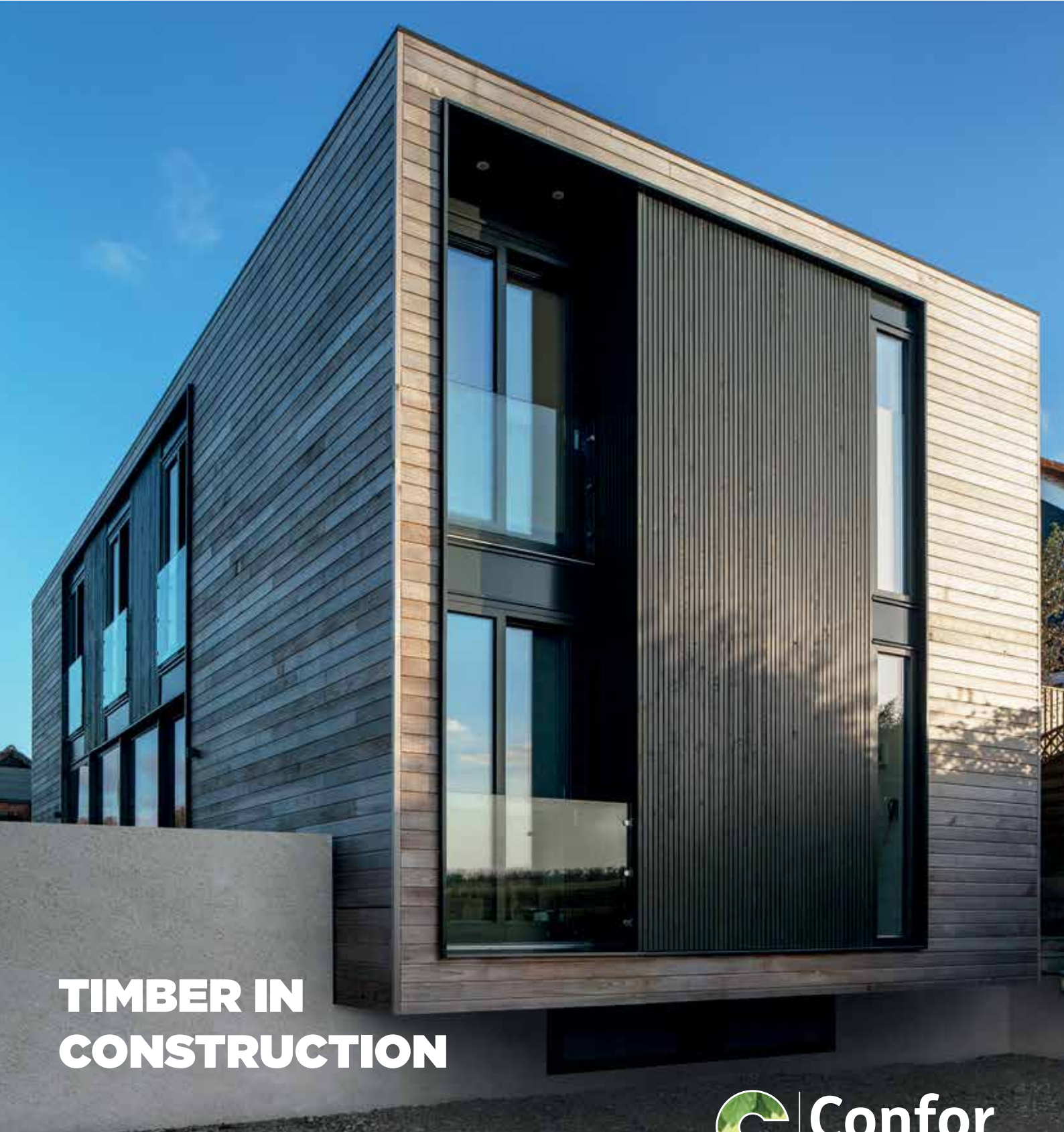


FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

October 2017 Issue 83



**TIMBER IN
CONSTRUCTION**



Confor
Promoting forestry and wood

BIOSECURITY ALERT

Xylella fastidiosa could devastate the UK's environment



Elizabeth Bush, Virginia Polytechnic.

Xylella fastidiosa is a bacterial disease, which is extremely difficult to control. *Xylella* affects a wide range of important woody plants and broadleaved trees, including oaks, elms and maples. It is spread by xylem-feeding insects. These insects can spread *Xylella* within 1 hour of themselves becoming infected, so dissemination of the disease between plants is rapid.

Xylella can only get to the UK on imported plants



TD Leiniger, USDA Forest Service,
Bugwood.org

Originating in the Americas, *Xylella* was identified in Europe in 2013. Brought in on live plant imports, *Xylella* is now in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, Czech Republic and Switzerland. In Italy, *Xylella* has put the olive industry in grave danger. Many of these countries export large numbers of plants to the UK. It is not known exactly where in Europe *Xylella* has spread to, because not all host plants are known, and known host plants may show no sign of *Xylella* infection.

Imported plants may show no sign of *Xylella* infection



Edward L. Barnard, Florida Department
of Agriculture Consumer Services, Bugwood.org

There are 359 species of known host plants, and it is accepted that there are more yet to be identified.

Very worryingly, some host plants may show no sign of infection by *Xylella*, making it impossible to detect all infected plants.

Once in the UK, feeding insects could spread *Xylella* from the infected imports to UK-grown nursery stock.

As such, the best control option is to keep *Xylella* out of the UK.

Keep *Xylella* out of the UK: demand British-grown trees and remove the risk of *Xylella* infected imports contaminating British-grown trees and woodlands

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www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine

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Cover picture: Residential building in Beckley, Oxfordshire, by Adrian James Architects (2014). SIP, clad with untreated Western Red Cedar. The building is featured in Peter Wilson's book *The Modern Timber House in the UK*. Photo: Adrian James Architects.

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Are we on the cusp of a new era of productive tree planting in the UK?

STUART GOODALL CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CONFOR

In Scotland, there is optimism that over 9000 hectares could be planted in 2017, about 60% of that productive, and that number could rise to nearer 12,000 hectares in 2018. In England, we're seeing large productive planting schemes coming forward for the first time since the 1990s, with Government ministers strongly backing the planting of trees to produce wood.

In Wales, progress has been a little slower, but interest is growing, not least in response to an Assembly committee report that made strong and specific references to commercial forestry. In Northern Ireland, the opportunities have been more limited, in part due to the small average size of farm holdings.

If I can be blunt, this sea-change in attitude and activity has happened because of Confor, and the significant time and resource we've put into lobbying and media work.

In Scotland, officials were prepared to observe productive planting scrape along at around 1000-1500 hectares a year, and productive restocking, especially on the National Forest Estate, barely merited attention.

That has changed. The current Cabinet Secretary, Fergus Ewing MSP, has now acted on our suggestion on learning from the planning sector and his natural support for forestry is taking us even further than expected.

In England, I'm pleased to see a new attitude by forestry minister Thérèse Coffey in favour of large-scale productive planting, and she will speak at our fringe event at the Manchester Conservative Party Conference as well as our Westminster conference on 29 November. We're also hosting a dinner with Michael Gove in Manchester, to ensure he gets the message as well.

Our ability to secure coverage of forestry, and the need for productive planting and restocking, on mainstream TV, radio and print media has certainly helped to support our lobbying, plus the excellent relations we have built with a number of MPs.

This personal touch is also evident in Wales, where Martin Bishop is now frequently in contact with the Cabinet Secretary and a range of AMs. We're now also looking at what more can be done in Northern Ireland.

When writing this leader, I decided against using the phrase 'renaissance in planting' - not just because we're leaving the EU and the use of French may be considered passé (groan!) - but because it was a little premature. In a few years, though, that phrase may just be very appropriate.



A Common Countryside Policy



Eleanor Harris
introduces Confor's
new Brexit
discussion paper

“T trees are not only a source of beauty and wonder, living evidence of our investment for future generations, they are also a carbon sink, a way to manage flood risk and a habitat for precious species.” So said Michael Gove in his policy speech, *The Unfrozen Moment*, soon after his appointment as environment secretary.

Gove described his approach by quoting Byron: “to love not man the less but nature more”. But he understands that the ‘unfrozen moment’, although he may describe it poetically, is about hard-nosed economics. “Leaving the European Union means leaving the Common Agricultural Policy, leaving the Common Fisheries Policy, and taking back control of environmental policy,” he said, “and in this unfrozen moment new possibilities occur.”

Yet the majority of the policy proposals put forward for what should replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after Brexit have been, to continue the metaphor, only half-defrosted. They have not engaged with the huge opportunity which leaving CAP offers, to break away from a narrow ‘agricultural’ policy, and to create an effective rural policy, integrating forestry, renewable energy, tourism and leisure, and the other uses of the land, along with farming.

This is Confor’s proposal, set out in its new policy discussion paper *A Common Countryside Policy*.

We do not believe that economic, environmental and social development of the countryside are an ‘either - or’. It is possible to create a rural policy which will support profitable businesses, sustain vibrant rural communities, and reverse the centuries of damage which have been done to our environment - but only by ensuring that forestry plays a fully integrated role.

We may live on food - but we live in wood. It is the only large-scale renewable material we can produce to build and furnish our houses, to capture

and store carbon economically, and to replace the plastic and fossil fuels which pollute our oceans and skies.

Moreover, the growing of timber can be combined effectively with agriculture, and with habitat and landscape restoration to multiply benefits to productivity, people and the environment. Hill sheep are warmer, and free-range chickens less stressed, in the shelter of trees, raising both welfare standards and productivity. Crops grow better, and soil and water quality is higher in a partially wooded arable landscape. Trees create opportunities for new businesses: mountain biking, woodland chalets, truffle-growing, game-stalking.

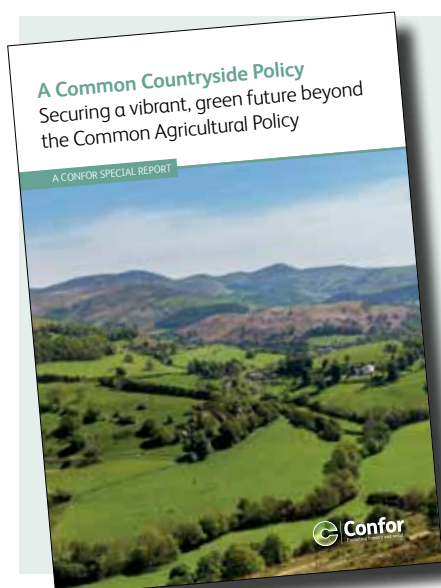
Disintegration doesn’t add up

But unless these trees are a productive crop in themselves, producing firewood, roundwood, and eventually quality sawlogs, they will not be delivering the economic benefits required for a UK rural policy after Brexit.

Forestry creates profit and sustains jobs: £2 billion and 80,000 jobs for the UK economy, according to Forestry Commission figures. While there are grants for new woodland creation, necessary to enable it to compete against subsidised farming, there is no ongoing subsidy for established forestry.

In contrast, before subsidy, farms on average run at a loss of £5500 in England and £25,000 in Scotland, while in Wales 56% of farms run at a loss. Meanwhile, environmental work is expected to be funded entirely from the public purse. After Brexit, the £650 million funding this ‘business as usual’ in our countryside will come under severe pressure.

The rural sector needs trees, because out of the profits of forestry comes the funding to pay for environmental benefits, and to secure and invest in traditional rural ways of life such as hill farming. The ‘disintegrated’ rural policy created by CAP is bad for forestry - but it is a disaster for farming.



An opportunity we must not miss

Change brings uncertainty, but also opportunity. Brexit provides a vital opportunity to rethink rural policy to be inclusive and based on the principles of sustainability, creating more social and environmental benefits as the countryside grows economically.

A Common Countryside Policy would offer the opportunity to throw off the straightjacket of CAP and build a sustainable rural future.

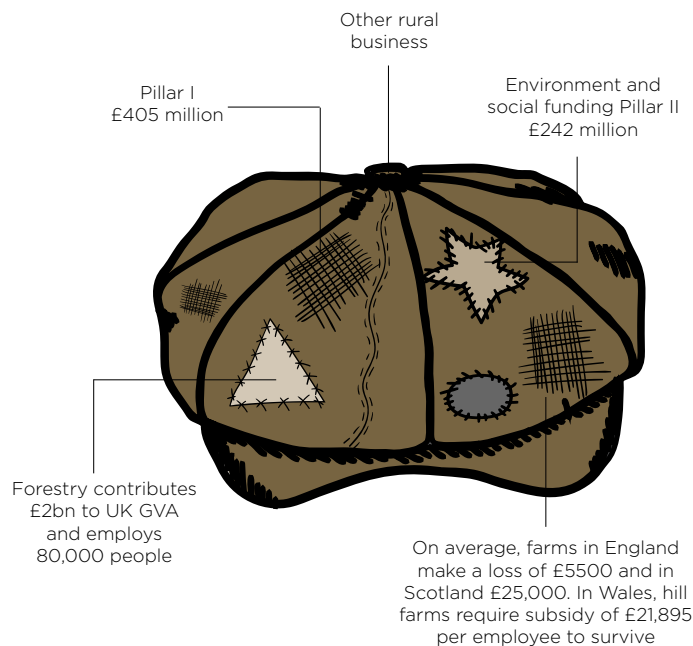
Forestry has a big part to play in that sustainable future, as many

different organisations have realised. The Soil Association has listed bringing trees onto farms as its top ‘game-changer’ in post-Brexit land-use policy.

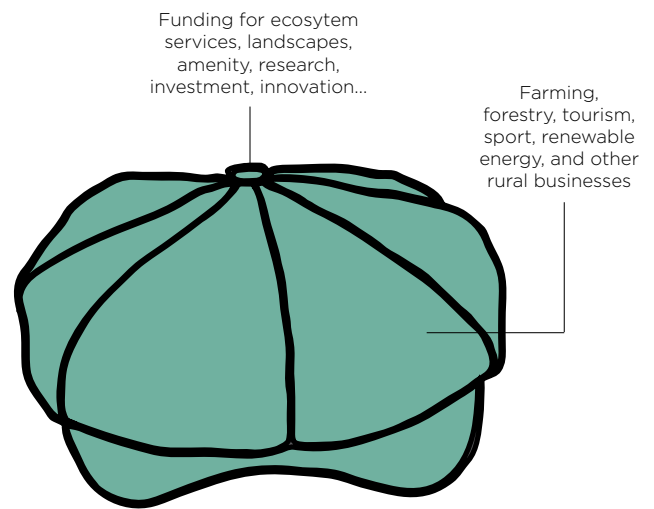
As the UK leaves the EU, we can map the way to a better countryside - one that is greener and more productive, offering better livelihoods. We can leave the CAP and create a CCP - a Common Countryside Policy - that truly works for all. It is an opportunity we must not miss.

Taken from the Confor Special Report

THE CAP THAT DOESN'T FIT



A COMMON COUNTRYSIDE POLICY



Download at www.confor.org

Defrosting rural policy

Michael Gove's 'unfrozen moment' reminds me of the words of another Michael, the comic lyricist Michael Flanders, who joked of his musical partner: 'Architecture, said Hegel, is frozen music; and Donald Swann's music has often been compared to defrosted architecture'.

It was actually Goethe who said it, not Hegel – but it was the kind of Romantic but pertinent insight that Gove was clearly aiming for in his speech. However, the phrase that came into my head was, 'agriculture, said Gove, has frozen Europe; and forestry could be the key to defrosting agriculture'. As anyone who has walked along the edge of a forest on a winter's day, and seen cattle huddle in the unfrosted strip in the shelter of the trees, this can sometimes be literally true.

But it's also an important metaphor, because if we get the policy framework right, the economic vibrancy and strong sustainability framework of forestry will not just be free to 'get away' like a successfully established tree. It will also, like the mycorrhizal relationship between different plants in a forest, nurse up other sectors of the rural economy, at present starved of investment and environmentally degraded.

To change the metaphor, as we have said in our report, the CAP doesn't fit. Let's seize the opportunity to create a new Common Countryside Policy that works for everybody, and for the environment.

RESOURCES



Download the report at
www.confor.org

Join our Common Countryside Policy launch in Westminster

The Common Countryside Policy paper will form the basis for discussion at the latest of Confor's Westminster conferences.

Dr Thérèse Coffey, the minister with responsibility for forestry, will open the event at RICS, Great George Street, just off Parliament Square on **29 November**.

