

# Trees

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

G C D G D G

Once this fair land was covered in trees from mountain tops to beach, Ma -

G C D G C G C

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C C D Em G C D

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G C G D G

came the Ro - mans from a - far, and with them cop - pic - ing

Once this fair land was covered in trees from mountain tops to beach.  
Majestic oaks and ranging ash up to the sky did reach.  
The hand of man was rarely felt - in that world trees were king,  
Then came the Romans from afar, and with them coppicing.

New roads were built through forests green, as straight as eyes could see,  
And wood was needed to build forts - lest natives disagree.  
Bright beacons burned on hills now bare, their warnings to proclaim,  
And in the valleys land was cleared and meadow it became.

And when the Romans left this land, for centuries trees grew,  
Until the Normans crossed from France bringing occupation new.  
As churches grand were built to God, their roofs were made from wood,  
Their timbers felled and shaped by men who woodcraft understood.

Elizabethans built with wood when stone could not be found.  
Their cottages and elegant halls in many parts abound.  
Then came the age of sailing ships, the oceans to explore,  
And oaks once dominating woods no longer acorns bore.

As men grew ever cleverer, they looked for newer ways.  
In iron they saw the way ahead, but needed fuel to blaze.  
If coppiced wood were slowly burned, then charcoal would appear.  
It burnt as bright as any star and iron-ore would sear.

As coal became the fuel of choice, men headed underground  
To dig for what wood had become where'er it could be found.  
If mining was to be a job that some could learn to love,  
They needed pit-props overhead to hold the earth above.

But then came conflict on a scale as never seen before,  
As fires raged through woodland glades as countries went to war.  
All standing wood was in demand as fortunes waxed and waned,  
And trees were sacrificed in droves as all around shells rained.

Then as the wars came to an end and trade became the norm.  
A new invention came to pass - the chainsaw had been born.  
It devastated trees in lands both near and far away,  
So we could have cheap food to eat on each and every day.

One day we might well stop to think of all the trees we've lost,  
And finally we'll realise just how high's been the cost.  
Without trees covering the land we'll struggle to survive,  
And as the last tree falls to earth, no man will be alive.



### **Veteran Oak Tree in Shropshire**

*I have come to appreciate ancient woodland (an area assumed to have had continuous tree-cover for at least 300 years) rather late in my life, although my excuse for this is that, sadly, there isn't a lot left in the UK given the activities of man over the past two thousand years. The fact that we are still decimating the earth's tropical forests means that our much vaunted Tree Preservation Orders are very small beer on a global scale.*