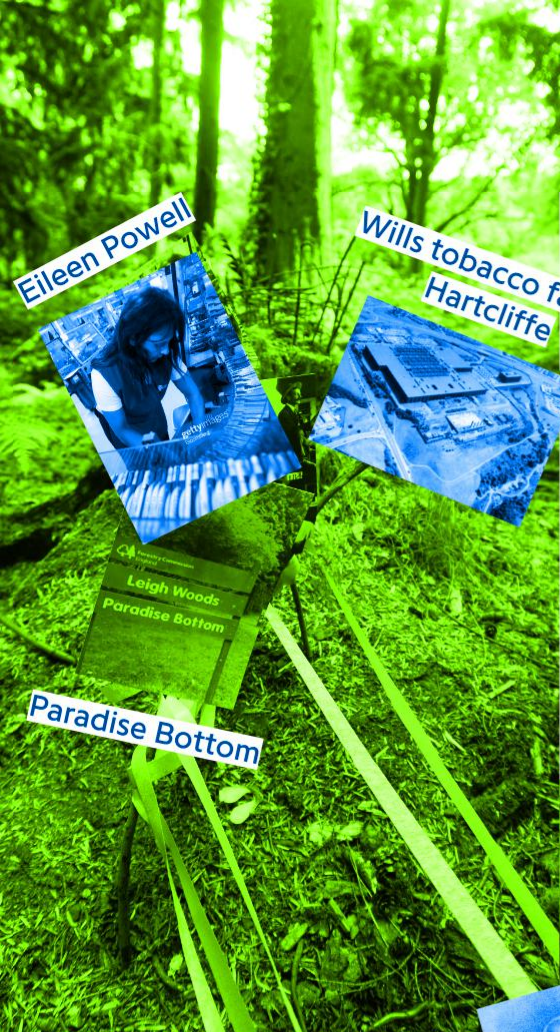
Of the rich sunshine doth to paleness turn

& seems but very shadows in thy sight

The striking black and yellow striped caterpillar of the cinnabar moth feeds almost exclusively on ragwort leaves.

Poisonous to horses, the name stinking willie is from Scotland, and mares fart in north Shropshire in Cheshire: 'how loathed the malodorous foliage is by cattle farmers'

