



**THE INTERNATIONAL FOREST FESTIVAL  
FEANEDOCK THE NATIONAL FOREST 2-4<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021**

**TIMBER FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2021 PROGRAMME**

**3 DAYS OF MUSIC, FORESTS, ART, IDEAS**

**FIELD MUSIC, GRUFF RHYS, SAM LEE, SNAPPED ANKLES, THE  
UNTHANKS, HACKNEY COLLIERY BAND, ELIZABETH ALKER**

**SOUNDS OF THE FOREST FEATURING ERLAND COOPER,  
HINAKO OMORI AND JASON SINGH**

**LETTERS TO THE EARTH FEATURING RECORDINGS FROM  
YOKO ONO & EMMA THOMPSON**

**SIMON ARMITAGE, JULIE HESMONDHALGH, CAROLINE LUCAS,  
JINI REDDY, LEICESTER COMEDY FESTIVAL,  
CHRIS BULLZINI (TREETOP TIGHTROPE SPECTACULAR)**

The award-winning Timber Festival will celebrate its 3rd edition returning to its stunning woodland home in the heart of the National Forest on 2/3/4 July 2021. **Gruff Rhys, The Unthanks, Snapped Ankles, Erland Cooper, Field Music, Sam Lee, Simon Armitage, Julie Hesmondhalgh, Caroline Lucas** and guest curator **Elizabeth Alker** (BBC Radio 3) top a diverse bill where music, performance and the arts run wild. Tickets are on sale [here](#).

Created by the National Forest Company and award-winning festival producers Wild Rumpus, Timber takes place at Feanedock, on the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border in the National Forest, from **2 - 4 July 2021**. A celebration of trees and forests, in a place where trees have led the transformation of a former mining landscape, Timber encourages audiences to re-examine their relationship with the natural world.

Attendees are invited to join artists, musicians, performers and writers, as they respond and react to the forest in bold and exhilarating ways.

Timber's carefully curated musical line-up is a clear statement of intent. Super Furry Animals frontman, Neon Neon singer and a prolific solo artist in his own right **Gruff Rhys** joins the bill. His recent solo album 'Pang!' was praised for its wistful melodicism. Its message of hope amid environmental and social calamity could not be more powerful.

Rhys is joined by artistically brave and revered folk duo **The Unthanks** whose haunting harmony signature pieces like Magpie, (recently brought to wider attention by Mackenzie Crook's beautifully poignant series, Detectorists) make them perfect for next year's festival. The Unthanks said, "***We are really longing to play live music again, so it brings us great joy to announce our Timber Festival slot! To be able to perform in the glorious forest and to connect and unite with other like-minded individuals will be really special!***"

With their other-worldly, post-punk debut 'Come Play the Trees', **Snapped Ankles** could not be a better fit for Timber. Summoning the feral energy of the forest, the East Londoners bring their homemade log synths to Timber's Field Notes stage. Fresh from releasing their second album 'Stunning Luxury', Snapped Ankles' unpredictable, electrifying live show is not to be missed.

Mercury Prize nominated folk singer, conservationist, song collector, award winning promoter, broadcaster and activist **Sam Lee** also joins the bill. Lee's recent album 'Old Wow', produced by Bernard Butler (Suede, MacAlmont & Butler) is devoted to the natural world; a commitment that has long since dominated Sam's principles, he calls it, "***Music that simultaneously looks back into the past and ahead to the future. An urgent cry to help inspire us all to fall back in love with the natural world that we might strengthen our resolve to protect her.***"

Sam said, "***It's a real treat that Timber is back up and running and happy in 2021. I can't wait to be part of that amazing family community of art makers and builders of music and human communities in the National Forest. It feels so important that next year we find ways of celebrating with each other in the woods and with music. These are essentials and Timber Festival does it better than anyone else.***"

Timber also welcomes **Field Music**. The band boasts several critically acclaimed albums including 'Commontime' (2016) and 'Plumb' (2012) and a reputation for innovative and varied live performances. Since forming in 2004, they have become known for a deconstructionist approach to music and songs, carving a niche in their approach to albums, soundtracks and collaborations. Recently, Field Music came together with Imperial War Museums for two specially commissioned performances exploring the energy, hope and fragility brought about by the end of the First World War. One of the best live bands around, Field Music are imaginative and transcendent.

