

# Forest Matters



November 2016





# Putting Forests Firmly in the Frame

PictureFrames (FSC®C007915) are proud to be the only FSC certified framers in the world to offer a fully comprehensive and bespoke framing service.

Founder Hope Elletson started a picture framing business in his garden shed in Salisbury, in 1989. Soon after starting, he moved into a large workshop in an old grain store on a working farm where he built the business for the next ten years. The first version of [pictureframes.co.uk](http://pictureframes.co.uk) went live in 1997, at which point it was the only picture framing website in the UK. The company moved to its current location on the Wincombe Business Park in Shaftesbury in 2000, and in 2006 started a fine art and photographic printing service alongside the framing services.

PictureFrames works for private customers, artists, galleries and corporate customers which have included Disney, P&O Cruises, Guinness World Records, Buckingham Palace and Rolls Royce Motor Cars.

On reading the 1999 environmental bible “Natural Capitalism”<sup>1</sup>, Hope had a nagging feeling that he was in an industry which caused a lot of trees to be cut down but didn’t have any significant measures in place to ensure that those trees were cut down in the right way.

Three years ago, the business started to change direction, and now PictureFrames is the only full service bespoke picture framing & printing company in the world who is FSC certified.

The team at PictureFrames believe that responsibly sourced timber is a very environmentally friendly construction material, but unfortunately one that’s not always responsibly sourced. According to the WWF Living Forests model<sup>2</sup>, half of the world’s tropical forests have been destroyed over the last century. If business as usual continues, up to 170 million hectares of additional deforestation will occur by 2030, and large areas of remaining forest will continue to be degraded. WWF states: “By choosing FSC certified products, you can be sure where they’ve come from, and that they won’t have been harvested in a way that causes damage to forests, people and wildlife.”

Left: Heart & Soul exhibition

“We have even had to establish new supply chains for almost all of our materials and hold vastly increased stocks in order to be able to meet the FSC requirements.”

Everything that PictureFrames promotes face-to-face is now FSC certified, and over 88% of the frames on the website is FSC certified. Hope expects to reach 100% on the website within the next six months.

For some customers it has not yet been possible to source FSC certified materials, but the team ensure that materials bought for these customers are not promoted to others and they are constantly moving established customers over to FSC alternatives.

## Heart & Soul exhibition

This year PictureFrames received major recognition for their sustainability efforts when world famous wildlife artist Gary Hodges chose them to frame all of the work in his Heart & Soul Exhibition. The exhibition raised over £160,000 for two charities - the Born Free Foundation and the Environmental Investigation Agency (See article in the September edition of Forest Matters). Here’s what Gary had to say about PictureFrames:

“After some research online, we found the perfect match for our goal with the frames... [pictureframes.co.uk](http://pictureframes.co.uk). Everything they use, from frames to backing board, comes from responsibly managed forests. It was a huge exhibition, but the 174 framed pictures were all delivered without fuss on the dates requested.”

Hope says “It’s early days at the moment - it took a long time to change our whole portfolio over to FSC certified materials, but I feel that the certification and motivation behind it has a great resonance with many artists. I am hoping that we will get a job to frame an exhibition in Berlin next year where the FSC certification will be a major factor for the artist.”

Further to being selected to frame the exhibition, PictureFrames were chosen as finalists for the Blackmore Vale Media Green Award.



Above: The PictureFrames team

“Do it ‘from the heart’ and make long term plans - because in time, legislation and public sentiment will demand that irresponsible timber practices are eradicated.”

## Meeting the FSC standards

Claire Randall, Office Manager at PictureFrames says: “As part of meeting our FSC audit requirements, we have ensured that above our comprehensive filing, purchasing and sales records, all FSC products are monitored through our workshop and kept record of on a monthly and yearly basis. Training has taken place with every member of staff to ensure a depth of understanding regarding the importance of using FSC materials and products, and the tracking of them in each department. We can also check to see that companies we choose to do business with are adhering to the high standards we have put in place and the customer has complete peace of mind that at every stage we have adhered to FSC Standards.”

## Committed to sourcing FSC

PictureFrames faced a huge challenge ensuring that every timber based component in their frames and prints came from an FSC certified supplier. At the outset, less than 1% of the mouldings available in the UK were FSC certified, not to mention mount-board, backing board and printing paper.

As a result, the business had an extensive portfolio of natural timber mouldings especially milled and now finishes over 80% of frames in house. Every possible finishing method is used from the ancient, traditional gilding techniques through to modern water-borne spray finishes. The upshot of this is a better finished product and far greater opportunities for quality, creativity and style - things the company constantly pursues.

This achievement has involved a huge change of direction for PictureFrames, with significant investment made in both time and money. Compared to when they first started, their offering is now radically different, and in most cases to anything else in their industry. They have even had to establish new supply chains for almost all of their materials and hold vastly increased stocks in order to be able to meet the FSC requirements!

Earlier this year they had a big sale to shift some of the non-FSC stocks of mouldings that they no longer offer as part of their range. They gave £1,607.92 (a third of the proceeds of this sale) to the charity Hope and Homes for Children.



*Above: At the Heart and Soul Exhibition, artist Gary Hodges with Virginia Mckenna, co-founder of the Born Free Foundation*

### Advice to others considering FSC certification

Hope says to anyone thinking of becoming FSC certified: "If you're in an industry like we are, which is 'way behind the curve' on timber certification, then you have an opportunity to make it your USP as we are doing. However, significant short-term business benefit is unlikely, so do it 'from the heart' and make long term plans - because in time, legislation and public sentiment will demand that irresponsible timber practices are eradicated."

<http://www.pictureframes.co.uk/fsc-certified-picture-frames/>

**Sources:** 1. *Natural Capitalism*; P.Hawken, A. B. Lovins, and L. H. Lovins; 1999 Rocky Mountain Institute. 2. WWF 'Deforestation Fronts'; [http://www.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/deforestation/deforestation\\_fronts/](http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/deforestation/deforestation_fronts/)

Image credits: © Neil Wray / PictureFrames



EVERY PICTUREFRAME WE MAKE  
STARTS LIFE AS A TREE...

...AND WE TAKE THAT AS SERIOUSLY  
AS THE ART WITHIN

- The world's only FSC® certified bespoke picture framing & printing company
- We commit to all of our materials being responsibly sourced
- Exclusively milled plain timber
- The best of traditional and modern finishes
- The highest quality work by expert craftsmen made in Dorset



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