



FUTURE-PROOFING FORESTRY SKILLS



Stefanie Kaiser meets staff and students at SRUC Barony College to investigate how education can keep pace with the fast-changing needs of employers.

Photos: Shona Warwick

Left: First-year student planting on a restocking site on Raehill estate.

It's a rainy Monday morning when I head down to Dumfries to attend a practical training session for first-year students at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). Scheduled outdoor activities seem to attract bad weather, I recall from my own student days. A positive thought crosses my mind - most people would pay for a steam bath or an exciting holiday in humid jungles, while Scotland's forestry professionals get their free dose of refreshing and invigorating Spa treatment on a regular basis.

I meet Gordon Hill, a forester of Canadian origin and SRUC's Programme Leader for Forestry at its Barony Campus in Parkgate, near Dumfries. With a soft accent he starts the conversation by describing the students he trains at the college.

"The students who enrol for our courses are very different to those looking at higher education. Some of them didn't do so well at school, and our task is to design engaging, vocational and hands-on courses that fit the forestry sector's labour needs and that are motivating for the students. Most of our students are 16-18 years old, but we do have some career changers as well."

"Many of our students are local but we attract students from across the UK as well as from abroad. In the past, we have had positive reciprocal training exchange arrangements with European forestry vocational schools for staff and students which we funded from European project participation (eg. from Czech Republic, Germany, Finland and Sweden). One of our unique selling points is that we have been tenaciously sticking with expensive vocational education and training provision like chainsaw use, tree climbing and forest machine operations. Other colleges have dropped this provision, but we have



We want to attract students who really want to take on forestry as a career

been working with industry partners for many years to keep it. We have been doing this for over 14 years. It is costly to run and maintain forestry machines and we need forestry thinning sites for training tree felling and forwarder extraction - it is not a cheap playground."

I ask Gordon the obvious question about gender diversity, a hot topic in our sector.

"We usually recruit only one or two girls per year - say 2-5% of the class. It's a shame, and SRUC actually has a positive and inclusive equality and diversity recruitment process - it's not because we don't try to actively recruit females. Our experience training females in using chainsaws or tree climbing or using forestry machines is overwhelmingly positive, girls seem to listen and act on instructions given - many come into the learning environment juggling family and/or work commitments. For example, in the early stages of training, when operators use our forest machine simulators, some of the younger lads tend to be 'too excited', focusing on manipulating the control levers instead of following the instructor's guidance - so, it may take them a little longer to learn how to the loader responds to the movement of the mini-levers or joystick. In the end, it all works out, but it is amusing."

Listening to Gordon's comment I wonder about the reason why he perceives female students as more focused. I could guess that if a girl chooses to enter a male-dominated career, this choice will be based on real interest and motivation, as it will unlikely to be her fall-back career option.

"When I trained in forestry in Canada, the gender balance was 30% female and 70% male right from the get go. Maybe it's because forests are part of the Canadian national psyche. In the UK, I think forestry tends to be more looked upon as a fringe activity, it's probably not particularly well understood by the general public."

We pick up Marketing Officer Shona Warwick and head out to meet the first group of students, who are working on a practical planting contract for Scot- >>

>> tish Woodlands, a Confor member. The company has made a planting site available on Lord Annandale's Raehill Estate and SRUC's forestry students are treated just like contractors; they are paid to plant trees at commercial contractor's rates. The students are in the Certificate in Forestry course, which started in August 2016. As part of their training, they are expected to understand all aspects of a contractor's job: they have participated in preparing access-to-site paperwork, and have met with site manager Mr Nick Dowdell, Senior Forestry Manager for Scottish Woodlands, for a site meeting before starting the job. The experience allows them to write a forestry planting risk assessment and work method statement which is relevant to the planting job and is site-specific. All this is part of their assessment for the course work and reflects the key skills needed for graduates to enter the job market.

When we arrive, Senior Instructor Brian Connelly is overseeing the students who are busy planting on a restocking site which has been prepared ahead of time. As a reference, an experienced planter would be able to plant 1000-1400 trees in the ground in one day, earning £80-£100+ per day. The plants that are used here are quite tall (60-90cm) and have a big root system, which will make them more successful in outcompeting the weeds that are expected to invade the site next summer. In addition, the trees have been treated chemically to prevent weevil attack. If their work is not up to the contract specifications, the job will have to be redone, so the students have undertaken quality checking on each other's group work to ensure the work meets the required standard. Gordon points out that staff "try to make sure that students do not leave SRUC without having a really good understanding of how much planning there is involved in undertaking - in this case - a tree planting contract. It is more than just sticking a few trees in the ground. The forestry curriculum aims to be as comprehensive as possible."