**Timber** is also delighted to announce that BBC radio presenter and broadcaster **Elizabeth Alker** has become a patron of Timber Festival. She will once again take over a day on the woodland Eyrie Stage, programming a mixture of live music, spoken word and a DJ set. Alker is the host of BBC Radio 3's Unclassified and presents weekend editions of Breakfast.

After dark, Timber comes alive. The natural amphitheatre beneath the trees is replete with beats, lasers and lights. As well as his appearance in Wilderness Tracks, the nation's bard **Simon Armitage** switches a mic for the turntables as he takes to the woodland Eyrie Stage as a night-time DJ - expect the unexpected!

Timber Festival has commissioned cutting edge musicians **Erland Cooper, Hinako Omori and Jason Singh** to create new music in response to crowd sourced sounds from forests and woodlands across the world. Supported by the PRS Foundation's The Open Fund for Organisations, the music will be premiered at next year's festival celebrating our relationship to trees and forests. Back in May, Timber Festival asked its global community to submit one-minute sound recordings of woodlands near where they live to contribute to the first global forest soundmap. **'Sounds of the Forest'** was created to encourage others across the globe to share in the harmonies of the natural world. Over 660 people from more than 50 countries have now contributed short audio postcards.

Erland Cooper commented, *"I grew up on an Island where there are little to no trees. Gale force winds simply don't let them reach maturity or perhaps even grow above a foot, save for behind some high dry stone dykes on farms and in particular, my parents back garden. The trees in that spot reach the exact height of the house and remain that way. Being a stone's throw from a constant battering of the north sea, I assume they are quite happy keeping their heads low and bodies wide. There's an ecosystem there, helped by my father encouraging my 5 siblings and I, over 30 years ago, each to plant a tree. I'm interested in deep ecology and the interdependence of organisms. I'm keen to see if I can explore this sensitive balance by the simple act of listening, recording and writing. I'm thankful to be asked by Timber to work on this new commission with some wonderful artists."*

Timber is a celebration of artists and artisans of woodland and wonder and of relaxation and revelry. It offers a culturally enriching experience but also lots of fun and this year's comedy, theatre and cultural roster is set to be spectacular.

Side-splitting comedy Leicester Comedy Festival return with a full-on programme aimed to make you laugh-out-loud. And let's face it, we all need a laugh right now! Geoff Rowe, Director, **Leicester Comedy Festival**, said, **"We are delighted to once again be part of the brilliant Timber Festival for 2021. The programme is always an amazing line up and we look forward to bringing some great comedians to the event."**

At Timber, new thinkers challenge audiences to re-examine our relationship with the natural world. Each year top guests discuss their favourite nature-inspired music in Wilderness Tracks with **BBC Radio 4's Geoff Bird**. Bird will host a live version Wilderness Tracks with Poet Laureate **Simon Armitage** and beloved Coronation Street star, **Julie Hesmondhalgh**. Previous Wilderness guests include Baroness Floella Benjamin, Phill Jupitus, Elizabeth Alker, Robert Macfarlane, Erland Cooper and Laura Barton. Listen back to the first series of the Wilderness Tracks podcast on the Timber website. Julie Hesmondhalgh said, *"I'm really looking forward to coming along to the amazing National Forest for the Timber Festival and sharing my Wilderness Tracks on what will surely be a beautiful summer's day! Can't wait."*

In exploring the climate crisis, Timber, set at the heart of the National Forest, is all about encouraging people to live more sustainably and in harmony with nature. In 2021, much of the programme will explore the impacts that we have on the world and how we can tackle the climate crisis. Expect a clarion call to action in a speech by **Caroline Lucas**, MP.

Timber will also host a reading of **Letters to the Earth from Culture Declares Emergency**, a book compiled of moving and inspiring letters about the climate crisis from the British public, along with authors, scientists and actors including contributions from **Emma Thompson, Yoko Ono and Kae Tempest**. Audiences will be able to listen to recordings by contributors, reading out letters from the book in a thought-provoking audio installation.