She will be followed by a debate on "What Does a Common Countryside Policy Mean to You"? with five diverse speakers outlining their broad position before a discussion on areas where there is potential consensus – and on the challenges which remain. The five speakers are:

- **Will Ashley-Cantello**, Chief Adviser on Forests, WWF-UK
- **Minette Batters**, Deputy President, National Farmers' Union'
- **Mark Tufnell**, Incoming Vice-President, CLA
- **Stuart Goodall**, Chief Executive, Confor
- **Beccy Speight**, Chief Executive, Woodland Trust

Stuart Goodall said: "As the debate about post-Brexit rural policy and funding gathers pace, it is vital that we have these open conversations about the future. We have to listen to where different groups are coming from and find areas of mutual interest – and also discuss where the real challenges remain. Confor is delighted to be able to host this important conference."

The afternoon session of the event will include individual stories from those who have grappled with rural land use challenges, followed by a political panel discussion, with all major parties represented.

BOOK TODAY

Tickets are £120 plus VAT, with a one-third discount for Confor members (£80 plus VAT). Bookings can be made by calling the Confor office on 0131 240 1410 or go to confor.org.uk/resources/events

Confor hosts lively Brexit show event

Brexit Opportunity or Catastrophe, was the main formal event at the recent Confor Woodland Show. Expertly chaired by Confor's Dr Eleanor Harris, and with a panel of experts not shy in sharing their opinions.

Stuart Goodall Confor's CEO opened the debate by stating that "Any mention of Brexit sucks all the oxygen out of the room, but that this is perhaps better than the usual cycle of CAP reform which occurs every five years and takes up a lot of time and energy and always seems to require a new IT system. And then just when it is bedded down there is another round of CAP reform and the merry go round begins again. This is an opportunity for forestry if we can get our messages clear, and a new system should be able to help and support land managers in making the right decisions. We are never going to meet our climate change commitments with our current position; tree planting and use of timber in construction is a real

opportunity to do that."

The first question from the floor was about the disease risk from imported trees; Austin Brady from the Woodland Trust stated that they planted two million trees per year and that they were all UK-sourced and grown. Austin thinks that post-Brexit there is an opportunity to improve regulation of imports. John Weir in the audience highlighted the need to ensure that the forests of the future will be climate change-ready: "We need to think about the legacy we are planting now for the future".

Stuart Goodall reminded everyone that the issue of biosecurity sits on our shoulders and that it could decimate the industry: "Brexit gives us the opportunity to regulate further but we need to balance that with economic reality and trade deals. All these deals are focused on 'frictionless borders' and simplicity in trade requirements. We need realistic calls for action that won't just be knocked down as soon as we speak to a politician."

James Hepburn Scott stated that the Read Report should be "compulsory reading for every MP.

COMMENT **ROB YORKE FRICS**

The difference between a farming and forestry event is evident at the entry gates – men and women forestry practitioners are more weather-beaten from being outside even more than their primary industry increasingly tractor cab and office-based cousins. A sweeping generalisation that can be felled by a single stroke of a chainsaw, but the point being that my role at the Confor Woodland show at Longleat, as at farming meetings, is to make us step outside our comfort zone to explore other issues not always on our radar.

'Integrated land management'. Too much jargon can really ruin a good day out when idealist policy makers are keen to learn from pragmatic grass root (or tree-root) realists who in turn are keen to

push opinions that have been hard fought for in a febrile pre-Brexit world.

We could all do with getting out a bit more – into other people's heads by reading their magazines (Farmers Weekly is dotted with agro-forestry, woodland pasture), drinking in the pub (good natured arguments with friends) or attending conferences (threat of afforestation to upland birds) run by academics who in turn could do with getting out even more, in working out how we optimise land use over a range of priorities and demands from taxpayers funding the countryside.

In order to help a disengaged and disconnected urbanised society decide on land uses, requires us to better 'frame the narrative' – it might not be your agenda

or even that of public opinion (what of the forestry-selloff?) – on the public benefits from exploring non-native trees species required in face of climate change (the Read Report) or ash dieback, engaging audiences on tough choices over wildlife management (deer, grey squirrel and fox control), dealing with knotty issues of herbicide use (Asulox and glyphosate), providing evidence of flood alleviation or seeking to get foresters to work in groups.

Thinking through other opinions can help us all face up to challenges and open up opportunities within forestry in a post-Brexit landscape.

www.robbyorke.co.uk

[#blackgull](https://twitter.com/blackgull)



Natural England need to wake up to the carbon economy and the opportunity that this presents. The carbon economy is a huge opportunity for businesses.”

Julia Aglionby replied that “there is an opportunity to do more using Natural Capital but in the short term it is likely to be through taxation.”

Martin Glynn responded: “I think we are too obsessed about grants, but carbon has the potential to do more and is an opportunity to be more innovative.”

Richard Bellamy asked whether there is any appetite to have just one organisation and get rid of RPA and Natural England and have leadership from the top. “We are in real danger of losing the dedicated staff in the Forestry Commission unless action is taken.”

Alastair Sandels representing FISA asked: “Today is the start of the great repeal bill and bonfire of regulations – how can the industry protect the people in the supply chain? There have been three deaths in the last three months. How do we stop a rush to the bottom?”

Stuart Goodall responded: “That is a hugely important point, a lot of Health and Safety legislation has come out of Europe. We collectively have responsibility to have the right safety culture and that is about transparency and honesty and it is something that we must get better at.”

Kevin Penfold asked: “What are the opportunities for productive conifer woodland in England?”

Austin from the Woodland Trust was very positive: “Yes definitely, and it will be about the changes in the uplands and a gradual switch from farmland to forestry economies and planting could help farms have a soft landing.”

Rob Yorke added that “Conifers have a very valid position in the countryside, but farmers won’t take long-term decisions until the CAP reform has been sorted out.”

The next Confor Woodland Show will be in 2019 by which time we will have formally left the EU, perhaps an opportunity to reflect on the opinions and thoughts we heard in the debate.

• **More on Confor Woodland Show on p18**



THE PANELLISTS

JULIA AGLIONBY

Natural England Board and Chair of Upland Alliance

“Collaboration for multiple outcomes takes courage and it can be difficult to reach the middle ground. Forests are contested spaces - how can we have more and better woodlands? Having the demands of Countryside Stewardship Schemes thrust upon us, makes us think that we must have done something terribly in a previous life. We need to be clear about the reasons for planting trees, whether it is for biodiversity, timber or recreation. We must have joined-up incentives, that don’t skew against planting trees. Natural England are working with estates on 25-year plans, and perhaps we should be doing the same with foresters.”



AUSTIN BRADY

Director of Conservation and External Affairs of Woodland Trust

“Modern well designed productive forest in the right place can achieve a great deal. We need to make a strong case for why woodlands are important and why they deserve public money; not just trees in woods but also trees in the wider landscape.”



MARTIN GLYNN FICFor

“The landscape of possibilities has changed a lot since I wrote my report 14 months ago. It is very easy to get caught up in the debate and miss the bigger picture; we need to set out a clear message about what we can do for the UK with a long-term vision, rather than responding to each individual issue. ‘What can forestry do for the UK?’ rather than ‘what the UK can do for forestry?’ Post-Brexit, can we take greater control of our timber imports to push up demand for UK material and drive woodland management? It is important that the whole industry and sector speak together.”



ROB YORKE

Rural commentator
See comment panel, left



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Grants for improving forestry productivity available now

Defra has recently announced a major new grant offer aimed at helping to improve forestry productivity. Showcased by the Rural Payments Agency working together with the Forestry Commission at September's Confor Woodland Show, Improving Forestry Productivity grants provide a unique opportunity to transform the productivity of forestry businesses.

Equipment for felling, extraction and primary processing of timber often represents the biggest capital investment that forestry businesses can make when growing or accessing new markets. A grant award beginning at £35,000, that can cover up to 40% of eligible costs may be the key to making the next step towards growing your business.

The amount of grant awarded is normally up to £1m. However projects seeking over £1m of grant can be considered and should be discussed in detail with the RPA. Smaller grants to support forestry businesses are also available through the LEADER programme.

The offer is open until 3 April 2018 to private forest holders managing at least 10 ha of forest and micro, small, or medium-sized forestry contractor businesses. **More information can be found by going to www.gov.uk and searching under Countryside Productivity.**

The forestry grant offer forms part of a suite of grants being offered by government to support rural businesses, farmers and foresters. These include support for business development, food processing and tourism under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Growth Programme announced in January 2017 and further capital grant offers under the Countryside Productivity scheme.

Here are three examples of the type of project which may be eligible for grant support:



1

Investing in equipment – A forestry contractor that supplies extraction services will invest in two new articulated forwarders with hydraulic cranes. The business has secured agreement from local forest holders to extract a significantly increased volume of timber. This will bring under-managed woodland back into production.



2

Adding value to felled timber – A private forest holder will invest in firewood processing equipment, a mechanical log splitter and will construct a covered area for storing and seasoning timber. This will add value to the woodland product and improve the productivity of the woodland. The project involves collaboration with local forestry businesses, will achieve wider economic benefits and create two new full-time equivalent jobs.



3

Working collaboratively – Two large private forest holders may collaborate to purchase a harvester which will be shared across both estates. This will improve efficiency in felling and initial processing in the two neighbourhood woodlands.

More information on support to forestry business through LEADER can be found by going to www.gov.uk and searching under RDPE LEADER.

Help to fight Phyto

The PHYTO-THREATS project aims to address the risks to UK forest and woodland ecosystems from *Phytophthora* by examining the distribution and diversity of *Phytophthoras* in UK plant nursery systems. It also aims to provide the evidence base for the development of a set of enhanced nursery 'best practice' accreditation criteria

to mitigate risk of further pest and disease introductions and spread.

To this end the project is running a survey to explore the potential development of a UK-wide assurance scheme within the plant trade to reduce the risks of importation and spread of diseases. Since the criteria for an assurance scheme will be partly informed by stakeholder and consumer attitudes, the survey aims find out more about the decisions people make when choosing and buying plants.

www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/phytothreats



GET INVOLVED

Please take the time to complete the survey at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/plants to improve understandings of the supply chain (what you buy and where from); what influences your plant purchases; the importance of biosecurity; and your thoughts on an assurance scheme.

Drive to beat pine weevil

Natural Resources Wales has embarked on the largest programme in the UK to tackle a pest that lives on conifer trees in an environmentally friendly way.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will spray microscopic worms known as nematodes into and around conifer tree stumps to combat the pine weevil.

The work starts in the Tywi Forest, near Llandovery in Powys before moving northwards to the Hafren Forest, and finishing in Clocaenog Forest in Denbighshire. The total area covered will be nearly 500 acres – an area the size of 276 football pitches. The programme is due to be completed by the end of August 2017.

Neil Muir, Forest Manager for NRW said: "We are trying to move increasingly towards using this biological control method to combat them and create more resilient forests. The nematodes eat the weevil grubs tackling the problem at source. We will monitor the work closely to see if the method can be applied even wider in future, cutting down further on the use of chemicals."

The treated areas will be left for six weeks to check the nematodes have successfully killed the weevil grubs before replanting starts.



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Confor brings in the crowds at the Royal Welsh Show

Eleanor Harris reports from her first Royal Welsh Show

The Confor presence at the UK's biggest agricultural show has been growing every year since its first appearance as the TGA in the 1980s. It has emerged from the back corner of a shared tent, to a large marquee at the centre of a thriving forestry quarter of the showground. By the time I arrived, the Confor Wales team – Martin and Angela Bishop – had decked it with banners, members' logos, pictures, stories, and the fluttering Confor flag worthy of the field of Agincourt.

The theme of our main seminar, like so much of our current work UK-wide from farm forestry to Brexit, was 'co-operation'. There were talks on investment, regulation, forest planning, and timber demand. Every seat in the tent was taken, and while a few might have been looking forward to Confor's famous forest buffet lunch afterwards, that can't have been the case for the crowd who came to stand at the back and packed out of the door.

The Confor tent not only hosts our own events, but provides a hub for other talks and seminars including the Royal Welsh Show Woodlands Awards and a Farming Connect seminar on how landowners can improve income streams through forestry.

Iwan Lloyd Williams, Assistant Director for Forestry at the RWAS forestry committee, has asked if we would be interested in expanding the Confor marquee to become a bigger focal point at the show. This is also an opportunity for our marquee to do more for Confor members, for example with more events or member-hosted tables within the tent, so please get in touch with Martin if this is something you might be interested in.

We hosted an evening reception for the stallholders in the forestry quarter. Small firewood processors drank beer with forestry investment companies, and forest managers passed the sandwiches to craft wood-turners. The following day, the forestry quarter felt more like a united sector, with Confor at the heart of it.

Being based in Scotland, I'm still used to a world in which 'The Forestry Commission' is the embodiment of 'forestry' in most people's minds, although probably not for much

longer. I was struck by the extent to which in Wales, where there is no longer a Forestry Commission, Confor has stepped up to fill that role. And so it should, representing as it does the companies and individuals who are the UK forestry industry.

The biggest excitement of the show, however, did not come from within the Confor tent, or even the forestry quarter at all. It was the launch, on Wednesday morning in the middle of the show, of the Welsh Assembly's Branching Out report, a major report on forestry following a consultation earlier in the year to which Confor provided extensive evidence. (See facing page.)

As we took the Confor banners down,

tidied away the chairs and finished the last of the venison pasties and game terrines, the conversations amongst the staff in the Confor tent were not just about how to improve our displays and our catering for next year. They were about how we would work over the next year to ensure that by the time of the next Royal Welsh Show the Welsh Government would have committed to implementing the recommendations of Branching Out in full.

At the next Welsh Show we will be the hub of a forestry quarter in a country that has committed to woodland creation on a significant scale – and that will be something bigger and better than this year.

Right: Confor National Manager for Wales Martin Bishop chats to show visitors



Below: A packed Confor tent for the main seminar with its theme of 'co-operation'



Welsh report draws positive response

Confor is stepping up its work to drive up planting and revitalise the forestry sector in Wales after a “very positive” response by the Welsh Government to the landmark Branching Out report. The 13 recommendations in the report, by the Welsh Assembly’s Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs committee, include a call to “significantly increase planting rates”, incorporating commercial forestry.

Martin Bishop, Confor Wales Manager, wrote to the Welsh Government’s Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths calling for her to implement the recommendations in Branching Out – and welcomed her response.

He said: “I was pleased to receive such a prompt reply from Lesley Griffiths and was heartened by its very positive tone. A new forestry strategy is a fundamental building block to ensure an increase in productive planting and securing the future of an industry worth £500m annually to Wales and which supports more than 10,000 jobs.”

Branching out: a new ambition for woodland policies, launched at the Royal Welsh Show, was described by Mr Bishop as “a shot in the arm for the industry.”



“The report recognises Wales is missing an enormous range of economic, environmental and community benefits delivered by not planting enough trees... it is a blueprint for a greener future.”

Martin Bishop, Confor Wales Manager

“The first recommendation delivers the central message forestry and timber businesses have been waiting for – more tree planting and especially more commercial tree planting, to provide the raw material to drive the rural economy forward.

“I am delighted the committee also

backed the industry’s ambitious targets for Wales to become increasingly self-sufficient in timber production and less reliant on imports – a central plank of the arguments I have put forward to the committee on behalf of Confor. There is also a call to look at building regulations to promote the use of timber in construction.”

Lesley Griffiths’ reply to Mr Bishop said: “The committee has produced a constructive report and many of [its] recommendations align with our thinking.” She said she was preparing the Welsh Government’s full response, but added: “As a first step we will be refreshing our forestry strategy.”



“Increasing woodland cover and developing a competitive and integrated forestry sector are and will remain, key outcomes of the strategy.”

Lesley Griffiths, Welsh Government’s Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs

Mr Bishop welcomed the comments, but said a full public consultation on a refreshed strategy in 2018 had to happen alongside practical actions to push up planting now.

“Consultation must not be used as an excuse to continue to push woodland creation into a tomorrow that never comes,” he added. “There are actions the Welsh Government can take today, under the current strategy, such as reviewing the scoring system for grants which channels funding away from productive woodland.”

Sawmills have warned that they need planting now to secure raw material and jobs in the future. Josh Sambrook-Jones, Clifford Jones Timber Group, Ruthin, north Wales said “Timber is in increasingly short supply due to a lack of investment [in tree planting] since the 1990s. There is a huge market for our timber and every sawmill in

Wales could double or treble production if the timber was there to feed the mills.”

Mr Bishop added: “We need the strategy to focus on, as Branching Out said, ‘a significant increase in planting rates, including long term targets for woodland cover and commercial forestry’.