We head to Dock Park in Dumfries. We meet up with Forestry Lecturer Andrew Treadaway, and students of the Advanced Certificate in Arboriculture course who are completing an urban park tree survey for Dumfries and Galloway Council. They are using GPS receivers to log precise location and tree condition data. Last year, SRUC had introduced a

couple of new units in the curriculum. First, staff recognised the need to keep pace with innovation in the forestry sector and SRUC introduced basic GPS / GIS training to teach the students about the importance of GIS mapping in a forestry and arboriculture context. Second, other recent teaching innovations have involved the student use of video footage using mobile phones, drones or Go-Pro cameras so students can replay sequences of tree climbing, tree felling or forwarder machine operations to reflect on, improve and correct techniques.

We hit the road again and pay a visit to another group of the first-year students, who are using chainsaws to thin a young spruce shelterbelt on Handgrove Farm, near Annan. This site has created opportunities for chainsaw felling for both the Certificate in Forestry (Year 1) and Advanced Certificate in Forestry and Arboriculture (Year 2) groups since August 2016. The job will be completed in June 2017, ready for handover to the client, Mr. Alistair Marshall (Mr Marshall is a Vice Chairman of SRUC). All students get valuable chainsaw felling and timber presentation experience in this forest.

As in the case of the planting job, the felling assignment covers all aspects required for the contract. Students are involved in preparing a harvesting site plan, a site and machine specific risk assessment with associated work method statements. Prior to getting hold of their chainsaws, the students have had to carefully plan the extraction route, locate and map the physical and man-made site constraints. Working in a forest thinning demands that students acquire skills for good directional tree felling and systematic presentation of neatly stacked timber to facilitate the forestry extraction process - a key learning outcome. Second year Advanced Certificate in Forestry (Harvesting) students who are already operating forestry skidders and forwarders will extract the produce to the farm steading. In this case, the produce will be used to provide fuel for the farm's biomass boiler.

To finish the day, Gordon takes me back to the college campus and I am shown around the forwarder driving area and the forestry harvesting simulator. The college is increasingly looking towards a future >>



First-year student working in a forest thinning at Handgrove Farm.

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ALIGNING TRAINING WITH INDUSTRY NEEDS

Responding to employers' training needs in real time is an ambitious goal; a curriculum needs constant fine-tuning and funding can be a major limitation to this process. SRUC's Barony Campus has therefore focused on industry partnerships.

One example is The Forest Machine Operator course, in which SRUC collaborates with the Forestry Commission, John Deere Forestry Equipment (a Confor member) and UK Forest Products Association to deliver an intensive 8 week course on a live site with forwarders and harvesters. The eight week course includes, training with simulators, harvesting site experience, theory (covering topics like health and safety) and it has been successful in getting new operators into forest harvesting work.

"The former Barony College and now SRUC's Barony Campus have been training forest machine operators for the past 14 years. Work is being undertaken to move this training to the next stage, so that the forestry sector has a continual supply of trained operators to work in the forestry sector.

"There is talk of an apprenticeship style of provision with a number of partners. It would be good to think that our college can play its full part in this future provision. We want the industry to

be aware that we can train the professional, skilled forestry operators they will need in the future", says Programme Leader Gordon Hill.

The centre produces highly employable vocationally oriented graduates who can work in demanding, technically relevant areas, namely forestry, forest harvesting and arboriculture .

"When we plan new course offers we need to make sure they are fit for purpose and aligned with industry needs. It takes us about 12-18 months to design a course. Prospective employers are invited to discuss their future staff needs well in advance, to make sure we can suitably adjust our education packages. To justify the cost of setting up a course, we would be looking for programmes for 10-12 candidates each year."

According to the Programme Leader, there seems to be a demand for forest establishment supervisors at the moment; people who have enough practical skills but also the capacity to manage a small planting squad.

"It's not about transferring technical skills in an isolated way, but combining them with business and people management skills."

