

# FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

August 2022 Issue 112

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PLANTING TARGETS  
MACHINERY  
CHANGING ATTITUDES



APF 2022  
PREVIEW



 **Confor**  
Promoting forestry and wood

# TIMBER - FUTURE HOMES DO JUST GROW ON TREES

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**James Jones**  
& SONS LIMITED

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# Tustins

## WOODLAND FOR SALE



**CLIFTON HEATH WOODLAND**  
Clifton Hampden, near Abingdon, Oxon  
91.21 Acres / 36.91 Ha  
An interesting opportunity to acquire a high-quality, managed forest in a rural location with easy reach of the city of Oxford.  
Sporting included.  
Guide price: **£990,000**



**WOODBURY HILL WOOD**  
Blakemere, Herefordshire  
139.80 Acres / 56.57 Ha  
A superbly located multifaceted woodland with both commercial and amenity attributes.  
Sporting rights included.  
Offers over: **£1,100,000**



**WEDDICAR WOOD**  
Hensingham, Whitehaven, Cumbria  
416.25 Acres / 168.45 Ha  
This delightful wooded parkland landscape includes a 20-year commercial woodland, areas of young broadleaves, a river and lakes.  
Guide price: **£1,250,000**



**THE KINGTHORPE WOODLANDS**  
Kingthorpe, Pickering, North Yorkshire  
In all - 243.5 Acres / 98.5 Ha  
A collection of four woodlands with a wide range of species and ages ranging from mature and maturing commercial crops and mixed broadleaves.  
Guide prices: **£25,000 - £975,000**



**PERTHYBU WOOD**  
Sarn, Montgomery, Powys  
73.18 Acres / 29.61 Ha  
A compact, commercial forest of newly-planted spruce and Douglas fir as well as extensive stands of mid rotation spruce and pine. Sporting included over part.  
Offers over: **£375,000**



**HIGH MEADOW & CRAIGHILL**  
Skenfrith, near Monmouth, South Wales  
179 Acres / 72.4 Ha  
A highly productive woodland with a significant amount of harvestable Douglas fir along with mixed, regenerating broadleaves.  
Guide price: **£1,200,000**



**ALLT HENGERAINT**  
Ciliau Aeron, Aberaeron, Ceredigion  
45.79 Acres / 18.53 Ha  
A restored ancient woodland on a valley side only two miles from the sea. This tranquil leasehold woodland offers amenity benefits and timber harvesting.  
Guide price: **£160,000**



**ALLT PISTYLL DEWI**  
Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire  
81.85 Acres / 33.12 Ha  
Multi-purpose hillside woodland with commercial/amenity appeal. Some good quality Douglas fir. Good internal access.  
Sporting included.  
Offers over: **£385,000**



**CEFN BRAN WOOD**  
Cefn Bran, Llanfyllin, Powys  
25.89 Acres / 10.48 Ha  
A modest but nonetheless impressive economically-viable woodland. Second rotation mixed conifer dominated by Sitka spruce. Sporting included.  
Offers over: **£180,000**



**GREAT WOOD**  
Grittenham, near Brinkworth, Wiltshire  
177.45 Acres / 71.81 Ha  
Commercial conifers including Douglas fir and Norway spruce together with native broadleaves including good quality oak.  
Sporting included.  
Offers over: **£1,950,000**



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# Laying new ground



**STUART GOODALL**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
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Well, after a turbulent time, we will have a new Prime Minister on 6 September. No one quite knows how many members the Conservative Party has, but estimates range from 160,000-180,000; by my calculations, that is a third of 1% of the total UK electorate.

Of course, we don't operate a presidential system of democracy. Voters elect MPs from a party and not an individual, and this process is not new – think Gordon Brown and Boris Johnson himself.

That said, as Johnson increasingly refused to abide by the unwritten conventions of our political system, it did shine a bright light on how politics is evolving and strengthened the debate on the potential need for greater constitutional clarity.

Without a crystal ball I don't know whether 'busy Lizzie' or 'dishy Rishi' will emerge victorious and, while they may have different plans for economic growth, I doubt they have detailed (never mind differing) plans for forestry.

However, whoever wins is at least likely to appoint a new Defra Secretary of State and a new Forestry Minister.

Reflecting on the change towards a more presidential style of politics, which focuses on the individual rather than the party, I can't help but also reflect on Zac (Lord) Goldsmith's tenure as Forestry Minister – which could of course continue.