**Jini Reddy** also discusses belonging and otherness in a conversation about her new book **Wanderland** which was recently shortlisted for the Wainwright Prize. The book explores Reddy's very personal journey to connect with the magical and the sacred in the landscape, in Britain.

Festival producers Wild Rumpus are renowned for breaking new ground and have long nurtured pioneering outdoor-theatre companies, making Timber a perfect platform for this exciting kind of work. Look up for high-flying outdoor performances across the weekend, as a series of soaring theatrical performances will grace the treetops. World-class funambulist and high-wire walker **Chris Bullzini** will perform the **Treetop Tightrope Spectacular**, a jaw-dropping tightrope walk above the forest canopy and the **Dream Engine** perform ethereal aerial show **Heliosphere**, in which a spiraling, spinning acrobat is suspended beneath a helium balloon.

Rowan Cannon and Sarah Bird, directors of Wild Rumpus, said, “*We are so excited to announce the Timber Festival 2021 line-up today. Forests are resilient, adaptive, multifaceted, and have provided us real hope and positivity through this crisis. They have also provided comfort and inspiration for many of the amazing acts on our 2021 bill. So it's with great joy, we announce this really special line-up!*”

John Everitt, Chief Executive of the National Forest Company, said: “*As we all look to 2021 as a year of new beginnings, this Timber Festival line up reminds us of what we have all been missing most. So, join us in the Forest as a celebration of a better future; re-ignite that festival feeling, embrace the natural world again, and create some lasting memories with family and friends.*”

Wild Rumpus and the National Forest Company are confident that the event will be something to look forward to next year. Because of the size of the location and scale of the audience, plans can be adapted to run the event with social distancing should that be required, and with all COVID safety measures in place. Wild Rumpus has been working collaboratively over the summer with the Outdoor Arts sector to highlight COVID safe practices and has been operating safe small-scale events.

Ends

Notes to Editors

**Timber Festival** is an immersive and revitalising weekend festival in the National Forest celebrating our relationship with trees and woods through carefully curated musical performances, installations, debates and workshops Timber will next take place from 2 - 4 July 2021.

Music, art, and ideas weave together during this three-day camping festival tucked away at Feanedock, a 70acre woodland site near Ashby de le Zouch in the heart of the National Forest.

Spanning 200 square miles of the Midlands, the National Forest is the first forest to be created at scale in England for over 1000 years. For three days in July, new thinkers, activists, makers, artists, musicians and writers gather to play, provoke and inspire as we explore our complex and rewarding relationship with the natural world.

A joyous, reflective festival, Timber gives you the chance to recharge and reconnect with your family, friends, nature and, most importantly, yourself.

Timber Festival is supported using public funding by Arts Council England, and by North West Leicestershire District Council.

Sounds of the Forest is supported by the PRS Foundation's The Open Fund for Organisations,

Find out more about Timber Festival at [timberfestival.org.uk](http://timberfestival.org.uk).

**The National Forest** is the UK's boldest environmentally led regeneration project, spanning 200 square miles of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire.

The central part of the Forest covers the former Midlands Coalfield, and the planting of nearly nine million trees over the past three decades has transformed the landscape, lives and the local economy. Working with local communities, businesses and land-owners, it is a national exemplar of imaginative and ambitious sustainable development.

Since the early 1990s, forest cover around Feanedock has increased from 1% to 27%; throughout the Forest as a whole, forest cover now stands at over 21%, more than double the national average.

However, the story of the National Forest goes beyond the trees. This transformation inspires people and businesses to reconnect with nature and create a place to grow together. We are creating a distinctive sense of place, a forest culture for the 21st century.

See more at [nationalforest.org](http://nationalforest.org)

**Wild Rumpus** exist in a space where arts and culture meet the natural environment. Working from the Whirligig, four acres of woodland in Cheshire, they create experiences which inspire curiosity and design events that immerse audiences in incredible stories and moments of wonder.

In addition to Timber Festival, Wild Rumpus produce other ambitious outdoor arts events including Hinterlands Film Festival and Just So Festival.

Wild Rumpus also run an extensive volunteer and talent development programme working with performers, producers and programmers to shape a cultural environment where excellent outdoor work thrives.

Find out more about Wild Rumpus at [wildrumpus.org.uk](http://wildrumpus.org.uk).