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REAL LIFE IS THE BEST TEACHER

SRUC is developing a practical contract management approach to provide students with real-life skills and experience, this supplements technical knowledge acquired in a controlled learning environment. Students set up companies to undertake their project group work, to develop small business skills. Their assignments are real contracts, pre-arranged by the college but paid in negotiation with the clients. To help lecturers appraise each of the student's performance within a working group, rather than just their

group outcomes, they are using the Moodle online learning environment. A dedicated project area allows to record and assess digital evidence, notes, annotated images, drone and Go-Pro evidence within an online collaborative e-portfolio. Evidence is recorded for all stages of the project: tender, client communication, pre-job assessment, the practical component of the job. Students build their portfolio which can be used not only for assessment of accomplished skills but also by students as e-CVs when hunting for jobs.

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The course

The Forestry Management postgraduate programme offers a solid and effective way of studying forestry with a strong applied focus. Input from industry professionals, many of them Chartered Foresters, will ensure that curriculum is relevant and current and that students benefit from the experience and insight of managers with real-world responsibilities. Industry visits and assignments based on professional projects and case studies reinforce this approach and help build links and networks.

The central UK location of Harper Adams in Shropshire enables access to a wide range of forest resource types for teaching and study.

Key facts

Final award: MSc (ICF accredited)

Intermediate awards: PgD, PgC

Duration: Typically one year full-time or two to three years part-time

Exceptional career opportunities



Contact

Heather Hogan
Postgraduate Administrator
01952 815289

Jim Waterson
Course Lecturer
01952 815388

harper.ac.uk/forestry

Forestry & Arboriculture – Programme Managers and Lecturers



With over 3,000 students, excellent resources and a drive for continuous quality improvement, Plumpton College is actively seeking staff with the right values and attributes who want to make a difference and be part of this exciting phase of our development. We are looking to recruit professional and ambitious individuals to form an integral part of our growing Forestry and Arboriculture team. We deliver a diverse range of courses: Level One to Level Three, Royal Forestry Society ABC Level 2 Certificate in Arboriculture and Forestry, Royal Forestry Society ABC Level 4 Award in Arboriculture, Foundation Degrees in both Forestry and Woodland Management and Arboriculture, and are currently investing in a BSc (Hons) 'top-up' to these FdSc programs.

Due to an expanding team we have a variety of exciting opportunities available in the Forestry and Arboriculture Department we are currently looking for Programme Managers and Lecturers. Successful candidates will hold a recognised forestry or arboriculture qualification and ideally have experience teaching within the Further Education sector although training will be given.

As well as a competitive salary, you can also look forward to a great range of benefits including generous holiday allowance plus bank holidays, continuous training and updating within our industry, membership of the pension scheme and a child care voucher scheme.

If you believe you can make a significant contribution to the success of our vocational programmes and wish to work in an inspirational location in the South Downs National Park, then we would love to hear from you.

For more information or to arrange an informal discussion/visit please email the HR team; hr@plumpton.ac.uk. Alternatively please contact: the HR team at Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton, East Sussex, BN7 3AE.

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LIFE AFTER SRUC

College graduates are mostly looking to becoming self-employed contractors. They are likely to be hiring tree planters or own a few machines themselves. For this reason, they need to be set up with the skills needed to be successful in their entrepreneurial careers.

There is no lack of success stories where graduates have set up their own businesses quite quickly and successfully. People from rural areas or a farming environment are often predisposed to set up contractor businesses. They have seen their parents do it, it comes natural to them.

A vocational forestry or arboriculture course gives them the skills and context to start their career and work their way up within a forestry company. Forestry is a sector that offers pretty good opportunities for career progression, for those who are motivated.

Graduates are not limited to working in the UK. Alumni have gone to work in New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, or Finland.

In vocational college, lecturers assess students personally. They know who is shaping up and who isn't. The college staff have good contacts with the industry and employers get in touch with the college if they need young professionals. Promising students get recommended; it's a merit-based career path, it's not just about grades or diplomas.

>> with increased digital learning and connectivity in forestry at the centre of its learning, although the challenges – both human and funding – are not easy to overcome. Using simulators as a first step to train machine operator is done early to give the operator a chance to practise in a risk free environment. This is tremendously helpful, but nothing compensates for driving real machines.