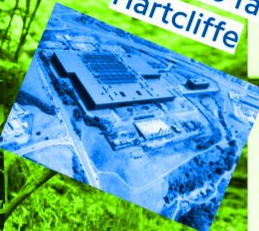




Eileen Powell

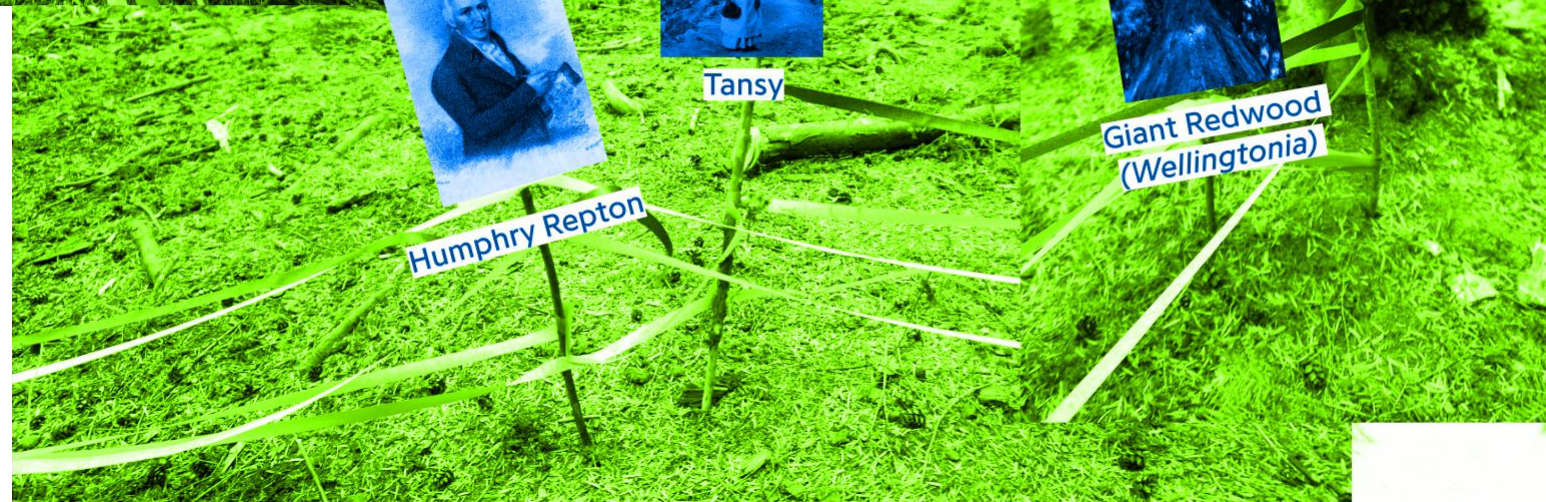


Wills tobacco factory
Hartcliffe



George Alfred Wills

Paradise Bottom

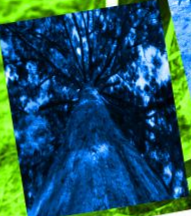


Humphry Repton



Tansy

Giant Redwood
(Wellingtonia)



Tobacco



We explored historical connections between Hartcliffe and Leigh Woods, which weren't immediately obvious!

Acting as detectives we tried to figure out what connected a wealthy 19th century factory-owner, tobacco, a Caribbean labourer, a giant Redwood tree, a famous landscape designer and workers in 1970s Hartcliffe

Back in the day the Lakeshore Apartments building in Hartcliffe was the Wills' Tobacco factory. A lot of people from the area would have worked there.

George Alfred Wills was head of Imperial Tobacco and built the Tobacco Factory in Bedminster 1901 - it later moved to Hartcliffe in the 1970s. All his wealth came from the Tobacco industry. He donated Leigh Woods to the National Trust in 1909, at the very same moment he was expanding his tobacco empire into colonial India.

Tobacco for the global industry was historically picked on slave plantations in the US in the 17-18th centuries.

Tobacco has long been used in the Americas, with some cultivation sites in Mexico dating back to 1400-1000 BC. Many First Nation tribes traditionally used it socially and ceremonially.

20th century workers in Harcliffe's tobacco factories were given free cigarettes, before the time they were condemned as a health hazard.

We pieced this story together in Paradise Bottom - part of Leigh Woods that was designed by Humphry Repton, a 19th century landscape designer. This area includes Great Redwood Trees extracted from the Americas.

"what do you think the factory was for?"

"Tobacco"

"What makes you think that?"

"It's Bristol, isn't it?"

"What's missing from the archives?"

"People from lower ranks don't have as much power to be remembered as people from higher ranks"

We ended the project thinking about the future

What might the future look like in Leigh Woods, in Hartcliffe and beyond?

What kind of paths might we take?

"The world could be like some kind of Atlantis, if we keep going down this path"

"If we keep going like we are doing with pollution, we might have to live up in places like Leigh Woods, up on the hill"

"We could change paths, use more healthy energy sources, like solar and wind, omit less carbon, stop using cars, all go vegan...."

"if we just get rid of petrol cars and replace them all with electric cars, history is just going to repeat itself"