“In the immediate future, we need to look at the barriers to increasing planting and adopting a presumption of approval for areas identified in the Woodland Opportunities Map. We have also highlighted the report’s recommendation highlighting ‘constraints on the commercial forestry sector, in particular making it easier to create coniferous woodland’.

“It is also important that the Welsh Government implement the committee’s recommendation to look towards increasing self-sufficiency in timber and promoting the use of timber in construction.

“There is much work to do, but this positive and speedy response from Lesley Griffiths is a welcome start to the process. She asks Confor to support the Welsh Government’s work in this area, and we are fully committed to doing so. Indeed, we will redouble our efforts.”



“There is a huge market for our timber and every sawmill in Wales could double or triple production if the timber was there to feed the mills.”

Josh Sambrook-Jones, Clifford Jones Timber Group, Ruthin, north Wales

RESOURCES



Download the Branching Out report at www.confor.org

The future of Forestry Research



Confor, IFC and FC organised a multi-stakeholder workshop to get the sector speaking with “one voice”.

Andrew Heald reports.

One of the few constants in the recent discussions and consultations on the future role of the Forestry Commission across the UK, has been the need for a well-resourced and UK-wide approach to forestry research in general, and support for Forest Research in particular.

An increasing number of research organisations are now interested in the environmental and social benefits of well managed and expanding forests; in Scotland alone these includes the James Hutton Institute, and SRUC who are particularly focussed on the potential of agroforestry. Edinburgh University have also recently re-opened their forestry school, but primarily with a focus on research rather than teaching.

How does the UK’s private forestry sector engage with these researchers and help define research needs, and ensure that forestry research includes the less fashionable topics such as improved ground preparation or thinning intensity?

These challenges were the priority when Andrew Heald of Confor, sat down with Roger Coppock (Forestry Commission) and Shireen Chambers (ICF) to plan a workshop that will hopefully be the start of improved engagement between those interested in the outcomes and output of forestry research and those people who can supply that research.

Twenty five people from across the UK, and from a wide range of organisations sat down recently in Edinburgh to agree the basics of a collaborative and coordinated approach to forestry research. A key part of the meeting was hearing from existing collaborative development projects in the forestry sector. This included the Timber Transport Forum, the Hylobius Plant Protection Group and Strategic Integrated Research in Timber. The recently established National Tree Improvement Strategy (NTIS) is another possible model which could be replicated; NTIS has brought together a diverse group of stakeholders and has already been successful in raising external funding.

The importance of the sector speaking “with one



It is vitally important that university research also addresses outward facing, practical challenges in everyday forestry, so it was great to be able to spend time learning about the particular issues that the UK forestry sector faces on a regular basis.

Prof Iain Woodhouse of Edinburgh University and founder of Carbomap

voice” will be essential if we are to target ever reducing government funding or to be successful with external funders. The potential for companies to offset research and development against tax was highlighted by accountancy specialist Samantha Wildman of the MPA group who spoke at the workshop.

Several companies are already involved in key forestry and timber research areas, for example, Tilhill and Maelor Nursery with weevil control, and James Jones & Sons on a range of innovative timber technologies. Finding the right balance between intellectual property, company funding and collaboration will be important discussions as we move forward.

The meeting was led by Osbert Lancaster, a facilitator who specialises in environment and land-use related events. He said: “it was a very useful meeting. It quickly became clear that success in developing a collaborative and coordinated approach to forestry research will depend on continuing to bring together organisations from across the public, private and third sectors that have a stake in woodland, forestry and timber.”



It is important that forestry research in the UK works closely with a wide range of stakeholders, and particularly with the forest managers who make use of that research on the ground and for the sawmillers and processors who use the timber.

John Paterson, Director of Forestry at Egger

Follow up meeting: 22 November
Contact Andrew.heald@confor.org.uk
for details

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Show gets bigger - and grows in appeal

More than 2000 visitors and 150 exhibitors from across the UK descended on Longleat for the 2017 Confor Woodland Show.

Exhibitors report a good level of sales and inquiries thanks to a high-quality, well-informed audience.

“Longleat is a wonderful venue and thanks to increased promotion of the show through social media, we attracted a more diverse audience this year,” said Confor’s Communications Manager Stefanie Kaiser. “In particular, the presence of young visitors, either in groups or in company of family and friends, was striking. The weather wasn’t too kind, but visitor numbers held up very well.”

Confor has been pushing the message of farm forestry and was pleased to see increased interest from farmers this year. Debates in the Confor tent were very well-attended, including an event called *Brexit: Opportunity or Catastrophe* (see p8).

The event also had plenty of opportunities for

hands-on activity, including archery and the opportunity to experience a 360-degree virtual reality forest environment. The show was a great opportunity for young people to get an insight into the career opportunities available in forestry.

There was also a chance to marvel at chainsaw carving and to buy locally-made wooden products, including trugs and baskets, which sold out in record-time.

In addition, there was a range of valuable practical advice on business development, occupational health, equipment maintenance, health and safety and other relevant topics.

“We had more than 50 companies joining the show for the first time and hopefully, many lasting business relationships were created,” said Ms Kaiser.

The show would not have been possible without the help of staff and contractors, volunteers and the sponsors Tilhill, Euroforest, Aspen Fuel, Abbey Forestry, Fountains Forestry and Soil Association.







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‘A VERY BUSY & REWARDING SHOW’... EXHIBITORS HAVE THEIR SAY

1 THE ONE STOP FORESTRY SHOP (JAS P WILSON)

We have done the Confor show for as many years as we can remember, it's always proved to be a very busy and rewarding show, and 2017 was no different! John Wilson and his team including Ken Reid, Simon Clingan and Andy McSherry were on-hand to greet customers new and old and talk through our large stock of new and used machinery. This year - besides some new machinery developments from our existing brands such as Botex, Posch, Igland, Lasco & TP - we also had one entirely new product range to offer customers: FAE, which is well known for producing quality mulchers and tillers for the forestry market.

We had recently been offered the UK dealership for FAE and we selected the Confor Woodland Show to provide the product launch. Our team met and spoke with many pre-existing FAE owners who not only confirmed our understanding of the quality of FAE, but also had kind words to say about Wilson's taking on the dealership.

The crowds who attended the show seemed to enjoy our wide range of machinery and live demonstrations, including the hugely popular Posch S-360 Turbo which produced high volumes of quality firewood across the two-day event.

2 SDL SOLUTIONS

We had a very productive couple of days at the show. It was our first time exhibiting there but the rain didn't put us off discussing all things forestry and making new friends. It was a great platform to connect with new and existing clients and we're already looking forward to the next one!

3 TUBEX

The Confor Show was a terrific event for Tubex! We were on the woodland trail for the first time and felt very at home. It was excellent to see so many of our customers and have the opportunity to speak to people whom we have not met before, who use



our vast range of products. The Confor Show was particularly good due to the high quality and focused visitors attending as well as the prominent Confor stand, where people can chat to the team and hear excellent talks.

The woodland trail is quite spread out and has the capacity for many more exhibitors, which for 2019 would be great. Thanks to the organisers and the marshals, who worked hard to make it all flow so well. '

4 M LARGE

M Large were not at the last Confor Show but our brands had been well represented by our Southwest dealer, Halse of Honiton. This year we decided to offer more support to our entire dealer network by having an M Large stand in addition to Halse's own stand. This proved very successful and we were pleasantly surprised at the number of visitors to our stand and the interest in our products on show. As expected the market leading range of Hakki Pilke firewood processors generated considerable interest from customers old and new with the new Easy 43 being particularly well received. Our own LMS brand Scorpion 440 Tree Shear was very popular with the two ordered during the show being delivered within a few days. The Palms range of forestry cranes and trailers introduced to the UK by M Large 15 years ago were shown with both timber grabs and the optional BioJack lightweight harvesting head. We



have a range of Palms trailers and cranes in stock for immediate delivery. Thor log splitters remain the only brand offering their patented partial foot pedal control for safe and efficient work.

5 KIRKLAND UK

Kirkland UK had a huge success from the Woodland Show! As this was our first time exhibiting, we were ecstatic with the amount of new customers we met! Now granted the title of UK importer for Antonio Carraro Tractors, the stand was buzzing with new, interested buyers. Kirkland UK originally started as fruit growing machinery specialists and have now diversified into the forestry industry with Antonio Carraro tractors, built with Yanmar engines and popular reverse drive feature. One of the popular machines on the stand was the 98HP Mach 4 Quadtrack. The four rubber tracks guarantee positive stability on steep slopes and continuous traction on slippery, crumbly ground and on snow.

GLOBAL RECYCLING SOLUTIONS

A good show for us, which resulted in the sale of a New Bandit 2650 Track Stump Grinder, which comes with a Tier 4 final 74hp Diesel engine, radio remote, expanding tracks, dozer blade and the Bandit Revolution wheel.

6 TRUNCATOR

A big thanks from Truncator sawhorses to everyone visiting and involved with the 2017 Confor show! It was incredibly well organised from start to finish, and attended by keen and interesting showgoers and tradespeople. The company received a fantastic response to both its existing sawhorse range and award-winning prototype Trailer Tipper, even taking pre-orders and meeting potential dealers before the official release of the new unit. A terrific show all round, see you again in 2019!

7 HI-LINE TRAINING

Our first time at the show was a great success and we had lots of interest from people not only looking for arb and forestry training but who were also asking for advice about work within the industry and apprenticeships. We made some excellent contacts for potential training sites across the South West.



8 CALEDONIAN FORESTRY

Thanks to everyone who made it along to see our stand this year, the phone has not stopped ringing since! We always enjoy the trip to Longleat as it gives us the chance to catch up with the many customers we have in the area, allowing us to maintain the high level of customer we provide. This year we saw a record number of enquiries with several new orders now confirmed. The Kesla 122H Trailer and 316 Loader gathered huge interest, especially with its true lifting capacity of 2080kg at 3m reach, also the overall quality and engineering of the product. The Palax C1000 Pro+ sparked a lot of interest and was dropped off for demo after the show. The new, more ergonomic design makes it easier and more efficient in use and as a result of better cutting speed and more power the C1000 is one of the most productive and efficient firewood processors for bigger logs in its class.

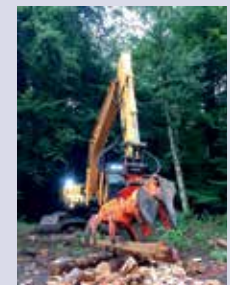
9 GLENFARROW BIOMASS

GlenFarrow, experts in batch fed Biomass Boilers and Dryers, were exhibiting for the second time. The show once more proved a massive success for the company with over 100 contacts made. The show came at an ideal time, following hot on the heels of changes to the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme which were announced at the beginning of September. The RHI reforms included a more than doubling of tier 1 tariff range, so that more of the energy output falls into the top tier. Batch fed biomass is ideal for the forestry industry who potentially have significant amounts of waste wood, which would otherwise need to be disposed of or simply just be wasted.

GlenFarrow's David Taylor, said "Once more the Confor show has proved a great showcase for our products."



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WHY THEY CAME... STEFANIE KAISER MEETS SOME OF THE VISITORS



Helena and Robert White: daughter and father

Robert, an ex-professional forester and woodland owner from South Devon, visited the show with his daughter Helena, a trainee land agent based in Edinburgh. For them, the show is a good opportunity to catch up with friends. They attended the Brexit debate in the Confor tent and were inspired by the demonstration of the Rezatec geomapping software in the John Clegg tent.



Barnaby: student

Barnaby is 16 and from Taunton, Somerset, where he studies arboriculture. He was invited by Cannington College to attend the show and we met him at the Forest Workers Zone. He enjoyed getting an idea of different types of machinery he will likely be using in his professional life in the future.



Jack and Whitney: tree surgeon

Tree surgeon Jack and his girlfriend Whitney from Surrey came to Longleat to look at arb machinery. Jack is only 22 and already has his own business. He saw some interesting stump grinders at the show.



Mrs & Mr Wooldridge: farmers/woodland owners

The couple from the New Forest own around 40 acres of woodland besides their 70 acres of farmland and some ancient woodlands. They are retired and sell some of their hardwood locally but more as a hobby. They have their own band saw. They would like to improve their woodland and make it more profitable and came to the show to get new ideas and inspiration.

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Woodlands on farms and adding value to your wood

As part of Confor's work on 'Farm Forestry', the Confor Woodland Show saw a panel of experts and thought-leaders from the rural sector present inspirational initiatives that promote the establishment and management of woodlands in a farm context.

"Growing trees is farming in 3D"
Andy Grundy, Certification Manager for Soil Association, gave a quick overview of his organisation's work in the field of forestry certification. He then highlighted their project Innovative Farming (part of Duchy Future Farming Programme) and how woodlands on farms can be an important component for sustainable agriculture

WEB RESOURCES



Learn more about Soil Association's work www.soilassociation.org/forestry/training

and animal welfare. "We want more agro-forestry at policy level, ideally in the form of a National Strategy and with a focus on the delivery of ecosystem services."

Food and wood in one
Dr Paul Thomas inspired the audience with Mycorrhizal Systems' proposal for farm diversification through the simultaneous establishment of trees and truffle crops.

Truffles are the fruiting bodies of fungi and grow together with trees in a symbiotic association. Mycorrhizal Systems works with UK-sourced seeds to produce seedlings that have grown with the fungus attached. Using the symbiotic plant material for woodland establishment can provide in an excellent diversification opportunity for farmers and woodland owners. Examples of diversified systems are a combination of Oak+fungus for timber and truffle plus hazel for coppicing.

If you're a landowner interested in Farm Diversification, and curious to learn more about truffle cultivation visit <https://plantationsystems.com/partnership/>

"Every hectare of forest on farm is a hectare weaned off subsidies."
Dr Eleanor Harris of Confor highlighted the potential for woodlands on farms in upland Scotland. Presenting Confor's recent report *Farm Forestry* she argued that sheep farming and forestry are perfectly compatible.

"Every hectare of forest on farm is a hectare weaned off subsidies."

Farmers in Scotland are increasingly discovering that planting woodlands on parts of their uplands are a 'no-brainer' with multiple benefits:

- shelter for animals resulting in better animal welfare and reduced feeding costs
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- income diversification.



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Eucalyptus – the future of biomass supply? Bryan Elliot (Devon Forestry Consultants), well known for work on eucalyptus plantations, talked about the future of wood supply and species choices.

Considering that the UK is importing 80% of its wood supply and ships in pellet wood for Drax from Canada, there is a need for short rotation crops while increasing species variety. Eucalyptus benefits include: 400-600m³ average yield/ha/year; allows grass growth under trees – can be used for silvipastoral systems; first thinning at age six; £15000/ha from clearfell at year 15; diversification opportunities, including oil and honey.

He promotes eucalyptus as having the potential to supply wood for biomass while responding to climate change. Challenges are the management required due to fast growth and the lack of processing facilities and markets at present.

More detailed updates on Bryan's work will feature in FTN.

It was encouraging to see mainly farmers among the audience being keen to start enriching their rural businesses with trees as the main changing agents.

WEB RESOURCES



Read and download the *Farm Forestry* report www.confor.org.uk



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UK WIDE ARB & FORESTRY SPECIALISTS

Forest Fuels acquires woodpellets2u

Forest Fuels has further increased efficiency and coverage for its wood pellet customers in the UK by acquiring the 'woodpellets2u' business.

Peter Solly (right), managing director of Forest Fuels said: "This is great news for our wood pellet customers as it further enhances our coverage, especially for blown deliveries, where a blower vehicle blows the wood pellets directly into the fuel hopper with minimal fuss and mess. We can now get to more customers, much more efficiently. Adding a further eight skilled and experienced staff members to bolster the existing 50-strong Forest Fuels' team also means that our knowledge base is now unprecedented in the UK."

www.forestfuels.co.uk



Norbord welcomes MSP

Wood-based panel manufacturer Norbord has played host to Fergus Ewing, Rural Affairs Secretary at the Scottish Parliament, at their site near Inverness which is undergoing a £95m expansion and modernisation programme.

Mr Ewing praised the part that Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) played in giving Norbord the confidence to invest.

Karl Morris, Managing Director of Norbord Europe, said; "An investment of this scale is undoubtedly a major undertaking. The FCS projections for

timber supply in the north east gave us the confidence to embark on our ambitious programme that we anticipate will double production capacity at Dalcross".

Mr Ewing said; "The Scottish Government fully supports this recent expansion programme by Norbord. It will bring economic and job creation opportunities for the area and boost the Scottish forestry sector. It is a significant investment that is very welcome news, and I am pleased to see the speed with which progress has been made."

Pictured, left to right: Fergus Ewing, Jo O'Hara (FCS) and Karl Morris (Norbord)



Final stage of integration

George McRobbie, Managing Director of Tilhill Forestry, has announced the final stage of the completion of Tilhill Forestry's integration into the BSW Group.