Before I head back to the train station, I ask Gordon about his 'wish list' for the college's future. His answer comes very quickly: 'quality' students. "We want to attract students who are very committed and keen to really take on forestry as a career. Students now need to be more 'technologically savvy' because of the impact that technology and innovation is making right across the forestry sector right now. In the future, it will be more important for those of us who work in the sector do our bit to raise its profile. The range of opportunities and range of work roles evolving across the sector at all levels from the forest craftsmen right through to senior management demands good education and skills. I don't see that demand for good forestry vocational education is going to be declining in the near future. We need the sector's continued support of good forestry education and training establishments like ours to continue so we can provide good candidates for the forestry sector in the future. A challenge is to attract the best people into our forestry sector.

www.sruc.ac.uk

WHY FORESTRY?

Three first-year Barony College students studying for a Forestry Certificate give their reasons. And two pose questions for the industry.

A NATURAL CAREER CHOICE

Rhys Jardine

Rhys is 18 and forestry runs in his family. His uncle is active in the sector and encouraged him to enrol at SRUC Barony. Going into farming had been his second career option.

He loves the physical work of felling trees, but so far, has found all aspects of the course really interesting. Once he completes the course, he hopes to find a job at the company his uncle is working for.

THE CAREER CHANGER

Shaun McGranaghan

Shaun, at 52, decided to retrain as a forester, after retiring from an intense career as a paramedic. He loves the outdoors and working with horses. He states that the Scottish rural sector is at a crossroad at the moment, and is convinced that forestry is a land-based sector that can really take off and make a difference in the post-Brexit future, "if we get it right". He wants to be part of this positive change, also for his children. He thinks that working in forestry could be interesting for the next ten years, and that there is scope to bring in some of his experience as a paramedic, to contribute to improving health and safety in the forestry workplace. Shaun has made a big commitment by commuting from Glasgow every day to attend this vocational forestry course.

Shaun's question: *Where is the sector going? Private, public or both?*

THE RUGBY PLAYER

Euan Hamilton

Euan is an 18-year-old rugby player. His first career choice had been to study biochemistry, and he got accepted at Glasgow University. But he realised that working in a lab environment was not for him, it wouldn't satisfy his craving for physical activity and spending time outdoors. He has a friend who completed the forestry course at Barony College and who encouraged him to look at forestry as an alternative career option. Euan wants to specialise towards arboriculture in the second year and is looking forward to getting into tree climbing.

Euan's Question: *What does the industry want from newly qualified students looking to get into the workplace immediately after education?*

ANY ANSWERS?

Can you answer Euan's or Shaun's question? Please contact us at Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk and we will publish your statement in the next FTN issue.



Course selector

Higher education courses in forestry, arboriculture and urban forestry in the UK, commencing academic session 2017-2018.

Compiled by
Ted Wilson

INSTITUTION	COURSE	FT	PT	DL	ICF pts
UNDERGRADUATE					
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN School of Biological Sciences	BSc (Hons) Environmental and Forest Management	•			NA
ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE Professional Tree Surgery and Management	FdSc Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•		NA
BANGOR UNIVERSITY School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography (SENRGY)	MFor (4-year Master of Forestry degree)	•			8
	BSc (Hons) Forestry	•			8
	BSc (Hons) Conservation with Forestry	•			6
	BSc (Hons) Geography with Environmental Forestry	•			NA
UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA National School of Forestry	BSc (Hons) Forest Management	•	•		8
	BSc (Hons) Woodland Ecology and Conservation	•	•		6
	BSc (Hons) Forestry (Top-Up)	•	•		*
	FdSc Forestry	•	•		5
HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY Department of Crop and Environment Sciences	BSc (Hons) Countryside Management	•			5
	BSc (Hons) Countryside and Environment Management	•			5
INVERNESS COLLEGE UHI Scottish School of Forestry	BSc (Hons) Forest Management	•	•		TBC
	HND Forestry	•	•		5
	HND Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•		5
	HNC Forestry	•	•		NA
	HNC Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•		NA
MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE University of Central Lancashire	BSc (Hons) Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•		•	8
	FdSc Arboriculture	•		•	5
NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE Kirkley Hall Campus	FdSc Arboriculture	•	•		NA
PERSHORE COLLEGE University of Worcester	BSc (Hons) Arboriculture and Tree Management (Top-Up)	•			8
	FdSc Arboriculture	•			5
PLUMPTON COLLEGE University of Brighton	FdSc Arboriculture	•	•		5
	FdSc Forestry and Woodland Management	•	•		5
TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE					
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN School of Biological Sciences	MSc Environmental and Forest Management	•			NA
BANGOR UNIVERSITY School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography (SENRGY)	MSc Environmental Forestry	•			6
	MSc Agroforestry)	•			5
	MSc Forestry			•	5/6
	MSc Tropical Forestry			•	6
HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY Department of Crop and Environment Sciences	MSc Forestry Management	•	•		6
	MSc Conservation and Forest Protection	•	•		6
MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE University of Central Lancashire	MSc Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•	•	6
	PGDip Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•	•	NA

