



ABOUT BOG WOOD

Bog wood is commonly referred to as bog oak, although formed from several species of tree submerged in peat bogs for thousands of years. Acting as a natural preservative and excluding oxygen, the peat stains these trees a dark brown to black colour.

Moss stocks (as the roots are known locally) find their way to the surface through peat cutting and agriculture, making this unique and unusual wood available to the craftsman. Bog oak is incredibly hard and has been used and carved in the past for dagger handles, police truncheons, bowling balls and jewellery.

Bog oak dates back 10,000 years when the dominant species of tree was English oak. When the climate changed and sea levels rose, the lowland forests were flooded and buried within peat bogs. The anaerobic conditions meant the wood never rotted, but its colour and character changed into a very distinctive jet black. It is a beautiful material, especially where the old tree roots curve into all manner of shapes.

In the 19th century in Ireland much of the native woodland had been felled, so the bogs were a valuable source of timber. The wood was used for roof timbers in houses, making furniture, and a whole variety of wooden vessels. Bog oak which is usually black was also used to make small items such as smoking pipes.

The goblet on display in the Visitors' Centre is from a piece of bog oak donated by the late William Cormack and turned by Henry Rogerson.

It is thought to be approximately 2000 years old and was unearthed at The Derrie*(oakwood) Farm near Mochrum north of Port William Dumfries and Galloway.

**The Irish City of Derry (Londonderry) derives its name from the Irish 'Doire Calgach' meaning 'oak grove' and comes from the settlement's original name Daire Calgaich, translating as 'oakwood of Calgach'. Calgach was a pagan warrior who had his camp on the 'island' of Derry in pre-Christian times. The name survived and the town grew until the 10th century when it became known as 'Doire Colmcille' in honour of St Columb. Over the following centuries this name became anglicised to Derrie or Derry.*