This last stage involves the combining of the BSW Sawmills UK log buying team with Tilhill Forestry's timber harvesting team. The integration process will start immediately and will be a phased process completing by 31 March 2018. Once the integration is complete Tilhill Forestry will have sole responsibility for the sawlog supply into BSW's UK sawmills. Tilhill Forestry will continue to supply sawlogs, small round wood and biomass to its other customers with no change to the current security of supply or contract terms.

Harry Stevens' role on the Tilhill Board of Directors will change. He will become the Timber Buying Director and be responsible for the expanded timber buying and harvesting function.

Gavin Adkins' role as Commercial Director at Tilhill will become full time and Peter Whitfield, currently Timber Operations Director, will be moving to a new role as Business Development Director. These appointments will take place with immediate effect.

Together, BSW and Tilhill Forestry form a strong partnership in the forest industry that will deliver quality from beginning to end - from creating new forests through to producing timber end products.

www.tilhill.com

New leadership at Scottish Woodlands

Scottish Woodlands Ltd has appointed two new directors.

Ian Robinson and Craig Nimmo have been appointed to the board of directors for the forestry management company which serves clients from a network of 17 offices located throughout Scotland as well as in North England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Mr Robinson, who has worked for the company for 30 years, becomes Operational Director. He has extensive forestry management experience across a wide geographic area, having worked for the company in South Scotland, North England and Wales. Mr Robinson was also responsible for Scottish Woodlands' Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

group certification scheme when it was introduced, as an industry first, in the late 1990s.

The second senior appointment sees Mr Nimmo join the board as Director of Utilities & Landscaping. He has been with the company since 1994 and has developed a range of expertise across its Utilities Division, particularly in fencing and vegetation management contracting for railways, and in finding innovative solutions for fence construction in remote locations and demanding terrain.

Ralland Browne, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands, is pictured (centre) welcoming new Board members Craig Nimmo (left) and Ian Robinson (right).

Head forester retires after 35 years' service

Not many people can as readily measure the results of their working life as Mike Libera, the outgoing Forest Manager with Crown Estate Scotland. He retired in July after having spent 35 years working in the forests on the Applegirth Estate and in many other Crown Estate woodlands across the UK estates, seeing countless saplings grow to full height.

Speaking of his time with the Crown Estate, Mike said: "The changes in forestry practice are incredible. We once had squads of chainsaw operators who made a perfect job of felling trees, cleaning the debris and soil around the base of the trees to maximise the volume of timber taken from the site (an inch at the bottom is worth a foot at the top)! We would photocopy maps and use coloured pencils to try and give an impression of what we were trying to achieve.

"Compare this to the current availability of GIS, mapping, computers (I got my first in 1993), aerial photography, timber harvesters and processing technology - all incredible advances which have revolutionised forest management."

Nick Page will take over the role of Crown Estate Scotland Forest Manager.



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Answering the housing challenge

THE MODERN TIMBER HOUSE IN THE UK



Peter Wilson presents his new book *The Modern Timber House in the UK* at TimberExpo 2017

Much has changed in the past ten years as regards the use of timber in the design of new housing in the UK, so much so that the sheer number of good examples that can be seen around the country may come as a surprise to many. During this period, wider acceptance amongst architects, engineers and other construction professionals of a new generation of engineered timber products and systems, as well as of the advances made in wood modification technology applications, has prefaced the emergence of a whole new approach to building design in which timber in its many modern forms is very much to the fore. This has certainly been the case for commercial, educational and healthcare projects as well as housing, where timber products have increasingly been specified in preference to other, more traditional building materials and methods. The reasons for this are multiple: government pressure on industry to implement Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), for example, in which off-site manufacture, CNC-machined fabrication, minimisation of deliveries, fast erection times as well as on-site health and safety considerations are paralleled by environmental demands relating to carbon sequestration and energy use (both consumed and embodied).

The substantial visible changes that have emerged have not been in the landscape of volume housebuilding, however. Yes, the use of timber frame systems and SIPs has continued to increase in this part of the industry, especially in England and Wales where the application of these technologies has begun to catch up on Scotland where they form upwards of 70% of new house construction. We are now at a point where the actual numbers of new timber frame house completions in England and Wales exceed those in the more mature market north of the border and are making significant percentage inroads into the market there. There remains, however, a predilection to form the outer skin of much of this new housing in traditional garb: brick, render or

stone - or a combination of all three - with perhaps an element, such as a porch, made from wood.

This latter approach - which some developers see purely as fashion appendages that they happily, if not a little cynically, refer to as 'gob-ons' - disguises the real advances being made in the use of timber in the design and construction of housing in the UK. All around the country, different innovative approaches are being taken to address the chronic shortage of new and affordable dwellings. Some of these have been inspired by government' initiatives to support more people into self-building homes for themselves, whilst recently enacted legislation is aimed at encouraging smaller, local groups of construction professionals to get together to 'Custom Build' a minimum of five houses and as many as 200. In order that land can be made available for this to happen, local authorities in England are obliged to maintain two registers: one of people indicating an interest in self-building, the other of land within their boundaries that can be made available for this purpose. Some local authorities, such as Plymouth, have become active supporters and/or participants in Self- and Custom Build projects, seeing this as a way to match their redundant land holdings to the availability of government finance for affordable housebuilding.

It is too early yet to see the results of these recent initiatives, but one thing is clear: timber products and prefabricated systems not only allow such projects to be constructed more quickly, they are also more accurate in assembly, ensuring the high levels of airtightness and thermal efficiency necessary to >>



Sweethaws, East Sussex
(Architect: Smerin Architects.
Photo: Tim Crocker)

Right: **The Turf House, Isle of Skye**
(Architect: Rural Design. Photo: Nigel Ridgen)



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>> reduce the country's over-dependency on fossil fuel and nuclear energy sources. Alongside the widening awareness of timber's many construction benefits is a greater appreciation of the environmental advantages of using UK grown timber: principally a reduction in volumes of imported timber and a consequent decrease in the embodied energy (transportation etc.) associated with this.

Opportunities for home-grown timber

Not all of the timber products and systems currently used in UK construction can be easily replaced, however: almost every solid laminated timber system presently employed - such as cross laminated timber, glulam, and LVL - is imported, with only a few UK manufacturers making use of the home-grown resources to create near-equivalent products: In-wood Developments Ltd¹ in East Sussex specialises in the use of sweet chestnut, Douglas fir and oak to manufacture bespoke glulam beams; whilst Confor member Buckland Timber² in Devon is involved with BMTRADA in a testing programme to manufacture glulam from larch, Douglas Fir and Sitka spruce. The same is true of the increasingly popular modified wood products, where the only commercially-available domestically-produced version is the thermally-modified Brimstone[®] wood³ made from ash, sycamore or poplar being available (from Vastern Timber in Wiltshire). L&G Homes⁴ have invested in a 500,000 sq/ft manufacturing facility near Leeds with the aim of producing 3000 modular housing units per year from cross laminated timber it will manufacture on the same premises, but whether this will prove to be the sea-change needed to dramatically increase the use of UK-grown timber remains to be seen, as there are technical challenges involved for our sawmills in kiln-drying Sitka spruce and other appropriate species down to the 10-12% moisture content levels required.

Understanding the needs of a construction sector in transformation

To understand the changing timber needs of the UK construction industry, the forestry and timber processing sectors need to acquaint themselves with 'Modernise or Die', the Farmer Review of the UK Construction Labour Model that was published in October 2016 and which received a formal government response in July of this year. Even without the uncertainties created by Brexit, the review paints a bleak picture of the construction industry's shrinking workforce and its failure to invest in skills, or to fully embrace the acceleration of the wider digital revolution: hence its ominous title. The success or otherwise of the modernised construction world that Farmer recommends will stand or fall by the effectiveness of its supply chains and it is here that the timber sector has to look to the future and recognise the need for medium-to-long term planning and serious investment in the technology required to meet demand.

The demand is already there, as is comprehensively evidenced in 'The Modern Timber House in the UK', the new, 240 page publication commissioned



by Wood for Good to highlight not only the range of conventional and advanced timber technologies currently being applied in the building of new housing throughout the country, but also the wide range of applications they are being put to. Throughout its 14 chapters, this copiously illustrated book demonstrates the many innovative and inspirational ways that architects and engineers are finding to use timber in all its forms. Whether in rural, suburban or urban situations, from stick-built frames to multi-storey residential buildings formed from cross laminated timber and from green timber to hybrids that integrate several different timber technologies, this is a book to encourage and inspire residents, clients, planners and other local and national government building control officials to demand more and better use of wood. And for those in the UK forestry and timber processing sectors looking ahead to see how benefits from the attendant opportunities might be accrued: 2020 will not just be a post-Brexit year, it will also be seen as the 20-20 measure of the industry's vision and ability to respond positively.

The author of 'The Modern Timber House in the UK', Peter Wilson is an architect and director of Edinburgh-based Timber Design Initiatives Ltd. The company's work is founded on innovation in three inter-connected areas; professional education on all aspects of timber design and construction for architects and engineers; the development and use of new, timber-based products and construction systems; and by creating demonstration projects for the new, high-technology frontiers being opened by engineered timber and modified wood products.

Top: **Crow's Nest, Lyme Regis** (Architect: AR Design Studio. Photo: Martin Gardner)

Above left: **Redshank, Essex** (Architect: Lisa Shell Architects. Photo: Helene Binet)

Above right: **Hannibal Road Gardens** (Architect: Peter Barber Architects. Photo: Morley von Sternberg)

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- 2 www.bucklandtimber.co.uk
- 3 www.brimstonewood.co.uk
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The Modern Timber House in the UK is available from Wood for Good or from the publisher, Arcamedia Ltd (<http://arcamedia.co.uk>), price £35.

Scotland poised to take key role in timber construction



Speakers at *From Trees to Timber Homes*, the Scottish Forestry Conference held in Edinburgh in September, were upbeat about the prospects for the role of domestic timber in construction. **David Lee** reports

Forestry and wood is now at the heart of policy discussions about land use, climate change and house building in Scotland, said Confor Chief Executive Stuart Goodall after the recent *From Trees To Timber Homes* conference in Edinburgh.

Mr Goodall also told the conference, sponsored by Wood for Good, that Scotland could lead the way in building more warm, attractive and high-quality homes from domestic timber if positive collaboration between foresters, wood processors, architects and house builders continues to gather pace.

Fergus Ewing MSP, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity, told delegates: "People love wood, they want wooden homes and we should be overcoming the barriers and challenges."

He said increased tree planting targets were a big part of this and more productive planting was needed to maintain the momentum created by a strong timber supply over the next 10-15 years.

"We have revised our approach to new woodland creation," said Mr Ewing. "I expect to achieve our 10,000 hectare annual target soon and we have increased that to 15,000 hectares by 2025. There is cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament for more planting so people making investment decisions know there won't be an abrupt shift in policy.

"We are implementing all recommendations in the Mackinnon report [to speed up planting approvals] and the new Forestry Bill will include a new forestry strategy. I'm excited about using more high-quality, home-grown timber in construction and offsite construction is on an upward curve."

Mr Ewing said planting targets were linked clearly to policy objectives - tackling climate change and using more home-grown timber. The ambition is to use 3

million cubic metres of domestic timber annually by 2023, from 2.2 million cubic metres now. Stuart Goodall welcomed this, saying although three-quarters of homes were built with timber frames in Scotland (against 22 per cent in England), only around one-third were built using Scottish timber.

Offsite construction

Calum Murray of CCG Scotland highlighted the strength in offsite timber construction in Scotland, now worth around £250 million per year, with an ambition to grow to £650 million by 2025. "Scotland is a market leader and there is a tremendous opportunity," he said. "However, it's not just about high-quality offsite construction, it's also about landing it on the site at exactly the right time."

Murray gave a recent example of successful off-site construction where 185 flats were wind and waterproof on-site within 26



weeks - probably a year or more quicker than 10-15 years ago.

Despite barriers to growth, including a "prehistoric construction culture" and slow planning system, Murray said Scotland had the "skills and capability" to develop a mass offsite timber construction base. Businesses were already collaborating effectively through Offsite Solutions Scotland, a group of nine timber-using construction businesses, including CCG, Makar Homes and Carbon Dynamic, who all spoke at the conference.

Murray said they were sharing R&D and business knowledge, and aligning technology and training needs. Dr Robert Hairstans of Edinburgh Napier University said: "We are moving away from an adversarial approach to business and looking at collaboration; these firms work across Scotland in different sectors and there is a huge market share to take advantage of."

Stuart Goodall said: "We heard from pioneers like CCG and Makar Homes, who have proved we can push boundaries with timber construction, and it's about making that mainstream - creating more warm, beautiful, high-quality and sustainable homes where people really want to live.

"As forestry becomes more attractive and collaboration grows, we can put more domestic timber into higher value areas like construction - and build more of those homes."

Conference chair Muriel Gray asked Fergus Ewing if the new Forestry Bill should commit explicitly to expanding the forest area in Scotland (now 18 per cent, with an ambition to increase it to 21 per cent by 2032). He said: "We are totally committed to growing the forest area. There are lots of opportunities for more plantations."

Mr Ewing insisted the planning system



Stuart Goodall presents Fergus Ewing with Confor's *A Common Countryside Policy*



Left: Conference chair Muriel Gray with Stuart Goodall (left) and Andy Leitch (Forestry Commission Scotland)

Right: The panel for Session 2 (left to right): Neil Sutherland (MAKAR), Max Garcia (Carbon Dynamics), Christiane Lellig (Wood for Good) and Petra Biberach (PAS)

was more amenable to using timber, with officials “giving clear direction”. He said he had spoken directly to planners in areas where new forests are most likely to be sited and it was a partnership approach: “Councils have democratic responsibility but we have to get on with it and see more forests. Planting applications are up [across Scotland] and productive applications are up too.”

Stuart Goodall presented Mr Ewing

with Confor’s new document, *A Common Countryside Policy* ahead of the conference.

Prof Davy McCracken of SRUC supported a more integrated land use approach: “There are lots of heads in the sand thinking everything is going to be OK - it’s not. Some farmers are getting 40-50 per cent of their income from the Common Agricultural Policy and integrated land management producing multiple

benefits has to be the way forward.”

Conservative MSP Peter Chapman, a farmer for 40 years in North-east Scotland, said: “In Scotland, if you plant trees on your land, it is somehow seen as failure. We have to change that mindset and I think we can do it.

“It’s not about planting whole farms, just a portion to create a micro-climate to help livestock and provide that extra woodland asset in 20-30 years’ time. My focus is to help change the mindset of the farming community, to see forestry as an asset, not a failure of the business model.”

• See p6 for full story on *A Common Countryside Policy*

Pushing at the boundaries of construction

Glasgow-based construction firm CCG (Scotland) Ltd is pushing the boundaries in the Scottish housing sector shown through a state-of-the-art residential housing development in Yoker, west Glasgow. Specialists in the applied use of ‘Off-Site’ Modern Methods of Construction with the manufacture of closed panel timber systems, the company is now actively researching and developing the applied use of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) for flatted house types. This is shown by Ellerslie Road, a 42-home development that is presently being constructed on behalf of Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association. Reaching seven storeys, Ellerslie Road has been constructed entirely using CLT and is the tallest timber structure in Scotland.





House at Gorthleck near Inverness, by MAKAR

A wooded living landscape – a vision for the future

Neil Sutherland challenges both current planning and woodland thinking across the UK

Woodlands make great places to live and work; across Mainland Europe such a reality is undeniable. Woodland provides a sheltered microclimate and a definition of space and function. When found in association with domestic household activities they are often inspired and positive environments for a wide range of compatible activities. Yet in the UK, few contemporary examples of this type of place-making interaction exist.

Living in and around woodland is the norm in many parts of Europe. In Sweden, there are 355,000 private forest owners, who, in aggregate, own 50% of the forest land area and supply about 60% of the timber produced. Private forest ownership in Nordic countries is often described as family forestry, which highlights the close relationship between people

and woodland.

Another example of land-use integration is the Swiss multiple-use rural development co-dependent functional approach combining agriculture, forestry, industry & housing.

It could be argued that in the UK we are currently missing out on the rural development potential of both existing woodland and woodland expansion through the limited way in which our present cultural perceptions relate to woodland in proximity to development.

This tendency is expressed in planning policies which regard tree places as single-use rather than multiple-use land utilisation. Planning, however, is ultimately concerned with public benefits. Seeing the potential for the multiple land-use of woodlands could create a range of public benefits, including; improved land management, better protection of watercourses, improved wildlife & biodiversity management, increased opportunities for housing, increased provision of space for business activities

“

Understanding a place – its physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental characteristics – is a fundamental prerequisite of good planning.