On a personal level I have found Zac to be

generous with his time, interested in debate and unfailingly polite. I have never experienced a minister who was so accessible and so easy to discuss things with. Zac is also driven by an apparent desire to make a difference in his time in office, which is no bad thing.

Where it has been difficult is that Zac is clearly focused primarily, and perhaps only, on nature or biodiversity. That is where he wants to leave a legacy. It has also been onerous that he has certain trusted voices he listens to and who clearly have an attitude towards productive forestry that is stuck in the 20th century.

These challenges are not unique in a politician, but they become that much harder when a minister so clearly pursues a personal rather than a party agenda.

The Conservatives were elected with a manifesto commitment to plant 30,000 hectares a year and while Zac has spoken increasingly about biodiversity, he has spoken less about the target. He has also ignored the economic benefit that productive planting can have for the Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda.

The 'new' administration will have just over two years to persuade the nation that it should be reappointed and that will require a focus on delivery and the development of a plan for the future. We will be working hard to make forestry and tree planting part of each of those and holding ministers to account.

Confor is a membership organisation that promotes sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. Confor members receive *Forestry and Timber News* for free as part of their membership. For more information on membership, visit [www.confor.org.uk/join-us](http://www.confor.org.uk/join-us). Past issues and articles can be accessed online at [www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine](http://www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine)

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# THE CLIMATE FOR TREE PLANTING

Confor Chief Executive **Stuart Goodall** reflects on the recently released planting figures for the UK and what they mean for the future priorities of the sector.

When interim tree planting figures for 2021/22 were published in June, Confor accused the UK Government of “a total economic and environmental policy failure”, a comment that was reported in the BBC and The Independent.

The following day, I accompanied UK Forestry Minister Zac Goldsmith on a tour of the Stourhead Estate where Andy Poore admirably demonstrated that conifers, wood production and biodiversity can go hand in hand.

That coincidence of events was timely. The minister’s insistence on limiting productive planting in England and his support for narrowly defined biodiversity outcomes is a key reason for the failure to increase planting in England.

The visit, coming the day after the publication of such disappointing figures, also provided a stark reminder of the challenge of setting a UK target in a devolved policy area, especially when the English minister’s leadership is at odds with counterparts in the rest of the UK.

So, with that in mind, and looking across the UK, what do the planting figures tell us? And does progress on planting matter given that there are so many other pressures and opportunities in the forestry and timber sector?

## The figures and what they tell us

The headline message from the figures is that, after being elected with a pledge to plant 30,000 hectares of new woodland



every year by 2024, the UK Government is not even halfway to hitting the target it set. Indeed, planting levels have flatlined across the UK as a whole.

The latest figures were presented by Defra alongside an upbeat message about being on track to meet the target – something which Confor contradicted with a public statement that there was “zero chance” of fulfilling the pledge by December 2024.

Scotland planted three-quarters of the 13,840 total with 10,480 hectares, while England planted 2260, Wales 580 and Northern Ireland 540.

In England, 270 hectares of conifer/productive planting took place – a pitiful 12% of the total and almost certainly less than the area of productive forest removed for PAWS and ‘open habitats’ restoration last year.

Wales doubled the area it planted from the previous year, though it is starting from a very low base, and at 31% productive we would want to see the species proportions become balanced.

Northern Ireland also doubled the area planted from the previous year and is now over halfway to achieving its indicative annual target of 900 hectares a year. However, it also has some way to go to achieving a balanced species mix with only 17% productive.

Scotland had hoped to get closer to its updated target of 13,500 hectares, which will rise again next year, so this total of 10,480 means there is definitely work to



Country	Target/Aspiration (ha)	Planting 2021/22	Percentage Achieved
England	7,500 (by Dec 2024)	2,260	30%
Scotland	13,500 (in 2021/22)	10,480	78%
Wales	4,000 (annually)	580	15%
N.Ireland	900 (annually)	540	60%
<b>UK</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>13,840</b>	<b>46%</b>

do. That said, at least it is achieving its previously stated aim of a 60/40 split of productive and native woodland.

When comparing performance across the UK, it is unhelpful that the four administrations express their tree planting ambitions differently – some have targets, others have ‘aspirations’. However, if in summarising we focus on the numbers we can see the progress by country (see table above).

### Tree planting matters

So, those are the figures, but I also posed the question of whether this whole tree planting issue even matters, given the

many other challenges the sector faces and the relatively small scale of planting compared to the existing resource.