Course accreditation (ICF Points)

Many Forestry and Arboriculture courses are accredited by the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF). Points are awarded based on course content: a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 points can be awarded to individual courses. Points are credited as partial fulfilment of the requirements for Professional Membership Entry (PME) to the Institute. New or re-validated courses require assessment from ICF and point scores are to be confirmed (TBC), while points awarded for others are dependent on prior qualifications and learning (*). Several courses are not accredited (NA) at the present time. Further information about course accreditation and the PME process is available from ICF: www.charteredforesters.org/join-us.

Course delivery modes

Professional Forestry and Arboriculture courses are offered in three delivery modes: full-time (FT), part-time (PT) and distance learning (DL). For many of the full-time courses there is an additional option to complete an industry/work-based placement (sandwich-year). It is important to check with each institution for information about course content, options and delivery, all of which can change at relatively short notice.

Information sources

Information contained in this note is based on a review of college and university websites for courses commencing in Academic Session 2017-2018. The UCAS website (www.ucas.com) was also consulted. Last updated: 16 March 2017.



Education and Learning
Royal Forestry Society
www.rfs.org.uk

Real-life skills to boost careers



Samantha Howard gives a personal insight on her nine-months placement in a forest management company.

My knowledge of forestry was minimal when I applied for the BSc Forestry degree at Bangor University but I have not looked back since. Two years in the university followed by my placement with John Searl Forestry Ltd has been a steep learning curve which I have thoroughly enjoyed. In particular, the placement was crucial to my career development.

My placement was nine months long and based in North Wales. I was adding potential to the business by carrying out site monitoring and contractor supervision.

Whilst I learnt and gained confidence in the basic skills that hadn't been extensively covered within my study, it also gave me the challenge of working in the industry without exceptions because of my experience. I would not have wanted this any other way because it gave me a well-rounded view of the potential work I could be carrying out after University and its complications.

My placement with John Searl Forestry Ltd gave me a strong grounding in best practice and understanding the risks of working in our sector. It gave me the opportunity to experience the complications of certification and maintaining the FSC chain of custody, in addition to testing and improving my physical fitness.

Learning from challenges

I drastically improved my accuracy and confidence when navigating unfamiliar, difficult and often steep terrain. For instance, when I started the placement, I could plan a route and find myself with accuracy on a map. However, now I can develop an understanding of the dimensions of a site, draw boundaries within a metre or two's accuracy and choose the best route across wet, unclear and uneven terrain.

I was given the opportunity to build confidence whilst supervising contractors. This was a completely new skill. The only comparison I can think of is my time as a young leader within the Girl guides. I now

have confidence carrying out an induction, covering site health and safety, risk assessments and maintaining on-site communication. I acted on behalf of my employer, to avoid miscommunications. I gained experience of dealing with a case of non-compliance related to a forestry operation. This was invaluable, as it helped me to gain the experience needed to manage difficult situations that insure best practice and safety can be maintained.

Finally, I had the opportunity to build professional relationships across the sector and learn what is appropriate within this network. This was most relevant to my work with Hanson as a supervisor and when representing John Searl Forestry Ltd at an initial planning meeting. It became clear that clarity and transparency was important to successful negotiation.

Different groups with different aims were all looking for successful completion, yet all required different amounts and types of information. They also had a range of experience and so respect for this was important.

Navigation and surveying, working with contractors and developing positive working relationships are probably my three biggest achievements

The placement student's role

It took me some time to fully understand my role as a placement student, given the broad range of activities that my placement host undertakes. Throughout my placement I was able to work to build an understanding of what was expected, what was relevant to our work and what my role was. This was an ongoing learning experience and highlighted the importance of constructive and regular communication with colleagues.

I would like to thank John Searl Forestry Ltd for providing me with a forestry placement (September 2015 - May 2016), as well as Martin Bishop who circulated my CV to Confor members in 2015 - without him, this opportunity wouldn't have arisen.

