



# A culture of forestry and

While the UK and Canada may occupy different ends of the spectrum when it comes to scale of the resource and maturity of the processing industry, there is real opportunity for the two countries to learn from each other, says **Stuart Goodall**

Canadians feel connected to their forests – all 348 million hectares of them (the UK has 3.1 million ha). From the maple leaf of their flag to holidays spent in the forests and the 90% of family homes built with wood, a clear forestry and wood culture exists, where using home-grown wood products is part of everyday life. 200,000 people work directly in the sector, spread across rural Canada.

While the connection to Canada's forests is in decline in the country's expanding cities, even here there are plans to turn the ubiquitous 21st century concrete, steel and glass jungle into a sky-scape of wooden buildings, primarily through the use of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). Groups work with school children to educate them about forestry.

While Scotland builds two-thirds of new homes in timber frame, and London is emerging as a major global market for CLT, the contrast with the UK is evident.

However, we do share an interest in looking at new ways to use wood. In Canada this is being driven by a significant fall in exports to its principal market, the USA. The US has seen a dramatic fall in house building since 2008 and, like developed countries worldwide, a major reduction in demand for newsprint. As a consequence, Canada has seen pulp and paper mills close across the country and sawmills struggle.

Forced to look for new markets, Canadian

companies are working with the federal and provincial governments to invest millions of pounds every year in research and innovation, market development and promotion.

The construction sector is a key target, with the larger provinces boasting testing equipment that is the envy of comparable UK facilities. Whether it is fire, acoustic or strength testing, the industry has access to what it needs to demonstrate suitability for use in low and high-rise building.

Outside of construction, impressive research facilities are utilised to develop products to replace oil, to manufacture useful products like lignin and even to utilise cellulose in foodstuffs.

When it comes to forest management, the Canadian and provincial governments are very concerned about reputation. While the forests (94% publicly owned) have been actively managed to produce wood for generations, environmental groups have challenged the harvesting and management practices of forestry businesses and how aboriginal rights are protected. Recent concern over declining woodland Caribou numbers have prompted calls for greater habitat protection.

Disagreements, and even legal action, still break out as different groups seek to exert control and influence over a major national asset. Recently federal and provincial governments have



**90% of family homes are built with wood and the use of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) is growing**



stepped up their promotion of how they regulate and protect the forests to protect the reputation of a still nationally important industry.

Both Canada and the UK face the challenge of an ageing workforce alongside a desire to promote greater diversity. While the UK boasts a more technically advanced sawmilling and harvesting sector than Canada, both face stereotypes of low-skilled, low-paid jobs and an unwelcoming environment for women.

In Canada, entire rural communities can be reliant on a mill and the businesses that service it. The government is keen to maintain employment opportunities in rural areas and the industry has launched an ambitious programme called The Greenest Workforce to challenge misconceptions and attract a new generation to the sector.

Both countries also face the challenge of climate driven changes to weather patterns and threats from pests and diseases, and a desire to



# Timber industry called for 'strong stand' in Paris climate talks



The European timber and woodworking industry – Europe's fifth largest manufacturing sector – called on EU political leaders to take a principled, ambitious stand ahead of the UN COP21 climate talks in Paris in November.

The industry highlighted to policy makers that the timber supply chain provided an excellent example of how it was possible to achieve economic growth without increasing GHG emissions.

The call followed a recent meeting of the 'Club du Bois', a cross-party discussion forum with MEPs on all legislative matters affecting the forestry and timber sector in Europe and jointly organised by the European Sawmills Organisation (EOS), the European Panel Federation (EPF) and CEI-Bois, the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries.

Academic, peer-reviewed studies have estimated that emissions amounting to 14-31% of global CO<sub>2</sub> could be avoided by using more timber in construction. This is partly through creating less carbon-intensive material such as concrete and steel, partly through the carbon sequestration and storage effect of timber products. A further 12-19% of annual global fossil fuel consumption could be saved through using more wood waste as energy.

David Hopkins, Director of Wood for Good in the UK said: "There is a huge opportunity for Europe to show real leadership at these talks, driving the growth of forests, sequestering more greenhouse gases and boosting the rural economy while developing low-carbon urban environments. The message is clear: Build with Carbon. Don't emit it."

# wood



The tallest commercial timber building in the UK – built for Sky in 2014 – used precision-engineered timber construction systems. Building in this way can drastically reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions says the timber industry.

demonstrate how growing trees and using wood products can play a crucial role in efforts to limit emissions of greenhouse gases. In this regard, the UK, through the wood promotion campaign Wood for Good has led, producing engaging animations to tell a simple, but important story.

The UK also has an opportunity to learn from the way that Canada, with its federal and provincial governments, co-ordinates support for the forestry and wood processing sector. The public and private sector collaborates across provinces to fund and design research, while wood promotion is shared. Even with a far bigger industry than the countries of the UK combined, each province recognises the benefits, and opportunities, from working with others.

A council of forest ministers meets regularly to discuss standards and reputation, research and industry development – a possible model for a 'fully-devolved' UK?

## NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL FOREST INDUSTRIES

Information as of October 2015

### Lumber exports from Russia up by 8.4% in January – August

For the first eight months of 2015 total volume of lumber exports from Russia increased by 8.4% to 9.44m tons year-over-year, Federal Customs Service of Russia reports.

The volume of Russian exports of Roundwood for the reporting period amounted to 12.07m m<sup>3</sup> (0.9% less than in same period last year).

Export value of Roundwood decreased by 26.5% to \$867.2m; export value of lumber decreased by 18.1% to \$2.1bn.

11.66m m<sup>3</sup> of roundwood (-10.2%) worth \$849.5m (-26%) were shipped to other countries in January – August 2015; to CIS countries - 416.2 thousand m<sup>3</sup> (+2.3%) worth \$17.7m (-35.9%).

7.38m tons (+17%) of lumber worth

\$1.79bn (-9.6%) were shipped to other countries; to CIS countries – 2.052m tons (-14.5%), worth \$309.1m (-47.6%).

### Brazil mills benefit from lower sawlog prices

Sawmills in Brazil have become much more competitive in the export market the past few years because of substantially lower sawlog costs. In the second quarter of this year, average log prices were down to their lowest levels in ten years, according to Wood Resource Quarterly. This downward trend may rebound later in 2015 as the export market for lumber is likely to improve.

### Hardwood chips

In July 2015, prices for overseas traded hardwood chip were 14% below their peak four years ago, according to the latest FOEX Chip Price Indexes.