The primary policy driver for these ambitious planting targets is to lock up carbon and contribute to achieving net zero. From these figures, we can see that all governments are failing to deliver on the sequestration element of their net zero plans at a time when the re-opening of the economy (and a subsequent return to travel etc) will most likely expose an underlying lack of progress on emissions reductions. This failure, if it is not addressed, will affect us all.

Apart from Scotland, there is also a fail-  
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# PLANTING TARGETS



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ure to deliver on productive planting. At the time of writing, we still await the much-delayed softwood production forecast, but it is expected to tell us that there will still be a future dip in supply, probably from the 2040s.

This is a little later than the previous forecast had indicated, but it will still come at a time when demand for wood is set to soar, both globally and in the UK.

According to the OECD, global demand for wood is estimated to double by 2060. In the UK, if wood consumption continues to increase at the rate it has over the last 10 years, then we estimate an increase in demand of 78% by 2050.

Quite simply, a failure to plant now will see the sector contract at a time when it needs to be expanding.

The lack of productive planting is also at odds with the UK Government's desire to 'build back better' after the pandemic, and with delivering its 'Levelling Up' agenda. The economic benefits of this planting would most definitely stimulate investment, support economic recovery and provide greater supplies of wood for low-carbon construction.

And, unlike the case with virtually every other industry, the resultant growth won't exacerbate emissions as increased activity in our sector means more jobs, more growth and less carbon in the atmosphere.

Tree planting, and more of it, does matter.



## Not all countries are equal

The reasons for the failure to deliver the UK and devolved targets differ across the countries, though there is a common theme around nervousness in tackling opposition to planting, especially when conifers are included. A stronger appreciation of the economic and biodiversity benefits

Country	Conifers Planted (ha)	Broadleaves Planted (ha)	Percentage by Private Sector
England	270	1,980	100%
Scotland	6,340	4,140	94%
Wales	180	400	95%
N. Ireland	90	440	96%
<b>UK</b>	<b>6,880</b>	<b>6,960</b>	<b>95%</b>

**“QUITE SIMPLY, A FAILURE TO PLANT NOW WILL SEE THE SECTOR CONTRACT AT A TIME WHEN IT NEEDS TO BE EXPANDING.”**

of productive planting would undoubtedly encourage politicians to be bolder when assessing stakeholder views.

In Scotland, ambition is running ahead of delivery, and tree planting needs to take a major step forward to bring those things back in alignment.

However, at least the political and financial commitment is there. And if, five years ago, I had suggested to Scottish Members there would be four years of over 10,000 hectare planting I suspect it would have been (very) warmly welcomed.

In Wales, we are beginning to see political support for planting hold up reasonably well in the face of opposition, and this support is widening out into interest in working on the development of the industry more broadly. That said, it's clear from the negative reaction from the farming community to ambitious planting targets that there will be a lot of work required to build momentum behind

more trees in the ground.

In Northern Ireland it's good to see the area increase, but the absence of a functioning administration makes it difficult to apply political pressure for further action, particularly on productive planting.

In England, we face a fundamental problem that the minister is simply not supportive of the forestry industry, unless it's hardwood. He has gone on record to say that net zero shouldn't be a priority for government as 'the market' is on course to deliver it. This is quite an extraordinary statement and at odds with the data, but it does fit with the minister's apparent driving motivation which is to focus solely on 'nature'.

This unwillingness to look at and accept basic evidence means that Lord Goldsmith can believe, and say publicly, that England could switch from a predominantly softwood-based industry to an equal sized one

based on hardwoods – without any significant negative impacts.

While I doubt planting targets in England would be more firmly on track if Zac Goldsmith wasn't the minister, I firmly believe more woodland would have been created and we'd be further down the road to delivering more.

In Scotland, political leadership has shown how progress on planting can be made, in England political disinterest (even opposition?) is showing it can deliver the opposite effect.

## Summing up

Accelerating progress towards delivering the planting targets will be good for the forestry and timber sector – it will stimulate greater activity, promote greater investment in wood processing and products, and bring greater political interest in and practical support for the industry.

Crucially, it will also be good for society and the planet.

There is still a big job to do to ensure that productive forestry is given its appropriate place in new planting and to help governments to identify and overcome the obstacles to significantly increased planting; vital work against a backdrop of the Climate Change Committee talking of 40,000 hectares a year by 2030 and 50,000 by 2035.

It's fair to say there is widespread scepticism in the sector about whether any of this is ultimately achievable, but in giving it our best shot we will do a lot of good.