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PLACEMENTS ARE A WIN-WIN

The student

SAMANTHA HOWARD

My placement has benefited my career because it reinforced that I cope best in a job that offers variety and challenge. I have also realised that I prefer working within lowland woodlands close to communities or agricultural land. Working alongside farmers can be challenging and so I would like to play my part to improve professional relationships between the farming and forestry sectors, in order to increase tree cover and improve understanding of the importance of trees. I would also like to contribute and support efforts to increase the value of trees to the public.

Placements are vitally important to the sector to ensure experience passes to the next generation and gives students a unique and hugely enriching educational experience. To individuals, like me, it greatly helps us understand what we might want to do in our future careers and give us more focus when applying for jobs. This could potentially lead to less “irrelevant” applications for employers to sieve through.

showard1995@outlook.com



Placements are vitally important to the sector to ensure experience passes to the next generation.

SAMANTHA HOWARD

The placement host

JOHN SEARL FORESTRY

Learning takes many forms and tutored experience of working within the forest industry can only strengthen the quality of the people who are entering our complex industry. We are very lucky that the variety of woodlands and forests that we look after enables anyone who works with us to experience decision making in different contexts and to understand the management of risk to those who work for us, our environment and to our clients interests. Tackling real world issues in light of the academic work already undertaken can only grow the skills of those who take advantages of these training positions.

www.johnsearlforestry.co.uk



The university

BANGOR UNIVERSITY

The sandwich year professional placement is such a valuable and enriching experience for Bangor University BSc Forestry / BSc Conservation with Forestry / MFor Forestry students. Spending a year learning how to solve real-world, forestry-related challenges in a professional setting is invaluable to a student and really brings the academic learning of the first two years of study to life.

Meeting up with students after they have completed their placement year is always a delight. Through their placement experience, they develop much greater organisational skills, as well as increased self-confidence and understanding. They return to their final year of study with a renewed commitment and motivation and – unlike the vast majority of final year undergraduate students across the UK – regularly have offers of relevant employment months before they have graduated.

James Walmsley, Course Director for BSc Forestry and BSc Conservation with Forestry, Bangor University.

www.bangor.ac.uk/senrgy



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University of Edinburgh launches Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes

Forests and woodlands cover 30% of the earth's land surface, and support the livelihoods of 1.5 billion people. The forest sector directly employs 0.4% of the global labour force, and contributes nearly \$1trillion to the economy. Global investible timber land alone has been valued at around \$300-480bn. In Britain, the primary wood processing and forestry sectors contribute £1.9bn in Gross Value Added to the economy and generate employment for over 39,000 people.

The value of forest ecosystem services likely equals or exceeds these amounts: Forests limit our risks from natural disasters; sustain our soil, air and water resources; provide diverse wood products to society; harbour significant biodiversity and carbon; and have fundamental aesthetic and cultural significance. These wider social and environmental benefits of woodlands are estimated to be worth around £1.5bn a year to the UK.

However, forests and woodlands are under increasing pressure around the



world, from both human and natural causes. In response, the University of Edinburgh will be launching a new Centre in summer 2017. The Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes aims to work with and inform sustainable practices in industry, the public sector and community organisations, bringing new tools and techniques to support effective decision making. Building on existing research excellence, the Centre will provide robust evidence and analysis to support forest policy development and implementation by governments and agencies in the UK and around the world. And the Centre will develop executive and short course training for forest managers, investors and stakeholders, as well as produce graduates with the skills needed to thrive in the complex multi-use landscapes of today. We want to place Scotland and the UK at the heart of national and international debates about the challenges of land use change, and the trade-offs in land use decisions.



Help shape the centre!

We are investing £1m in new staff initially, and leveraging this investment with multi-million pound project funding. We are advertising for a new Centre Director and other posts. We are seeking to build and manage partnerships, nationally and internationally, with forest investors, forest owners, insurers and public agencies; with innovative companies; with government; and with other research organisations. We want to work with you to identify where we can help you: with training for new skills? with new tools and techniques that help your decision making? with robust evidence or analysis? or with skilled people?

Please contribute to the new Centre: info@edinburghcentre.org or call 0131 650 5326.

Forestry Management keeps growing at Harper Adams

Forestry Management courses at Harper Adams University in Shropshire are attracting both full-time and part-time postgraduate students. "Our central UK location and week-long block mode of course delivery are both working well for students", says Principal Lecturer and subject co-ordinator Jim Waterson MICFor.