James Mackinnon
(retired Scottish Government Chief Planner)



Both Planning and future woodland are concerned with long-term community resilience and prosperity. In bringing them together purposefully they could bear far more fruit than their individual parts.

Neil Sutherland

(eg workshops and home offices), reduction in fuel poverty through the provision of local wood-fuel, increased opportunities for local food production, increased opportunities for improved access to, and interpretation of, woodlands.

Culturally, we seem a long way from an intimate relationship between trees, woodland and everyday ordinary life. A quick look at the North West coast of Norway on Google Earth confirms another approach: housing groups, individual houses, industry, public buildings, intimately integrated within a natural as well as a managed landscape.

Both planning and future woodland are concerned with long-term community resilience and prosperity. In bringing them together purposefully they could bear far more fruit than their individual parts.

In recent decades, patterns of rural living and working across the UK have changed considerably and will continue to change. Home-based economic activity - home-working, light industrial activities (eg crafts) [increasingly related to internet sales] is not catered for in zoned single-use edge-of-settlement house allocations. At the same time, the renting of space on industrial estates is often financially unrealistic and inconvenient for many. Modest home-based enterprise activities, the result of entrepreneurial and enterprise thinking, requires active public sector support in the form of proactive and visionary Development Plans.

There are positive trends in the many growing signs of a shift in attitudes towards woodland and human relationships; the hutting movement, woodland crofting, community woodlands, agro-forestry, forest gardens and changing practices in woodland management.

Rural areas of the UK need to represent and make available places of creativity and economic activity. The benefits of population density, cooperation and interaction are assumed to be an urban phenomenon yet this is as relevant to rural life - in terms of actual human community, dependency and resilience.

We believe we need to find simple ways to unlock the potential for woodland sites to offer suitable rural development opportunities, particularly the opportunities to link housing and business activities. Such a link could unlock opportunities and provide security for many families.

Aspirational, perhaps, radical incentives for woodland expansion coordinated with rural busi-



ness and housing development are required.

At MAKAR we are piloting a number of settlement Master-plans - three initiatives of 18, 35 and 160 homes respectively, which aim to integrate high-quality (timber) housing with appropriate large and small areas of woodland establishment to create amenity, shelter, privacy and beauty. These positive landscaped interventions are being designed in conjunction with green infrastructure - expressed swales, ponds and flood mitigation areas, often undergrounded and fenced off in conventional housing developments. Such green infrastructure spaces rather than be characterized by maintenance heavy grassed open space, which nobody uses, could be low maintenance and productive beautiful places.

Bringing people closer to trees and trees closer to habitation could be seen as consistent and supportive of the general trend towards high quality place-making, and the mainstreaming of low-energy demand and low-carbon timber housing.

Typical settlements in the UK (top) and Norway (above)

Neil Sutherland is director of Makar Ltd, an architect-led design and build company based in Inverness, Scotland.

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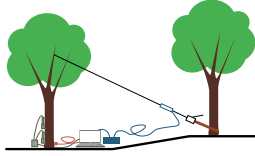
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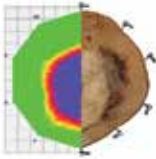
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Constructing the future

Grown in Britain week, 9-15 October 2017

As the old saying goes, the future is what we make it. Constructing on-going awareness of the quality, availability, and economic and environmental contribution of British-grown timber beyond the immediate confines of the timber industry is where Grown in Britain Week comes in. Running from 9-15 October, the campaign is offering its first set of marketing materials for supporters, available from the Grown in Britain website, and has produced specific ideas and advice for its supporter base and industry partners.

"This year's theme is 'Celebrating Great British Wood'," says CEO Dougal Driver. "We want to encourage wide participation and recognition of the value of British-grown timber in all its facets, from social and economic to environmental," he adds.

A leaflet or poster template and templates for two different promotional stickers are available. They are being circulated through the organisation's 200-strong supporter network, amongst licence-holders, and via partner trade federations to over 2000 businesses nationwide.

Grown in Britain Week 2017 also features a conference jointly staged by GiB, the Country Land & Business Association and the Forestry Commission, on 12th October. The business-oriented theme is 'Adding Value to Woodland'. Places can be booked via the link on the Grown in Britain Week web page or via the CLA. Other organisations and events taking place in Grown in Britain Week are listed on the organisation's website. Grown in Britain licence-holders are also using the Week as a basis for their own promotions, events and launches.

In progress with a view to launch during Grown in Britain Week is a special joint project between Grown in Britain and the British Woodworking Federation. This will provide one softwood and one hardwood exemplar timber windows, made from British-grown timber kindly donated by licence-

holders Tyler Hardwoods and Vastern Timber. These are likely to be on show at UK Construction Week at Birmingham's NEC, which this year coincides with Grown in Britain Week.



Send an E-postcard and promote home-grown timber

A further 'first' for Grown in Britain Week is a series of e-postcards publicising the different aspects, uses and the multiple values of British-grown timber. Each card features either products from a Grown in Britain licence-holder relevant to the theme, or projects from some of the UK's leading timber specialist architectural practices including Gaia Architects, Roderick James Architects, Glenn Howells Architects, and Architype. The postcards will appear initially on the campaign's Twitter feed and will then be distributed through its marketing channels. Visit www.growninbritain.org for details.

Photo: Roderick James Architects

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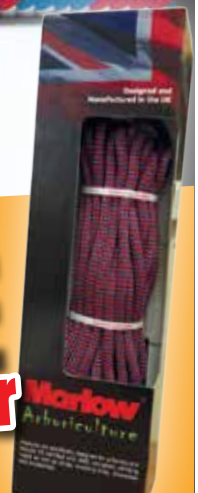
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Complaining recently about the dearth of qualified forest engineers, I was promptly informed that there are plenty of engineers out there but forestry is often

unwilling to pay the going rate. There is truth in this; we work at the low-margin raw material end of the supply chain and have a tradition of keeping costs low by extending the supposed competency of the forester to cover everything from ecological scientist to roads engineer.

We don't have good statistics on the scale of forest road construction. Forest Enterprise Scotland, which manages 26% of the conifer plantation resource in the UK, has a road network of 9700km and an annual construction programme of about 70km of new road and 100km of

road upgrading. In addition, they maintain (grade, roll, ditch etc) something like 10% of the network each year. Many of the private sector forests coming on stream require new roading, so the UK forest road construction programme might be at around three times the FES programme.

Times are changing; we work within a more demanding regulatory and legal environment; the roads and bridges we build will be used by ever more complex and expensive machinery under changing climatic conditions alongside numerous recreational and other users. They must



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be safe, efficient, robust and maintainable and fit into the landscape becoming part of the permanent, land use change from upland grazing to sustainable, multipurpose forestry.

Forest roads

Talking to hauliers you get the impression that, too often, our forest roads are less than adequate for the timber lorries which, despite some modifications, are effectively standard 44 tonne haulage vehicles, designed for efficient running on a trunk road.

Road widths are narrow leaving little margin in slippery conditions and requiring every lorry follow the same wheel path encouraging deformation and rutting. Corners are tight, gradients can be steep and, particularly where the running surface is poor, this makes for difficult driving conditions. Turning areas and passing places may be insufficient to cope with multiple vehicles servicing busy sites keeping up with high production harvesters.

Maintenance 'regimes' can be more a case of responding when the road becomes impassable rather than planned monitoring and maintenance. When impromptu improvements are made, a top coat of sharp stones with no time to settle may result in punctures and tyre blow outs, sometimes several miles down the public road.

Stacking and loading areas should be properly prepared to prevent lorries loading directly off the narrow forest road, their stabiliser legs gouging holes in the road edges risking collapse.

The 'harvesting interface' includes access ramps into the forest from the forest road and appropriate off-road routes to stacking and servicing areas keeping harvesting machinery off the forest road. On steeper sites, suitable



Potholes in a forest road



Well prepared harvesting interface Photo Kirsty Robb

areas for siting winches need planned and prepared.

If the hauliers are right, we need to up our game and take more time, expertise and resources to plan and prepare our forest infrastructure. Every corner not

widened, every gradient change that requires a hurried gear shift, every misaligned bridge or lump in the road will, over the years, generate many driver curses, increase wear and tear on the drivers, the vehicles, and the road, and



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add continuing cost to the supply chain. A recent shift towards asking the buyers of standing sales to create or upgrade harvesting access may not encourage careful planning and durable investment.

Making a good entrance

Our forest entrances tend to be a legacy from when the trees were planted; hurriedly prepared in the 1970s for transit vans, Land Rovers, tractors and the odd 32 tonne lorry.

Inevitably some entrances will require improvement, or even relocation, to ensure heavy traffic can enter and leave the site safely and to prevent forest debris, muck and water from running onto the public road. Any physical alterations, even on minor roads, will require permissions from the council and the relevant roads authority. The public road itself may be more fragile than the forest road and where this is taking the brunt of lorry braking and turning it can soon be damaged.

Most of the timber transport groups in Scotland and the north of England have identified where timber joins the public road and there are plans to review some of these entrances to help illustrate a range of appropriate specifications to suit the different circumstances.

Smaller woodland areas will struggle to cover the costs for significant infrastructure. Sometimes the entrance may be extended as a roadside stacking and loading bay providing enough space for machinery to work safely off the public road. Grants are available for infrastructure improvements where this is required to bring smaller woodland areas into productive management.

To control vehicle access and ensure timber security there is now the technology for off-grid automated vehicle control barriers using CCTV, number plate recognition and wireless data services. As the price of such equipment drops the days of forgetting the padlock key or number may finally be over (to be displaced by other technology failures no doubt).

Going public

Minor rural roads make up the large part of the UK road network and provide the access to most of the forest resource. The roads were developed to serve previous land uses and, in many cases, the improvements required to build capacity for modern heavy haulage are lagging well behind the land use change.

Forestry expansion has been driven by national governments while the minor roads are the responsibility of



High specification junction between a public road and a high volume shared-use forest road

local authorities with their own priorities and resource constraints. In the upland plantation areas this public infrastructure gap is a real constraint on the efficiency of our harvesting supply chain with lorry access and frequency having to be managed to minimise expensive damage to roads.

Of additional recent concern is the implications of this for achieving new planting targets. The councils and forestry authorities, always keen to learn from the past, are increasingly questioning how proposed new areas of productive forestry will be transported to market and are less than willing to give carte blanche to new planting currently accessed by weak roads. There is little point upgrading remote roads now, for a future harvest, decades down the line, but how, and who, do we commit to public road improvements in an unknown future context? Quite how this conundrum will be resolved is still being worked out.

More encouraging has been the not insignificant sums going into public road improvements to serve existing forests. In Northumberland, with input and support from the local timber transport group, the county council applied for and was awarded a £5m share of the government's national £75m Highway Maintenance Challenge Fund. Combined with a £1.5m of their own funding, this is seeing improvements to 24km of highway along three key rural routes serving timber and other industries.

In Scotland, the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme has awarded a record £7.05m pounds this year towards fifty timber transport projects that benefit communities and the environment, with the large part of the money going into improvements to minor public roads.

Haul roads and sea roads

With the support of an active timber transport group, and grant support through the (Scottish) Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (and its precursors), many of most of the obvious opportunities to build in-forest shared haul roads have been taken. These can serve multiple forests and cross several ownerships bringing large volumes of timber out onto more suitable roads. In Argyll, the Dunoon Haul Road, the North and South Kintyre haul roads, the South West Cowal haul road, West Loch Awe and North-West Mull haul roads are key examples, but there are others throughout the well forested parts of Scotland and Wales. There remain identified opportunities for a few more, particularly if these can also serve other uses such as providing access to windfarms, or powerline developments. However, they are not without their challenges; managing shared use and ensuring equitable charging and timely maintenance requires deliberate and ongoing management time as well as significant on-going material cost. In some cases, making the choice between investing in a haul road specifically for timber or rather upgrading the public road - with benefits for all - can be controversial. The practicalities of agreeing community priorities, establishing access rights and finding sufficient public or private funding at the right time may become the driver behind one or the other as much as any strategic position.

Coastal shipping of timber is significant, particularly from Argyll and the Highland west coast and islands. Landing craft are taking timber directly out of a forest onto boats, with fairly minimal shoreside infrastructure, equivalent to the cost of forest roads. The floating piers such as those used on the Isle of Mull, Kingairloch, Glenelg, Loch Fyne, Raasay, Jura cost a bit more, requiring fairly large volumes of timber (or a lack of real alternative) to justify the investment. The boats are taking timber to sawmills in Fort William, Ayrshire, Workington and Ireland and around the north coast to Inverness and mainland Europe. The volume of international trade tends to depend on the exchange rates and the Argyll to Ayrshire route is supported by the Scottish Government through the Timberlink service. Grants are available for other domestic shipping routes that takes lorry traffic off our roads but there has been limited uptake.

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/forest-industries/timber-transport>

Managing fragile roads in Argyll

The Argyll Timber Transport Group's Agreed Routes Map has over thirty management plans in place for fragile public roads. These are voluntary agreements between the council and forest industries where restrictions on the type of vehicle, frequency and timing of load are used as an effective way of facilitating timber haulage while preserving the condition of the road for all users. The number of plans in place together with the wider network of relatively weak roads is now having a knock-on effect on the haulage fleet. We simply don't have enough lower impact timber lorries of the required configuration (often wagon and drag with, twin or maxi wheels and tyre pressure control systems to service the number of harvesting sites on the fragile routes.

Forestry Commission Scotland is categorising part of their forest road network to allow only lower impact vehicles to be used from 2021 which will put additional pressure on the hauliers to adapt their fleets. However, such vehicles have less load capacity and where timber is being transported to market by road out of Argyll hauliers need facilities to transfer timber onto standard artic trailers. This will maximise the tonnes of timber per load saving fuel and time and making the whole operation more efficient. The group is identifying locations to create safe and secure areas for cross loading with systems in place for timber security and chain of custody traceability.

Kirsty Robb
(Argyll Timber Transport Group)

Woodland infrastructure support in England

Countryside Stewardship is a Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) grant scheme which provides support for woodland and land managers improve the environment. Specific support is available for preparing a woodland management plan, improving existing woodlands, supporting woodland creation and addressing tree health issues. Infrastructure support is an existing option within the Higher Tier Woodland Improvement Grant and it will also be available for new woodland creation schemes from 2018.

The Woodland Infrastructure option (FY2) provides 40% of actual costs and its aim is to make woodlands more accessible by road, allowing timber and other forest products to be moved more easily. This will improve the management of the woodland. From 2018 it can also be used to support the establishment of new woodland. The funding can be used for extraction tracks, haulage roads, turning points, woodland security (new entrance gates) and entrances or laybys.

A key point to note is the requirement to have a Forestry Commission approved management plan which identifies the access issues which need to be addressed. For creation the Woodland Creation plan must identify the need for the proposed access to support the establishment of the new woodland. Also both Higher Tier Woodland Improvement Support and Woodland Creation grant operate within application windows. The Forestry Commission are currently processing the Woodland Improvement applications for 2017 so this is currently closed but details of Woodland Creation grant offer

for 2018 is expected to be published later this month with all the information being available on the website.

Confor's National Manager for Wales adds:

Wales has many very small woodlands which are unlikely to support significant infrastructure investment and it would be helpful if some costs for future infrastructure improvements or creation could be included in public support to encourage the inclusion of a productive element in woodland creation.

The Welsh timber business investment scheme (TBIS) funds works that will assist in bringing woods and forests into management. The guidance notes preclude standard road transport activities but it would support costs related to the mobilising of wood, for example, transportation of wood within a forest by specialised forestry equipment which might include access facilities or stacking areas. As yet no dates have been set for the next Expressions of interest round.

Scottish Grants

The Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme offers infrastructure grants for woods under 50 ha to provide support for new access infrastructure that will bring small scale, undermanaged or inaccessible existing woodlands back into active management. The fixed rate grants support the construction of forest roads, entrances, turning areas, loading bays and lay-bys. Similar grants are available to sheep farmers creating new productive woodlands up to 50 ha.



WEB RESOURCES

Information is available on:
Constructing and managing forest roads
Transporting Timber and Loading timber from roadside forests
Relevant grants in Scotland, England and Wales
www.confor.org

The Life of a Tree

Chapter 3: Processing and Utilisation

OAK

GRADING

This article will focus on the species of oak native to the UK (pedunculate and sessile). After oak trees are felled the timber would usually be graded using the criteria of diameter, length and lack of defects.