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# THE HEAT IS ON IN WESTMINSTER

**Maria Bellissimo** provides an update on Confor's recent activity in the political sphere.

They say a week is a long time in politics. For Boris Johnson, a month was all it took to go from being confirmed in power for at least another year to losing it all: on 6 June he was relieved to survive a no confidence vote from his own MPs, by 7 July he was forced to step down when minister after minister resigned from Government and called for him to go.

On 6 September he will leave Downing Street and his successor will take over the running of the country. Mr Johnson's record on climate change, nature, and afforestation reflects the rest of his work in Government: great enthusiasm and many promises, regularly followed by lack of focus and effort to deliver them.

Tree planting in England is lagging painfully behind the target of at least 7,500 hectares by 2024, with no real improvement even after the publication of the England Trees Action Plan in 2021. This poor result has been exacerbated by a Forestry Minister who has repeatedly shown little inclination to collaborate with the sector to hit the targets.

Now we are on the verge of a new chapter. On 5 September the new PM will be announced, chosen by the members of the Conservative Party from between Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss, both of whom served under Boris Johnson as his Chancellor and Foreign Secretary respectively.

While serving in the Johnson Government, Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss supported the Net Zero agenda. Mr Sunak established the £640 million Nature for Climate Fund and, just weeks before the pandemic started in 2020, he promised funds to plant "a forest the size of Birmingham across England".

Liz Truss is familiar with the forestry sector, having served as Secretary of State at DEFRA between 2014 and 2016.

However, recently they have both expressed reservations about the 'green' agenda when other, more radical candidates suggested that it is a choice between tackling climate change or growing the economy. This newly found climate change scepticism looked misplaced as it coincided with some of the hottest days ever recorded in the UK, which created chaos and disruption on roads, railways, airports,

schools, and workplaces.

In the forestry and wood using sector, we know very well that green policies like tree planting and increasing the use of wood across all sectors can deliver great opportunities for growth and jobs when they are well-designed through close collaboration between government and the industry.

Confor is planning an initiative to get this message out there during the final weeks of the leadership contest; most importantly, we are preparing informative material for the new ministers and secretaries of state in the new Government about the many economic and environmental benefits of the sector.

## **From Wiltshire to Galloway, afforestation is the hot topic**

Even as all these dramatic events were unfolding in Westminster, the Confor team continued to focus on constructive engagement with politicians across the UK.

In June, we worked with the Stourhead Estate to host a visit to productive forest sites for Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith, the Forestry Commission's Richard Stanford and Stephanie Rhodes, and Defra's Tree Programme team.

Only the day before, Forest Research had published the tree planting figures

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### **GET IN TOUCH**

If you have examples of investment, innovation, skills and training schemes that you are running or considering running in your business, get in touch with Maria Bellissimo (maria@confor.org.uk) for the opportunity to be highlighted in our initial contact with new ministers.

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*continued from p10*

which showed once again very disappointing results for England. The visit was the perfect opportunity to raise with the minister and policy officials the negative impact of the complex, cumbersome application process on planting schemes.

Stourhead Estate's manager Andy Poore illustrated in detail the great biodiversity value of productive woodland, helped by some truly magnificent Douglas firs and ecologist Phil Sterling, who is collecting invaluable data about the many different species thriving in these sites. The visit continued on to the Rushmore and Cranborne estates, where Defra officials were shown more examples of different planting and management solutions.

At all three sites, Andy mentioned the difficulties in getting schemes off the ground and how the current process is discouraging, rather than increasing, tree planting. We have no doubt that this visit was a real eye-opener that challenged many of the assumptions of our guests and we would like to thank Andy Poore for a great visit.

Also in June, the Confor team had the pleasure to work with Scottish Woodlands and James Jones Ltd on a visit to a recent planting site for Finlay Carson, MSP for Galloway and West Dumfries.

When Confor had met with Finlay earlier in the year, he expressed concerns - raised with him by local groups - about getting the balance right between afforestation and community benefits. This seemed the

## GET IN TOUCH

We are calling on all our Scotland-based members to share their views on the recently launched Land Reform proposals from the Scottish Government, and on the discussion around principles for sustainable investment into natural capital. Send your comments and suggestions to [maria@confor.org.uk](mailto:maria@confor.org.uk) to be included in the Confor response. The consultation deadline is 25 September.

perfect time and opportunity to showcase a site that delivers carbon sequestration but, perhaps more importantly, new jobs, secure timber supply for the many local processors, and the opportunity for locals and tourists to access and enjoy more of the local area.

The point we all kept coming back to was the importance of early engagement with communities around their concerns and needs. We would like to thank David Robertson, David Leslie, and Finlay Carson for ignoring rain and wind up on the Glenskens to engage in a very positive discussion about the jobs and many opportunities for the local community that woodland creation offers.