"Our strong and broad industrial links are essential to course structure and delivery, helping to ensure the currency of our curriculum and provide real insight into the applied forestry and forest products sectors" he said.

"These forest sector links and partnerships are immensely valuable and constructive" added Mr Waterson. "They create excellent opportunities for professional knowledge exchange and sharing of experience with our forestry management students. We also use these links to build assignment work around real-life sites, projects and case-studies."

"The courses are fully-accredited by the ICF and many of our students find that our modular week-long block delivery allows



them to combine and plan their forestry studies effectively around their day jobs and other commitments."

"We are working with students based in England, Scotland and Wales and recent

graduates have secured jobs with Tilhill Forestry and the Woodland Trust."

jwaterson@harper-adams.ac.uk

www.harper-adams.ac.uk/postgraduate/201045/Y/2017/forestry-management



Lantra Scotland's overall winner Emma Staniforth with Andy Leitch of Scottish Forest & Timber

Learner of the Year Awards

The hard work and dedication of some of the country's most talented trainees and modern apprentices have been recognised at Lantra Scotland's 15th Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year Awards, which took place on Thursday 2nd March in Dunblane.

Emma Staniforth, a talented 34-year-old forestry apprentice from Dumfries, took the top accolade this year. Emma has been doing a Modern Apprenticeship SVQ Level 3 in General Woodland and Treework through Forest Enterprise Scotland. She began her SVQ with no prior knowledge or practical experience of forestry, then went on to gain certificates in the use of forestry equipment at her first attempt and completed her SVQ Level 2 within 15 months of starting her new career. Her ambition is to own some woodland, either privately or through community ownership, and use it as a teaching centre for community groups.

Emma commented: "I can't believe I've won two awards and to be chosen as the overall winner is the icing on the cake. It's fantastic news and a great achievement for me. I'm delighted with the support I've had from my employer, the hard work I've put in has really paid off. I'm honoured to have represented Forest Enterprise Scotland and their apprenticeship scheme at Lantra's Learner of the Year Awards."

Shared Apprenticeship

The Fife Forestry Shared Apprenticeship Scheme is a pilot and has been established in response to concerns from the industry about an ageing workforce and shortage of new entrants as well as the ability of forestry businesses to employ new staff and provide year-round continuity of work.

Employed by Rural Skills Scotland Ltd (RSS), a not-for-profit company, the 6 Apprentices will undertake a Modern Apprenticeship in Trees & Timber and a number of industry-recognised training courses. After their initial training, the Apprentices will be placed with a variety of forestry businesses from the public and private sector in order to give them a range of industry experience.

As employers, RSS will pay the wages of the Apprentices but is looking for a small contribution towards project costs from the forestry businesses for the time they are with them – over a 12 week placement this equates to £1,425.60.

Stewart Christie, Director at Rural Skills Scotland said, "It is our hope that by developing this shared apprenticeship model we can encourage micro and small forestry businesses to provide training opportunities for young people, without them facing the burden of employing someone on a full time basis."

Forestry businesses keen to be involved or find out more about this initiative should contact Stewart Christie, email stewart@ruralskillscotland.com.

International work exchange

The Canadian Institute of Forestry/ Institut forestier du Canada (CIF/IFC), the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF), and the Duchy of Cornwall are pleased to announce the four outstanding recipients of the 2017 Prince of Wales Forest Leadership Award.

Now in its third year, The Prince of Wales Forest Leadership Award is a UK-Canada partnership initiative between ICF and The Prince of Wales' Duchy of Cornwall in the UK and CIF-IFC in Canada, funded by TD Bank. The distinguished Award is fully endorsed by His Royal Highness and it offers selected UK students the opportunity to take part in a work placement exchange with those in Canada.

Daniel Haslam and James Broom, both from the University of Cumbria, were the selected recipients among top UK applicants.

The UK and Canadian recipients will participate in an international work exchange in their respective partner countries during the summer of 2017. They will be placed in roles at leading forestry and natural resources management employers in Canada and the UK, in addition to receiving a \$12,000 CAD bursary.

The 2017 Award programme employers are Strategic Natural Resource Consultants and Algonquin Forestry Authority from Canada, and Pryor and Rickett Silviculture and A T Coombes Associates in the UK.