In most circumstances the longer and straighter the better but oak is

a species where all grades can be effectively utilised and relatively short bent sections can serve a purpose.

One interesting anomaly of the UK oak industry is that whilst the softwood industry is totally metric, hardwoods are still generally measured in the Imperial Hoppus system of measuring.



PROCESSING

When oak is going to be used for construction purposes the initial processing involves the sawing of the logs into boards, followed by an air drying process. Compared to other species oak dries quite slowly and the air drying process can take up to five years. Air drying of oak takes place at a rate of 25-30mm per year. Even when not being used for constructional purposes oak logs are usually air dried for a considerable time before being sawn. One exception to this rule is when the oak logs are being used for veneering, in which case they are veneered 'green' and then the veneers are left to dry.

Once the air drying process is completed the boards can then be subjected to further processing.

Most other grades of oak are also sawn after air drying.

Oak products are routinely kiln dried but only after the afore mentioned air drying.

The number of sawmills in the UK able to process oak logs has reduced in the last 20 years and this has primarily been caused by the reduced availability of good quality UK grown oak.



DOUGLAS FIR

GRADING

Douglas fir (DF), like most species of softwood, is usually initially visually graded on the basis of size, straightness and knot size prior to further utilisation.

Typically, the larger the diameter and longer and straighter the length the more valuable the timber will be.

Unlike most species of UK grown softwood there is a significant premium for larger DF poles and logs in terms of £/tonne and this encourages growers to extend typical rotation lengths to 60-80 years rather than the more typical 40-50 years for spruce.



PROCESSING

Better quality DF logs are routinely air dried for several weeks prior to processing and this seasoning process is aimed at reducing the moisture content down to 25-30%.

After processing timber hoping to be utilised for construction would be subject to machine stress grading for strength (European specification). Depending on the results the timber would be given a strength class and this would ultimately determine whether it could be utilised for its intended purpose.

Lower value logs would tend to be processed 'green' along with other mixed conifer species and then depending on the end use kiln dried and if for outside use treated with a preservative.

The UK market for large diameter DF logs is not large but a number of sawmills still exist that are capable of dealing with these logs.



Following the first and second chapters in the Life of a Tree – Nursery and Forest – we now move to Processing and Utilisation.

by **Ian Robinson**, Scottish Woodlands

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Oak can suffer from a number of timber defects. Typically these defects, such as rot, discoloration due to metal and cracking, cause the timber to be degraded.

Oak has specific issues such as star and ring shake. Shake is undetectable prior to felling and although little understood, it is usually found in trees growing on sandy or gravel (dry) sites. It is much less common on more fertile clay-loam (wetter) sites.

Other defects that can adversely affect oak after sawing is surface checking and cracking which is principally caused by ineffective drying.

One thing that is key to maximising the value of large mature oak is to fell them before they become moribund and rotten. This is a common problem in the UK as the trend is to only fell large oak when they are showing signs of die-back and decay. If managed correctly they could have been felled earlier and the timber better utilised.

Much of the oak timber utilised in the UK is imported from France and Germany. The continental oak is generally smaller in diameter but straighter and more uniform. It is graded into various categories including unedged timber, square edged timber and squared beams. Whilst this can be a major selling point for the imported oak, UK-grown oak products can benefit from the 'Grown in Britain Label' as well as generally larger dimensions and the timber having a more aesthetically pleasing 'figure' due to our harsher and more variable climate and growing conditions.



UTILISATION

Oak provides a wide range of marketable products and is potentially the most valuable timber that can be grown in the UK based on £/tonne.

The most valuable products are veneers for the furniture trade. Pippy and burr oaks are especially sought after with the logs being sent to Europe for processing.

Oak is also used in high-quality furniture manufacture such as table tops, joinery, flooring and increasingly in oak frame buildings either as part of a renovation project or in new builds where it is used for decorative rather than structural purposes.

The grades used for these construction purposes are green structural oak, air-dried structural oak and QP1 grade beams.

Other lower grade construction uses would include joinery, flooring, planking and cladding.

Oak timber is also utilised in higher value fencing products and sleepers for use in landscaping. In Europe oak sleepers are utilised on the railways but not in the UK. Other specialised uses of oak are in boat building (short and bent sections for ribs) and for smoking fish.

The lowest grade products usually end up in firewood although in the past collection of oak bark for tanning was an important part of the rural economy in some parts of the UK such as the Lake District.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The main issue affecting DF is quality. To achieve the premium prices the logs need to be straight and have a low rate of taper. Ideally, these high value logs would be 9m in length and have a top diameter of 30-45cm. Larger diameter logs are marketable but the demand is lower, they may be coarser and fewer mills can deal with them.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 DF is a more demanding tree when compared to the spruces and most poor quality DF results from it being grown on unsuitable soils or on sites with too much exposure.

Possible timber defects would include rot and drought crack but these can usually be detected before harvesting.



UTILISATION

DF has often been described as "Poor Man's Oak".

Compared to most softwoods grown in the UK it has a wider range of end uses and is often used as a cheaper alternative to oak. Specialised uses attracting a premium price would be construction of log cabins, large beams, large sections for sea defences and piers and bridges.

For large sectional construction work quality (straightness) is more important than size.

Other more general construction uses include joinery, flooring and cladding.

Lower value products would be utilised in fencing, pallet making and chipboard manufacture or biomass.

WEB RESOURCES



Read and download chapters 1 and 2
www.confor.org.uk

Towards a Woodland Water Code?

Encouraging tree planting for water quality benefits

Gregory Valatin and **Tom Nisbet** of Forest Research provide insights into collaborations in the PESFOR-W project

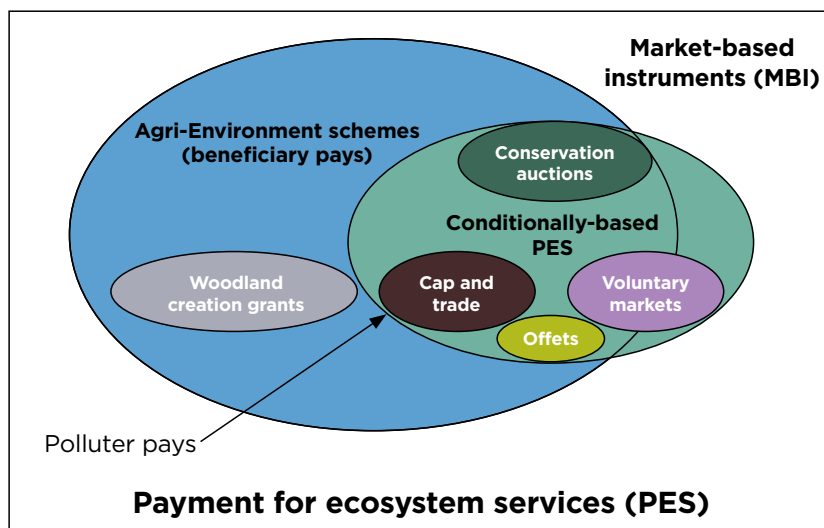
Diffuse pollution from agriculture is a major environmental problem. It is a significant pressure for over 40% of Europe's river and coastal water bodies, responsible for degrading water quality, damaging freshwater life and reducing recreational and cultural amenity values. This represents a major cost to society. For example, South West Water estimate that 17% of their customers' bills is for water treatment to remove diffuse pollutants for the provision of clean drinking water.

While efforts continue by farmers and researchers to find ways of reducing diffuse pollutant losses through changes to farming practices, it is increasingly recognised that other 'measures' will be required to achieve water targets and protect the water environment. This includes utilising the ability of trees to intercept and reduce the flow of pollutants from adjacent agriculture. Strategically placed woodlands can be very effective at controlling diffuse pollution, as well as delivering other water services.

The benefits of tree planting for protecting water quality and reducing flood risk have informed woodland creation grants in England since 2012, with additional payments or points awarded in priority areas. However, planting rates remain limited, which in a large part is thought to be due to insufficient incentives for landowners to plant trees on higher valued agricultural land, where pollutant losses are often greatest. Better quantification of the value of woodland creation for removing diffuse pollutants would strengthen the economic case for supporting tree planting for water benefits through grants, or other Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes.



The benefits of tree planting for protecting water quality and reducing flood risk have informed woodland creation grants in England since 2012



The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of woodland planting to reduce diffuse pollution is the subject of a new international research network (PESFOR-W) created in autumn 2016 and supported by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (EU COST) programme. PESFOR-W aims to improve Europe's capacity to use woodland for water PES and help tackle diffuse water pollution by pooling knowledge and experience from across many countries. It will develop standard approaches and tools to quantify the cost-effectiveness of woodland planting for reducing the five main diffuse pollutants - sediment, nitrate, phosphate, pesticides and Faecal Indicator Organisms, as well as consider potential trade-offs for water quantity.

PESFOR-W currently draws on expertise from 38 countries and spans a range of disciplines, including forestry, agriculture, water and environmental economics. It includes participants not just from research institutes, but also from those engaged in existing woodland for water PES schemes, and aims to involve a wide spectrum including landowners, industry and regulators. A key task is to gather evidence from case studies across Europe. The aim is to incorporate this information into a publically available web-based, spatial repository, and to draw lessons from existing schemes to provide guidance for future PES implementation.

As the diagram above illustrates, broadly defined, PES schemes can be considered to encompass a range of different types of mechanisms. These include publicly funded schemes such as woodland creation grants, agri-environmental schemes such as the EU Rural Development Programme and use of

Continued on page 51

EXISTING OR RECENT WOODLANDS FOR WATER QUALITY PES SCHEMES

CROATIA

Fund for forest functions of general benefits (FFGB)

Under the Forest law, all companies and business in Croatia have to pay around 0.05 % of their income to the FFGB, part of which goes towards woodland creation / regeneration and forest management related to water-purification and protection.

DENMARK

Aalborg city council groundwater quality improvement

450 ha farmland converted to forest or permanent grass to improve groundwater quality

Vigersted Groundwater Scheme

Copenhagen Energy purchased farmland and paid the municipality to plant woodland to protect groundwater.

Water Supply Act Reforestation Levy

Consumers pay a levy on their water bills which funds land purchase and afforestation (as well as forest management of public land)

FRANCE

Massif de la Nerthe

To protect mineral water supplies for bottling, Coca-Cola Enterprises in partnership with the City of Pennes-Mirabeau financed reforestation during 2010-2013 to reduce sediment-laden runoff in local public forests damaged by wildfires.

Rennes

Rennes city council financed creation of 70 ha of woodland in a local catchment, successfully lowering nitrate concentrations by 20%.

Vittel

Nestle Waters provides incentives for farmers to adopt a range of land management measures including woodland in order to reduce pollution of sources used by its mineral water bottling plant (providing additional rent-free land to farmers), as well as providing funding for management of local public forests.

GERMANY

Lower Saxony Oldenburg and East-Frisia Water Association

Purchase of land and afforestation to reduce impact of agricultural nitrate pollution on groundwater (as well as payments for replacing conifers with broadleaves - mainly beech).

Munich water supply - Mangfall Valley - Stadtwerke München

Historic woodland creation (as well as more recent replacement of conifers with broadleaves) to improve water quality.

SWITZERLAND

Henniez SA

To protect its water supply from pollutants such as nitrate, chloride and pesticides, Henniez SA bought land around a spring from which it extracts water and planted 200 hectares of forest to form a protective belt (also halting arable production), with a positive effect in limiting the nitrate content of the mineral water.

Baden water utility / Müller brewery

Müller AG (a local brewery which owns water extraction rights for a spring in Müsern auf der Baldegg) provided funds for the municipality to restore nearby forests in 1999 in the aftermath of hurricane Lothar.

UK

SCAMP - Cumbria and South Lancashire, England

United Utilities is paying for some woodland creation (and other land management measures) to increase water quality (reduce discolouration).

English woodland grants scheme - New woodlands for water

For a period, Forestry Commission England offered additional £2000/ha grant for planting woodlands in appropriate locations in priority catchments for water quality improvement or flood risk attenuation. (The scheme has now been superseded by the Countryside Stewardship scheme).

Forestry grants scheme (Scotland) - Woodlands for water

Forestry Commission Scotland is offering an additional £130 - £690/ha grants for planting woodlands in appropriate locations in priority catchments for water quality improvement or flood risk attenuation.



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auction mechanisms to achieve greater environmental returns per £ of public expenditure. They also include in a carbon markets context, for example, cap and trade schemes such as the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, as well privately-funded voluntary transactions such as for carbon savings from projects certified under the Woodland Carbon Code. Some of the schemes involve those undertaking activities that pollute paying for measures to minimise and compensate for associated environmental impacts in line with the 'polluter pays' principle.

An underlying ambition of PESFOR-W is to explore potential for developing a Code covering the water quality benefits of woodland planting along the lines of the UK Woodland Carbon Code. After reviewing evidence on the environmental effectiveness of woodland creation, the aim is to develop standard look-up tables for the ability of woodland planting to reduce each diffuse pollutant. These numbers would underpin the valuation of water benefits and the development of a Woodlands for Water Code. This could play an important role in expanding the development and implementation of PES schemes and encouraging landowners and managers to plant trees to improve water quality, with potential for synergies by integrating with the Woodland Carbon Code.

Biannual meetings of the Action include field visits to learn about existing PES schemes and to explore first hand with stakeholders how barriers to practical implementation were overcome and schemes made to work.

The next meeting will be held in Opatija, Croatia

in October 2017 and will include a visit to the Motovun forests and Botonega reservoir to find out about payment schemes for tree planting to increase water quality.

Meetings are open, so anyone with an interest in the topics PESFOR-W covers is welcome to become involved (although funding is not available to cover expenses of additional UK participants at present).

Riparian woodland as buffer to agricultural land

RESOURCES

Further details about the network, activities, working groups, as well as presentations and minutes from previous meetings can be found at

www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/pesforw

The proposal to create PESFOR-W has recently been published in the journal *Research Ideas and Outcomes*.

ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES



List and description of relevant European schemes at www.confor.org

GET INVOLVED



We welcome: expressions of interest in hosting short visits by researchers from other COST countries; help to host a future meeting were one to be held in the UK; information on existing woodlands for water PES schemes; and suggestions for potential investors to contact to explore perceptions of woodlands for water PES mechanisms for generating new investment (Email: gregory.valatin@forestry.gsi.gov.uk).

Shifting global markets



TIMBER AUCTIONS MARKET REPORT
Oliver Combe

The UK market continues to be influenced by global timber trading patterns; volumes continue to increase whilst prices have been largely static or decreasing in 2017.

The US market remains a key short-term influence on the UK, the ongoing trade dispute between Canada and the US over timber trade tariffs, increasing US domestic activity and most recently the impact of hurricanes Harvey and Irma on the Caribbean and Southern United states are all going to impact on the UK.

The trade dispute has seen new supply lines opened to the US from Europe and Scandinavia; whilst Swedish volumes have steadily increased, the German mills have jumped at this new opportunity and are reported to have increased exports tenfold in the last six months.

Increased US house building activity has led to steady increase in lumber prices in 2017 making the market even more attractive to importers.

The tragic impact of Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Irma in the Caribbean and Florida will put added pressure onto the US timber market as the reconstruction effort kicks into gear. Historically, major hurricane events have led to 10 to 15% price spikes as demand for lumber and wood products suddenly increases, however, given the scale of these two recent events this could be even more pronounced.

If the spike in demand is sudden it is difficult for domestic producers to suddenly ramp up production and an increase in imported volume is required to put stock on the ground quickly. The European and Scandinavian producers will be aware of this opportunity and will be assessing options to divert volume to this market opportunity.

The slow progress of the Brexit talks and the EU's stonewalling tactics have eroded confidence in the GB pound and pushed it down to a level last seen in 2009, although there has been a slight rally in early September.

UK buyers have been reluctant to accept price increases or make forward commitments on imported timber volume during 2017 and have been content to trade on a more hand-to-mouth basis. Whilst the importers have put up with this when other markets were quiet there are now signs of a more bullish attitude. Some German mills are reported to be demanding a £20 per m³ price increase and have a take-it-or-leave-it attitude to the UK now that they see opportunity in the USA. The Swedes have historically taken a more long-term view of the UK market and have benefited from lower log prices in the last couple of years but low profitability in the solid wood sector will focus producers on those markets where they can make the most money.

There are now signs of a tightening of supply of imported timber to the UK market unless the UK market accepts price increase in the region of £15 to £20 per m³.