Traces would we might leave to the future

thick strand of grey cotton

old disfigured plastic bottle with distingerated notes saying sparkle

magic card preserved in plastic sheet

old photo of the woods

perfectly conditioned quality streets

piece of paper with writing on it

stars

the sun

family of birds

preserved seeds

Tray

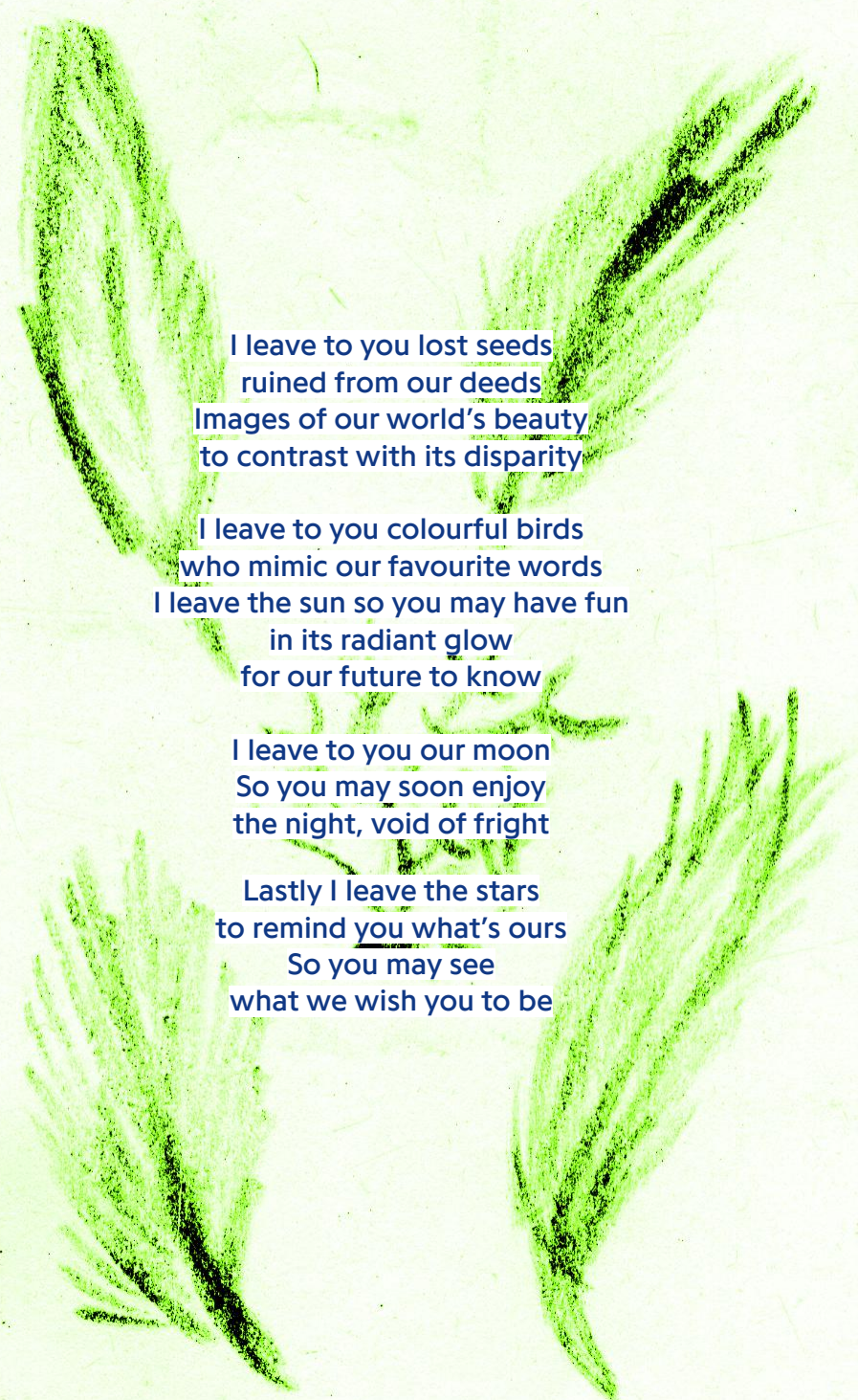


I leave to you lost seeds
ruined from our deeds
Images of our world's beauty
to contrast with its disparity

I leave to you colourful birds
who mimic our favourite words
I leave the sun so you may have fun
in its radiant glow
for our future to know

I leave to you our moon
So you may soon enjoy
the night, void of fright

Lastly I leave the stars
to remind you what's ours
So you may see
what we wish you to be



This zine was created through
The Body-Forest Summer School, July 2022
conceived and facilitated by Jack Young and Rebecca Beinart

The Body-Forest is a programme of engagement activities and public events devised by Jack Young, recipient of the 2022 Spike Island Engagement Fellowship for South West-based Curators. The programme explores how thinking of the body as an interconnected ecosystem rather than as a machine – a metaphor developed under capitalism – might shift the way we think about our human connection to the world.

Drawing on the work of biologists Pierre Sonigo and Shrese, among others, The Body-Forest programme includes participatory workshops, discussions, radical history walks, reading groups and more. The programme will interrogate how the concept of the Body-Forest might de-centre the human, and change the way we think about time, language, desire and community in an age of overlapping social and ecological crises.

For more information visit spikeisland.org.uk

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Plant references (pp 6-10) from Richard Mabey
(Chatto and Windus: 1996)

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Spike Island