£2000 forestry student bursary

The RFS Viking Bursary 2017 is a unique opportunity for a student in forestry or a closely related discipline to receive up to £2000 towards the costs of research into trees and woodlands.

To qualify for the Viking Bursary you should be studying forestry or a closely allied field, such as arboriculture, urban forestry, natural resources, conservation, geography or environmental science. You should be a full-time or part-time student at a university or college in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

The deadline for 2017 applications is 1 June 2017 via www.rfs.org.uk/learning (follow the bursaries and studentship links).



MEMBER SERVICES

Education & Provident Fund

The Forest Industries Education and Provident Fund makes awards of up to £750 per application for technical and professional courses such as chainsaw competency, but also for educational trips and activities, for example attending conferences that can help you to develop as a professional.

The application form is at www.confor.org.uk/resources/education-provident-fund/

Future-proofing forestry employment

We have a major problem looming for the industry – one that we've all been aware of for some time, but haven't really got to grips with yet. So it was good to learn how the Industry Leadership Group's skills subgroup are now tackling the issue of how to get more young folk into our sector with the right skills and training.

We have an ageing workforce throughout the industry (see table), with not well developed diversity in skills. There are new areas of expertise and technology in the sector, yet we are failing to recruit enough young blood, and sometimes find it difficult to retain existing workers. Some seasonal work is covered by non-British nationals, and there is now uncertainty about their future availability post Brexit. Add to this a projected 5% decrease in the working age population in the next 25 years – meaning more competition for labour.

We have a great industry with a myriad of opportunities for many different skill sets, so what are we doing about it?

The SFTT skills action plan (see panel) is complementary to the Scottish Government's programme *Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)* and its agenda *Widening Access and Participation in Further and Higher Education*.

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)
This is where you – an employer / business – needs to get involved. The Scottish Government 3-year funded initiative will be facilitated on a regional basis and aim to build relationships and links between Schools, Colleges and Employers, identifying for employers reasons to employ youth. The programme will:

- Support work experience, placements and visits
- Build Employer engagement and mentoring.
- Encourage Business's to take on work experience and Modern Apprenticeships.



Jamie Farquhar reports from a well attended Scottish Forestry & Timber Technologies (SFTT) regional meeting in March at Lockerbie.

SFTT skills action plan



TALENT ATTRACTION

- Collating Labour Market Intelligence
- Co-ordinating & developing resources to promote the industry and careers within the sector – including a proper careers route map
- Working with National & Regional DYW groups to support college/school engagement
- Developing and supporting an Industry Ambassador programme

NEW ENTRANTS

- Facilitated the re-evaluation and approval of the Trees & Timber National Occupational Standards
- Engaging with Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board regarding Apprenticeship routes following Levy and SG Consultation.
- Exploring alternative training models
- Evaluating pilot 'Shared Apprenticeship' project (Fife)

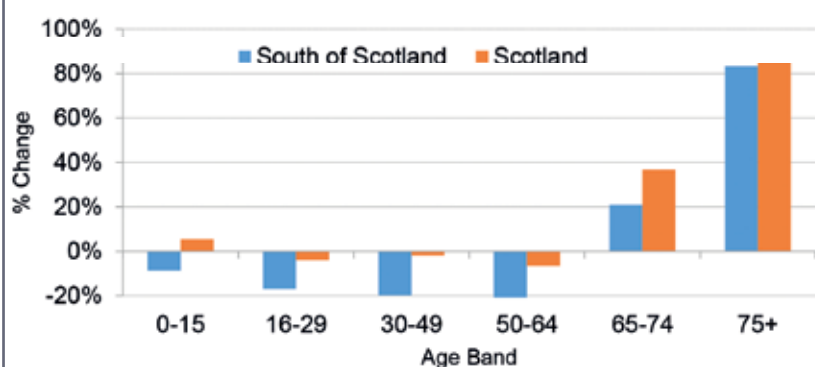
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Developing a register of recognised and promoted CPD opportunities for the industry.
- Carrying out Harvesting Machine census.
- Developing a Forest Machine Operator training to meet sector demands

CURRICULUM REVIEW

- Developing/promoting increasing industry/sector engagement with Further/Higher Education establishments and courses.
- Exploring opportunities for improved Industry/Sector support for industry education .
- Providing industry engagement in developing Foundation/Graduate Apprenticeship schemes

Population projections, by age, 2012-2037



Source: National Records of Scotland