DOMESTIC TRENDS

Currently the UK economy is ticking over, Government spending is still under pressure but there are positive signs from the UK economy with better than expected news on jobs, inflation and public finances. The key questions remain whether the difficult Brexit negotiations will stall UK economic confidence. There are now signs of economic recovery in the Euro zone but concerns that Brexit will prevent Britain from benefiting from this. Overall there is caution in the economy as we navigate through a period of real uncertainty.

Pull-out quote

The domestic market has been steady this year and is currently described as OK for the time of year but not breaking any records, order intake remains reasonable, there are no signs of extended lead times and most mills have good stock inventories. The really interesting influence this autumn will be profitability as log prices have shot up far faster than processors have been able to increase their selling prices; the net result has been a squeeze on profitability. As we start to see the impact of the seasonal slowdown many processors will be reviewing their options for the coming six months and there will be a strong case for reducing activity levels, slowing sawmills throughput levels down and concentrating on trying to stabilise the log prices. At the

Hardwood sawlog market

Outlook for winter 2017/18

The hardwood market in 2017 has been surprisingly good and has steadily improved throughout the year. The weakening pound has had a very positive effect on both demand and prices and we look set for a good autumn and winter selling season.

Globally demand for hardwoods remains strong as consumption continues to increase whilst supply becomes more constrained. The Chinese continue to increase purchases from the USA and Europe of both sawnwood and roundwood. At the same time, supplies of African hardwoods to Europe continue to reduce due to the demands of EUTR forcing buyers to look at using other species from Europe or America or increasingly to use modified timbers.

In Europe, the dominant species is oak, demand is very strong and increasing, oak is used for beams, flooring, parquet, wooden structures, landscap-



ing, furniture, joinery and barrel staves. Whilst demand increase supply is reducing, France harvested 2.7 million m3 of standing oak in 1993 but only 2.1 million m3 in 2013, in five years oak sawlog prices have increased by 60% despite very low inflation.

Now there is intense competition for log supply right across Europe and the ban on log exports from Croatia is really starting to have an impact on oak prices for the 2017/18 season by reducing the quantity of logs available to buy at a time when demand continues to increase.

Despite record prices being paid for oak logs across Europe, continued shortages of available stock are leading to longer lead times, uncertainty over availability and exporters insisting their customers purchase lesser grades to secure the prime material.

Germany, France, Poland and the lowland countries have both consistently devoted considerable efforts over a long time into improving both the genetics

and silviculture of their oak forests and so produce higher quality sawlogs which are longer, straighter, have less knots and defects, consistent growth rings and are well presented. As there are historic sales records for forests down to a compartment level, buyers know which areas consistently produce good quality logs which reduces their risk when they are buying and translates into better prices.

UK woodlands were often established with multiple objectives and managed to meet these without quality timber production being the primary objective, variable genetics, sporadic management and consistent squirrel damage all contribute to much more varied quality in parcels of-



There has been a mini renaissance in the smaller hardwood mills

ferred to the market in the UK.

Although it has taken time, oak sawlog prices in the UK have now started to move steadily upwards at the same time as demand has increased. There has been a mini renaissance in the smaller hardwood mills with a small but increasing number of mills focusing on supplying the requirement for sustainable homegrown hardwoods of a known origin. Although they mainly focus on oak there is increasing demand for prime planking ash, beech, cherry, elm, sycamore and sweet chestnut.

This is a much improved situation but UK growers need to be realistic with their expectations as homegrown oak parcels are usually of much more variable quality than those seen in lowland Europe which have been continuously managed for the express purpose of producing high quality timber and as a consequence the prices are much more variable. Despite this the UK can grow very good quality oak and where this is well presented to the market it is currently attracting excellent prices.

ROADSIDE HARDWOOD PRICES SEPTEMBER 2017

Prices shown are £hft roadside – High Mid Low

Oak planking			Oak beam/fencing			Oak cordwood			Export ash & beech			White ash sawlogs			Export sycamore			1st grade firewood		
7.50	6.50	5.00	5.50	4.25	3.50	1.40	1.25	1.00	3.25	2.75	2.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	1.80	1.60	1.40



The key to effective selling of oak

1. Offer the timber early in the season (October to January),
2. Present the timber well by putting it on bearers, cross cutting it neatly, trimming the toes and marking the logs clearly
3. Market the parcel effectively to a wide range of buyers

There is also renewed interest in exporting planking grade logs to the furniture markets of the Far East from Europe including the UK, ash and beech are the preferred species.

The specification for beech is:

Length	4m to 11.8m
Diameter	40cm plus overbark
Quality	Clean, straight planking grade beech butts

The specification for ash is:

Length	3m to 11.4m
Diameter	30 - 34cm, 35 - 39cm, 40cm plus
Quality	Clean, curve in one plane, white, olive or light brown, defect free, no rot.

There are a number of companies looking for this material so please consider presenting parcels to the open market to ensure best value from the sale. The specification is flexible so if you have a parcel you are interested in marketing please contact me to discuss how to effectively present the timber to the market.

same time there appears to be opportunity to try and increase the sawn timber prices and avoid distressed selling in the early part of 2018 especially if events across the Atlantic see reduced availability of imported carcassing to the UK market.

When and if the domestic demand starts to increase again in spring 2018 and order lead times start to increase then this will be the time for a robust approach on pricing on both kiln dried material and unseasoned timber.

LOG SUPPLY

North and West Scotland

The North and West of Scotland have still got reasonable levels of supply of timber with demand for spruce sawlogs reported as brisk, prices have stabilised. There are positive signs in the small roundwood market with increasing now demand meaning there is no longer an imbalance between supply and demand, hopefully the next three months will see the backlog of small roundwood stock reduced.

Although most processors along the west coast are well bought there are a few now looking to buy to secure supply for the end of 2017 and early 2018. There is renewed interest in exporting of small roundwood, domestic producers are increasing their activity levels and it is anticipated that there will be a seasonal upturn in demand for woodfuel for the energy market. All of these factors should help the small roundwood market over the next six months and should help to maintain the excellent prices for standing timber we are currently seeing.

South and East Scotland, North England

Supply of timber to the market on the East Coast has continued to be sporadic throughout 2017 and there is still strong competition to buy material right down the east side of Scotland and into the borders.

SOFTWOOD SUMMARY

The market in 2017 remains very good, we are now in a period of stabilisation as processors seek to try and bring raw material costs under control and increase their selling prices. Despite political uncertainty there are positive factors in the market that should help offset the normal seasonal downturn.

Supply remains much stronger in the North than the South and it will be interesting to see what tactics the processors adopt to deal with the market challenges of the next six months



This has pushed the East Coast mills further West and put pressure on sawlog prices and sawlog parcels in the west despite a much stronger supply picture throughout the West Coast, Borders and Galloway.

Standing timber prices do now appear to have stabilised at a very healthy level and whilst there are negative influences on the market from oversupply of small roundwood and low sawn timber prices there is increasing competition for the available timber which should help to keep the market at current levels.

The mills remain in the difficult position of having seen sawlog prices increase much faster than their sawn timber and co-products prices throughout 2017 but remain slightly concerned about the raw material availability.

The small roundwood market is looking more positive, Kronospan are now back up and running, the new Estover plant is going through trials and will shortly begin commissioning, there are reports that the Verdo plant at Grangemouth is due to reopen and the seasonal upturn in requirement from small scale biomass heat plants will shortly begin to be evident. All of these factors should start to impact

over the next three months and may lead to a stronger market for small roundwood in early 2018 which should have a positive impact on the standing timber market.

Wales and South England

So far 2017 has been an excellent year for the grower of timber in Wales and the south of England with consistently strong demand and some exceptional prices. Whilst we can expect a seasonal slowdown in the next six months the level of installed processing capacity and the current level of supply of timber to the market indicates that prices will remain very strong. Historically, although we have seen reduced demand from the processors in the winter this has been increasingly offset by reduced harvesting activity due to the shooting season, poor ground conditions, environmental controls and shorter working days and has led to strong prices in late winter and early spring as purchasers look to ensure continuity of supply.

Whilst the sawlog market remains very brisk there are now problems moving large volumes of small round wood in England, Kronospan and Verdo have both had a negative impact which we have to an extent been shielded from by the local heat

PRICE TRENDS

£ per tonne delivered to customers in Wales, central and south England (September 2017)

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£60.00	£65.00	↑
Bar 14	£50.00	£56.00	=
SRW	£38.00	£40.00	= ↑
Fencing	£50.00	£60.00	= ↑
H Wood firewood	£45.00	£50.00	↑

£ per tonne delivered to Customers in North England and Scotland (September 2017)

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£60.00	£65.00	=
Bar / pallet 14	£42.00	£45.00	=
SRW	£30.00	£35.00	= ↑
Fencing	£45.00	£50.00	= ↑
H Wood firewood	£40.00	£45.00	↑



It's your business!

A timber security leaflet to encourage good practice and deliver best value for the entire supply chain has been produced by Confor.

Timber Security: It's Your Business was launched at the Confor Woodland Show at Longleat. It highlights the benefits of collaboration to ensure that timber is not lost at any stage in the process.

Andrew Heald, Confor's Technical Director, said: "The industry asked Confor to produce a straightforward, easy-to-use leaflet which we have done. It includes simple tips for those working in the whole supply chain - and if we can work together more effectively, everybody benefits.

"As the leaflet says, timber security is your business."

Mr Heald said the forest and timber industry operated to the highest professional standards, but also relied on a high level of trust.

He added: "Timber security is not a major economic problem in the industry, but isolated examples of bad practice can create negative perceptions and cause reputational damage."

Confor will create a dedicated web page on timber security where the leaflet can be downloaded, as well as distributing hard copies - at the Confor Woodland Show and at future industry events. The web page will feature examples of good practice in the sector and Confor is keen to hear from businesses about their positive work - including timber tracking and number plate recognition systems.

The leaflet includes simple advice for all parts of the supply chain, from forest owners and managers through harvesting managers and contractors to timber hauliers, sawmillers and processors.



Mr Heald added: "This is all about common sense and good practice - such as accurate mapping and measurement, good site security, pre-commencement meetings, regular assessments and long-term contracts.

"The industry has a good track record of partnership and collaboration - and Timber Security: It's Your Business builds on this. We are keen to highlight examples of good practice and if anyone would like their timber security work featured on the web page, we would be happy to hear from them."

markets. As the winter peak in demand from the heat markets slows down then the problems in the small round wood market will become more apparent.

Buyers will have to focus on sawlog crops and will try to avoid those crops with a high small round wood content.

Supplies of sawlogs remain constrained and some mills remain concerned about their bought-ahead situation and are having to target certain parcels to ensure they have enough logs to run their mills. Sawlog prices have crept up towards £65 per tonne for certified spruce logs whilst uncertified logs are now around £5 per tonne cheaper. Isolated exceptional parcels have attracted premium log prices which have resulted in standing prices of over £50 per tonne.

CONTACT

If you wish to discuss parcels of timber you would like to market, please contact Oliver Combe on 07771 958975, oliver.combe@timberauctions.co.uk for free independent marketing advice.

RESOURCES



Download the leaflet
www.confor.org.uk/timbersecurity

GET INVOLVED



Anyone who wants to highlight good timber security practice should call Andrew Heald on 0131 240 1410 or email andrew.heald@confor.org.uk



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‘Start planning now for Stewardship’ - FC

The Forestry Commission is encouraging landowners and land managers to start planning now to apply for funding for woodland creation available through the 2018 Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Application forms and guidance for the Countryside Stewardship woodland creation grant are now available online. This is much earlier than in previous years; giving landowners, managers and agents more time to develop their plans ahead of the window for submitting applications opens in January 2018.

Countryside stewardship offers two year capital grants of up to £6800 per hectare to support ground preparation, fencing and tree protection and initial maintenance, and an option to subsequently apply for a maintenance payment for up to 10 years, covering the initial period while trees become established.

This funding aims to create woodlands for biodiversity, water quality and flood management. But woodlands also offer economic opportunities in rural areas. As woodlands mature they can provide a good source of income thanks to thriving timber and woodfuel industries and multiple recreational uses. Other benefits include carbon storage, shelter for livestock and improved soil.

If you have land available and want to realise some or all of these benefits by planting new woodland you are encouraged to start preparing applications for the funding now. Applicants are advised to

WHAT'S ON OFFER

Successful applicants will receive:

- a two-year capital grant (for ground preparation, fencing and tree protection and initial maintenance, including new this year wall top netting and access infrastructure)
- opportunity to apply for annual maintenance payments for up to ten years (to ensure the best start for your woodland)

contact the Forestry Commission as early as possible to get the most out of the advice and assistance on offer.

The application process has been improved this year, making it easier to apply. For example, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements are now an integrated part of the application process, making it clearer and easier.

The Woodland Creation Grant is open to all land managers - owner occupiers; tenants, land lords and licensors, as long as they have control of all the land and all the activities needed to meet the obligations of the grant for the full duration of the agreement.



RESOURCES

To access the forms and guidance please visit:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-woodland-support

Additional funds for Scottish nurseries and processors

Tree nursery owners and small-scale secondary processors of timber in Scotland are set to benefit from new features of a forestry grant.

An additional £500,000 has been made available to support both sectors through the purchase of specialised equipment, increasing the opportunities for business expansion.

The funding is available within the Harvesting and Processing option of the Forestry Grant Scheme.

The grants boost has been developed in consultation between Forestry Commission Scotland, the Associations of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers (ASHS) and Confor's Nursery Group.

An additional application round will run from 18 Sept - 27 Oct for the 2017 claim year. Up to 40% grant support is available.

Welcoming the new grant funding, Rural Affairs Secretary, Fergus Ewing (pictured), said: "Recently, I have met



with representatives of the forest and timber industry and discussed a range of ideas to better support their businesses. The widening of this grant is a direct response to those discussions.

"This funding will support the purchase of the specialised equipment that will allow small forestry businesses to start-up or scale up, creating jobs and ultimately help deliver our ambitious woodland creation targets."



Woodsure - the UK's woodfuel quality assurance scheme - has launched a Ready to Burn initiative to help homeowners look after their stoves and improve air quality.

"Today, modern heating appliances are highly engineered, efficient pieces of technology that do a fantastic job - but they can only do so much without quality wood fuel," says Bruce Allen Chairman, of Woodsure.

The Minister for the environment Thérèse Coffey said:

"The Ready to Burn logo will allow people to easily identify clean, quality wood fuel, allowing them to make informed choices that will not only benefit their appliances, but also wider air quality."

www.woodsurre.co.uk

Winners and losers in uncertain times



TIMBER MARKET
REPORT
Peter Whitfield,
Tilhill Forestry

I would not want to chance my luck, but the likelihood of the pound's continued low value against the Euro seems pretty much a racing certainty. Brexit and the continued uncertainty on the economic front are the main contributory factors. Brexit negotiations seem to be mired in the inevitable bureaucracy surrounding EU processes and are unlikely to be concluded in a hurry and in turn the UK's economy is closely intertwined to the outcome. Inflation rose to 2.9% in August. This level of inflation is causing the Bank of England to seriously consider a hike in interest rates in the near future, the earliest point could be at the Bank's next MPC meeting in November. The likelihood of this impacting majorly on the strength of the pound, and by this I mean taking it back to above the €1.20 to £1, seems to be somewhat limited.

Historically there has been a strong correlation between exchange rates and the health and profitability of the forest industry in general. In the current cycle this is less evident. Whilst there has been an undoubted lift in the standing timber market there is no equivalent uplift in the sawn timber prices at the processor end. Certainly there have been price increases in sawn timber but these are hard won and not keeping the differential that mills would require to maintain margins. Simply put, the merchants are not able to pass price increase on to their customers. The UK has always been and remains a key market for Scandinavian and Baltic timber. The exporters are prepared to continue to push volumes here and keep prices at competitive levels despite exchange rates.

One upside to a weak currency is that exports of small roundwood are again more attractive and we are seeing some renewed interest in demand from Scandinavia and mainland Europe in the past cou-

ple of months. Small roundwood demand within the UK domestic market has picked up as the summer comes to an end. Partly due to Kronospan coming fully back on line but also with good demand and consistent uptime at the majority of small roundwood processor's sites.

In Europe, demand for sawn timber is good and there is evidence that Baltic timber exporters have been able to achieve some small increases in prices for sawn timber. There has been significant wind-blow in Poland and Southern Austria in the summer. This has largely been in pine and the timber quality and rate of blueing in the pine has meant that this volume is unlikely to come to the market as sawlogs, but will be heavier to fuelwood and chipwood.

Overall demand from UK processors remains very strong for all products. Stocks of roundwood are reasonable and order books are healthy. Availability of standing sales has been reasonable, although as ever in the hotspots around North England and South Scotland there never seems to be enough standing timber at the right price. Prices are relatively stable for the most part, although it still remains a mystery on many occasions as to how some of the values put on standing sales are achieved. Looking ahead there is less visibility on volumes coming to the market than processors and merchants would like.

