



The aims of these sheets are to show:

- *the journey of the timber from the tree to the user – now and in the past*
- *that modern harvesting of timber can employ high technology or traditional techniques, depending on which is most advantageous for economic, environmental and silvicultural reasons.*



Point out to the children ways of growing wood to suit a need – then and now.

ACTIVITY 1

In the past craftsmen usually went into the wood and selected and bought the living tree. They knew which tree would give them the right timber for the job. In those days some trees were planted well out in the open to encourage the curved sideways growth needed for buildings, ships and wagons. In many cases green wood was used in building, drying out in situ. In present times builders, carpenters and DIY people go to a timber merchant to select the wood they need. This wood is likely to have come from forests where trees are planted close together so that they grow straight and tall. At the timber merchant's, wood from the sawmill is seasoned either by the weather or in a kiln. The seasoned boards are then stacked as high as possible so that they are pressed flat.



ACTIVITY 2

If it is possible, take your class to visit an outdoor museum such as the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Butser Hill, Hants or the Weald and Downland Museum on the Goodwood Estate, Sussex. They can see coppiced trees where the young tree is cut back so that it throws up new shoots which mature into poles; and pollarded trees where the top of the tree is cut back to produce the new shoots. They can see these young shoots harvested and made into hurdles, thatching spars, wattle etc. You may also be able to arrange for them to see other woodland crafts. At Buckler's Hard Museum on the Beaulieu Estate, Hampshire, for example, children can see the many ways that wood was used in shipbuilding in the 18th century. Research the museums which are accessible for your school and which would provide a similar range of experiences.



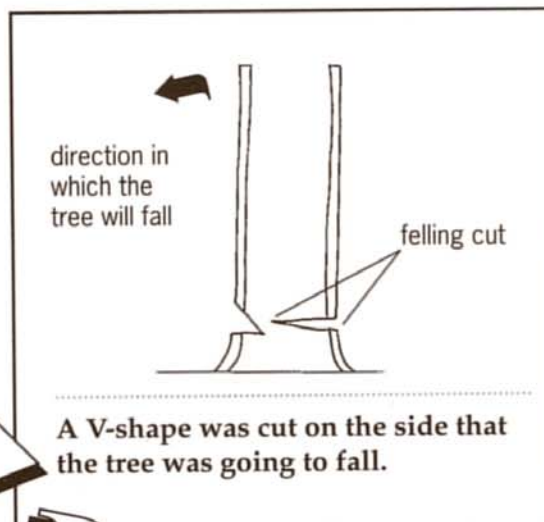
ACTIVITY 3

The children could focus on the dangers involved in harvesting trees in the past, and how modern tools, clothing and conditions of work have served to minimise these hazards.

FELLING IN THE PAST



The butts (the thick base) were axed off. The cut had to be as close to the ground as possible.



A V-shape was cut on the side that the tree was going to fall.

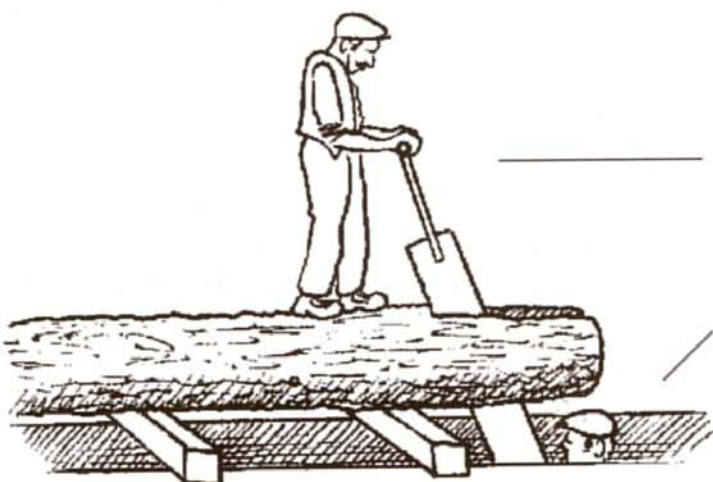


Lopping and topping. Then, as now, no part of the tree is wasted.



Two men sawed the trunk through

SAWING IN THE PAST



The top sawyer (or top dog) pulled up and guided the saw.

The pit-man (the underdog) pulled down.