For the UK, on a positive note, new build dwelling starts for England and Wales in the year to June 2017 were up by 13% compared with the year to June 2016. All new building starts are now 141% above the trough in the March quarter 2009. Interestingly in Europe forecasts for new construction of domestic housing is forecast to increase by 11% for 2017 over 2016.

Forestry workforce

The Office for National Statistics has recently reported the lowest net migration figures since 2014. There is no question that this is only likely to increase. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence of EU workers leaving the UK, in part due to Brexit, but as importantly due to exchange rate impacts with the pound closer to parity with the Euro there is little financial gain to be had. European citizens leaving the UK and impacting negatively on net migration is not a good thing for the forest industry as we have become increasingly dependent of EU workers in contracting for both harvesting and forest management as well in the processing industry. Our ability to attract new entrants is notoriously poor and something is going to have to be done if we are to maintain a viable workforce in forestry and indeed other industries such as agriculture. A reducing pool of labour can only push up wage costs and harm the economy in the medium to longer term.

Many challenges remain ahead of us, not least relating to where our brave new post-Brexit world will take us. As ever, we foresters (and probably everyone else), live in interesting times.



One upside to a weak currency is that exports of small roundwood are again more attractive





Deer deterrence

The browsing, debarking and fraying of newly establishing crops by deer is an issue which has a number of remedies including culling and deer fencing. However, these options are not always appropriate, and in these situations some extra assistance can be helpful.

Deterrent materials such as AAProtect and Curb have had limited success in the past, largely due to new growth being unprotected, coupled with poor rainfastness characteristics.

However, an Austrian material with an excellent performance history over the last 16 years in northern Europe has just been approved for use in the UK and looks well worth trying in either coniferous or broadleaved plantations.

Trico is an emulsified solution of sheep's fat (yes really!) and apparently deer are suitably disgusted by the stench and do not attempt to attack treated crops. Unlike other deterrent materials the product is rainfast and is claimed to be effective for several months after treatment, with deterrence likely to continue further as a result of deer memory. Trico is used neat, and has been successfully tested and used against red, roe, fallow and sika deer - and it is likely that muntjac will be similarly put off. However, it is not effective against rabbits, hare, voles and other browsing / biting mammals.

The label permits one neat application per year at a rate of 20l/ha (in reality this means that two applications of 10l/ha may be permissible if, for example, both summer and winter browsing is likely) with the recommendations shown in the table.

This does flag up some limitations, if a typical planting of 2200 trees per ha is establishing:

- i). A rate of 5mls/tree may be used to treat 2000 trees in 1 ha. twice in one year to provide short term deterrence.
- ii). A rate of 10mls/tree may be used once



per year to treat a maximum of 2000 trees in 1ha to provide effective spring or winter deterrence. As the product is relatively expensive, it may be worth considering a barrier spray by treating trees within a 20 - 50m outer perimeter around the newly planted trees.

iii). A rate of 10mls/tree may be used twice per year to treat 1000 trees in 1ha. to provide an effective barrier spray where summer and winter browsing is anticipated.

iv). A rate of 100mls may be used once/ year to minimise fraying by treating a barrier of 200 trees per ha.

Continued on p60



Trico costs around £18.50/l (18.5p/tree at the 10ml rate) is available mail order only from the importer and sole UK distributor through email fiona.homes@laronkarn.co.uk

TRICO RECOMMENDATIONS

Problem	Timing of application	Target	Application rate	Nozzle
Winter browsing	Autumn /early winter	Lead shoot	5 - 10mls/lead shoot	Fine cone
Spring/summer browsing	Spring / early summer	Lead shoot	5 - 10mls/lead shoot	Fine cone
Fraying	Mid / late summer	Whole tree	5 - 10mls/lead shoot	Flat fan
Debarking	Late autumn to early spring	1-1.5m above ground or snow	100mls/trunk	Fine cone

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Cut stump control with Ecoplugs

The Ecoplug Max, introduced in 2012, is a peg containing glyphosate granules which is hammered into recently cut broadleaved stumps to control coppicing.

Recently, a number of factors have led glyphosate manufacturers Monsanto to develop a revised version (MAPP 17581) which will be soon available once current stocks of the current Ecoplug (MAPP 14741) have been depleted. The old product may continue to be used until December 2018, with the new product distinguished by a darker orange colour.

Following successful Forest Research trials the new plug will have an offlabel approval (2017/0195) which will permit use for chemical Sitka thinning, and control of invasive scrub such as rhododendron. The new Ecoplug can also be used in aquatic areas - requiring Environment Agency / SEPA approval.

Operators with no certification will be required to obtain the NPTC certificate PA6PP plus PA1. 'Grandfathers' with qualifications 051 & 052 may also use Ecoplugs without further certification.



Glyphosate - the EC vote

It is expected that the European re-registration issue will be voted on by the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed, (SCoPAFF) on 05 / 06 October, as the current temporary arrangement must be replaced by a new approval by the end of December if use of glyphosate is to continue after the current approvals cease in December 2018. This approval has been put in doubt following the French decision to vote against re-approval.

GET INVOLVED



Glyphosate is a key tool in aiding forest establishment, so if any member wishes to write to their constituency MEP's in support of the approval, then this can easily be done using the website www.writetothem.com as follows:

1. Enter your postcode & hit Go
2. Scroll down to Your MEP's and hit the item Write to all your MEP's
3. Note the instructions, write your message, add your personal details and hit Preview & Submit
Your message should explain why glyphosate is important to your business, and a selection of supporting points can be found on the website www.ruralservices.info
4. Done

Spray operator certification

There is a considerable amount of confusion over the validity of older spraying certificates for current spraying operations. This issue will be fully explored and explained in Pesticide Notes in the next issue of FTN.

Have your say on FSC proposal



GET INVOLVED

Confor members involved in forest management, are encouraged to participate in a consultation on an important change in FSC procedures for the regulation of pesticides.

The FSC Pesticides Policy Working Group are running webinars on the 26th and 28th September to support and encourage stakeholder participation in the consultation of the first draft of the FSC Pesticides Policy, open until the 29th October 2017

Further details are available on the FSC UK website www.fsc-uk.org/en-uk/newsroom/events/id/470

Confor will be making a full response to the consultation, for further information contact Andrew Heald Confor's Technical Director.



WELCOME TO NEW CONFOR MEMBERS

- Andrew Goto, Cheshire
- Blackford Farms Ltd, Stirlingshire
- Boconnoc Estate, Cornwall
- Colin Mann, Clackmannanshire
- David J Price, Caerphilly
- George Dennison, Derbyshire
- Hugh Bence, County Durham
- John Plumb, Abergavenny
- Michael R Wales, Hampshire
- Ron Smith, Fife Simon Osborne, Hampshire
- TEIFI Timber, Dyfed
- The Crown Estate Scotland, Midlothian



MEMBER SERVICES Pesticides helpline

If you haven't used the service to date, be assured it is a free service operated by Confor's crop protection adviser Colin Palmer on behalf of Confor members. Colin can be contacted 8am to 8pm Mondays to Fridays on 01531 633500 (leave a message if necessary) or by email to: forestry@branchline.demon.co.uk



THE SHARP END
NORMAN HALL-GARDNER

A sense of invasion

I was doing a survey in a Galloway forest, and took a moment to scan the surrounding landscape. Parked halfway up a hill, and looking west, I had an open vista of roughly 120 degrees, and in that third of the horizon, I counted 145 wind turbines, the clear majority on clear-felled forest land.

I had always been suspicious of wind power and the claims made to justify the huge investment, until I read that, for four days over the winter, Scotland produced more electricity from wind than it needed. Sadly, much of this power leaked south of the border, but I was forced to renounce my scepticism. At the same time, my hostility to the visual impact of the turbines mellowed slightly; perhaps after all it was a price worth paying, and maybe I would eventually stop noticing them.

The first visit to a forest where there are windfarm operations comes as quite a shock. What was a forest road has become a highway, with signs, speed limits, marked passing places, and traffic. Hazard lights or flashing beacons are obligatory. At some point, there may be a red and white barrier across the road, and a security guard, complete with a clipboard, in a little wooden hut. Somewhere in the middle of the forest will be a complex of portacabins, contractors' parking and storage yards.

I must admit to a sense of invasion, that forestry and its people have been nudged aside, that what I'd hoped, at worst, would be a forest with turbines here and there had become a windfarm with some trees in it. Whereas previously I could enter the forest with the right key or combination, I now must attend in induction course. There is an irony too – that the widely despised Sitka spruce has been replaced by the equally despised wind turbine.

The concept and practise of multi-purpose forestry has done much to enhance the public's



perception of the industry. It was disappointing, therefore, to visit a small forest that had been partially clearfelled, very prematurely, and populated by turbines. I was informed that there were no plans to restock, and that the land would be allowed to naturally revert to peatbog, a forlorn hope. When, in due course, the whole forest had been replaced by turbines and the wind farm operational, access would only be by appointment and accompanied by a power company representative.

I am prepared to accept that wind farms and forests can live together, and that some forest land needs to be sacrificed. But not whole forests.



The irony is that the widely despised Sitka spruce has been replaced by the equally despised wind turbine.



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WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

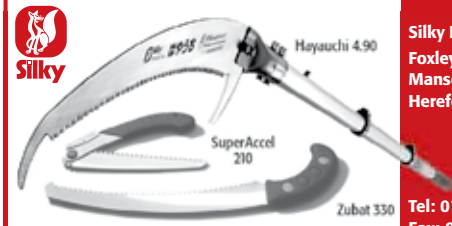


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This is an ideal position for a qualified forester to build on their 3+ years' field experience, sound technical forestry knowledge and to continue developing their good understanding of current relevant legislation. The experience already gained in writing woodland management plans would be an essential requirement and some working knowledge of current CSS schemes would be advantageous. The role will also enable the successful applicant to use their good communication and computer skills to assist with the planning of woodland operations, tendering for contracts and subsequent execution of allotted contracts.

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This position is full time, Monday-Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm. A full driver's licence is essential.

Applications should be sent to Rachel at: Rachel@nicholsonsgb.com

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The post also requires a full driving license and chainsaw certificate valid in the UK.

For a full job description and application details, please contact scott@managed-estates.co.uk, quoting 'Cambusmore Estate – Head of Forestry & Estate Maintenance' in the subject line.

Closing date for applications: 27th October

Provisional interview date (tbc): 15th November

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SMALL WOODLAND OWNER
PROFESSOR JULIAN EVANS OBE FICFor

Autumnal activity

Autumn heralds the start of work in a wood. I always feel that visits in summer, apart from controlling the wretched grey squirrels, are for enjoyment and sharing or for a bit of wildlife spotting. Come the autumn, thoughts turn to what work needs doing. But before getting down to the work itself there are the necessary preliminaries: is a felling licence needed, have plants been ordered from a nursery, is equipment up to scratch, what about protective gear, even perhaps is some improvement in access needed? These are just a few questions which even an owner of a small woodland will need to reflect on.

In many ways I like the autumn. Though hours of daylight are rapidly shortening, the cooler temperatures make for longer hours of congenial working. The essential safety equipment and clothing make for sweaty working in summer when temperatures exceed 20°C. In particular condensation inside goggles or even on glasses behind a visor obscure vision as well as stinging the eyes. But this introduces a more general point. Owners or managers of small woodlands often only have spurts of work, they are not at it day in and day out. This brings its own risks and hazards.

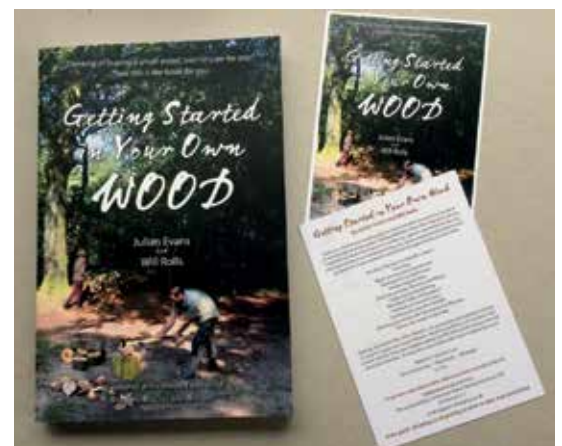
Starting strenuous physical work after a long break can be particularly tiring as muscles are out of trim. We all experience the aches on waking the next morning! The situation may be more concerning if there has been illness or an accident since last wielding a saw or other tool. The inactivity from prolonged illness weakens muscles – they atrophy. Let me share a personal example. Some years ago one of my three rotator cuff ligaments in my left shoulder was severed by a sharp fall – we were descending that splendid Welsh mountain, the Abergavenny Sugar Loaf! Lifting is now impaired even though other muscles have compensated wonderfully. The shoulder aches more and doing high pruning, hedge trimming and lifting logs is curtailed more than it used to be. Fortunately being right-handed it hasn't affected chainsawing.

Another obvious point is to work up to full strength over a few days. It's all part of getting and keeping fit to work safely and productively. This inventory of getting ready for work is hardly comprehensive, but raises the importance of just that: being ready for physical activity after a break. Alongside sensible precautions like a first aid kit and always having a mobile phone to hand, these considerations will reduce the accidents our industry is so prone to. Will Rolls and I go into a bit more detail in our book, *Getting Started in Your Own Wood* (Permanent Publications, 2015).



Work up to full strength over a few days... it's all part of getting and keeping fit to work safely and productively

Let me finish on something quite different. This year should be good for woodland fungi, at least for those of us in the South after the unusually wet August. But how many of us know that even in Britain a few woods have that great delicacy the truffle? They are usually the summer truffle, *Tuber aestivum*, and while rare are sometimes found in beech woodlands. They get a mention in that splendid little book by Richard Mabey in the Collins Gem series, 'Food for Free'. The woody tuber is just below the surface, is dark brown or black, and is commonly about the size of a golf ball. There is even an English Truffle Company who organise events such as truffle hunts and from an item on Farming Today (4 September), a lady in Somerset trains dogs to search for them. So maybe there's something else to think about this autumn.



RESOURCES

Getting Started in Your Own Wood by Julian Evans and Will Rolls is available from selected bookshops and online from Amazon.

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MORE FROM WOOD.

E EGGER



Commercial forestry in Northern Ireland has seen a resurgence in new planting over the last couple of years. The current Forestry Expansion Scheme grant has created a level playing field between broadleaves and conifers, consequently planting has moved back up the hill. Over the last 15 years of the Woodland Grant Scheme there had been almost no commercial planting. Landowners are still reluctant to plant, even with generous grant aid available, a cultural resistance to forestry that will be slow to overcome. Hopefully changes to rural support payments to farmers post-Brexit will assist forestry. The photograph is of a recent project in Glenshesk in Co. Antrim.

Photo: Tony Johnston MICFor, NI Farm Forestry

Want to see your picture here?

Forestry in Pictures is a new regular feature in FTN. For every issue, we will select the most impacting photograph sent by a reader. If you have a photo you would like to see published here, please send your file to Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org before 11 September 2017. Please include your name, brief description of yourself and the picture and a credit.

Photos should relate to forestry and timber and be of high-quality (minimum resolution 300dpi).

Exceptional pictures might be considered for the front cover of a future FTN issue.

By submitting a picture to Forestry in Pictures you give Confor permission to use the file for non-commercial purposes in Forestry and Timber News or the Confor website. Photos will always be credited.



COMING IN DECEMBER – GET INVOLVED

In FTN DECEMBER we will focus on

- New technologies in Forestry and
- Timber Treatment and Quality.

If you would like to suggest an article for these features, please contact the editor before October 25th. And, of course, we will continue to keep you up to date on important current topics, such as Brexit and planting in the UK.

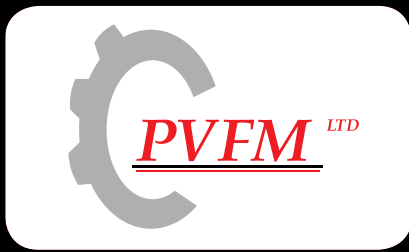
We encourage members to inform us on what is going on in their businesses or raise interesting points to be discussed in future editions of Forestry and Timber News.

Don't forget that your opinion counts. If you would like to comment on any of the articles published in this issue, please don't hesitate to send a letter to the editor. Across the magazine, there are also specific opportunities for readers to participate.



And don't forget there is additional information on topics throughout this issue – FTN web resources are directly accessible from the Confor homepage. Watch out for the mouse icon in this magazine!

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