July brought the Royal Welsh Show

and the conversation also largely revolved around afforestation and the impact on communities. The Confor team organised some events to reset the discussion around this topic after a few months of very challenging headlines in the media.

The picture that emerged from Confor events and engagement with visitors to the stand and politicians alike, is more complex than what is represented in the media. Many farmers are interested in learning about planting trees as a means to diversify but often do not know where to access unbiased information and find experts that can help them understand the process.

Even on the forestry side of the debate, it's clear that more and better engagement can go a long way in dispelling misconceptions and prejudice.

Away from the Confor tent, tree planting figured prominently at events hosted by the NFU, CLA and Farmers Union Wales, due to the Welsh Government publishing their proposals for the new Sustainable Farming Scheme only days before the show started.

Wales National Manager Anthony Geddes has a more detailed account of the Royal Welsh Show in this issue (see p29). The Confor team will continue working to change the terms of the conversation about afforestation in Wales and updates will follow soon.



## HELLO CONFOR MEMBERS!

Firstly, I would like to welcome all our newest Confor members: Ms Erskine, Mr Flowitt, Mr Smith, Sir Dalton, Mr Guest, Mr Hemphill, Mr Beechey, Mr Ellis, Mr van Holten, Mr Leach and Ms Mostyn-Owen.

I can't believe it's been almost a year since I started at Confor! It's been a pleasure getting to know you all, especially at the Confor Dinner and the Royal Welsh Show, and I am really looking forward to meeting more of you at the APF!

If you are planning on attending the exhibition in September, please make sure to come over and say hello, I would

love to meet as many of you as I can. You should have received your Membership card by now which enables you free access to the APF show.

Further details are in this issue's APF preview (p32).

I am also excited to share that our Membership directory is nearly ready for launch. This is something that the Membership team have been working hard to deliver in 2022. I will be in touch with you shortly to share more information and how you can get involved.

On another note, we have renewals coming up in October 2022. Invoices will

be sent out in early September, so please keep an eye out. If you would like to set up a direct debit, it's not too late - get in touch and I will provide a brief form to fill out.

This saves you time in the future and reduces our administration costs, so it's an all-round win!



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# CONFOR WELCOMES NEW INQUIRY INTO TIMBER INDUSTRY AND GLOBAL FORESTS

A new parliamentary inquiry will examine the vital link between a sustainable and thriving UK forestry and wood industry, and tackling future global deforestation.

Confor is delighted that the inquiry by the Environmental Audit Committee is taking place, as it will address many crucial questions highlighted by Confor repeatedly in recent years.

Stuart Goodall, CEO of Confor, said: “We have constantly stressed the need to develop a sustainable productive forestry and timber industry in the UK, to grow more of the wood we consume, rather than relying on ever-increasing imports against a backdrop of surging global demand for wood.

“Last November the UK Government was a signatory to the Glasgow Declaration on Forests at COP26, pledging to conserve and protect the world’s fragile forests – halting and reversing forest loss. As this inquiry announcement highlights, global timber demand is set to quadruple by 2050 and the UK is the second largest importer of timber in the world after China. With few countries producing more supplies of wood, I just cannot understand why the UK Government is not doing more to increase the amount of domestic timber being produced.

“Confor looks forward to giving evidence to this inquiry to start addressing these vital issues. The inquiry should be ambitious – to grow the UK’s forestry and wood industry sustainably, while tackling climate change and reducing pressure on fragile global forests.”

The inquiry’s remit states: “With global timber demand set to quadruple by 2050, and given the commitment to promote timber use in construction as part of the UK’s Net Zero Strategy, domestic demand

is also likely to increase. However, the UK is the second highest importer of wood in the world, importing 82% of all its timber in 2020.

“It is estimated that around one fifth of the UK’s imported timber footprint is from countries considered to have high social and/or environmental risks associated with their forestry practices. There are also questions around the ability of domestic supplies to meet future demand.”

The committee says it “will explore how best to scale up a sustainable and resilient domestic timber sector to reduce reliance on imports, whilst also achieving its wider nature recovery and biodiversity goals through woodland creation”.

Environmental Audit Committee Chairman, Philip Dunne MP, said: “Forests around



**“FORESTS AROUND THE WORLD ARE THE LUNGS OF THE PLANET, LOCKING IN DAMAGING CARBON AND BREATHING OUT OXYGEN.” PHILIP DUNNE MP**

the world are the lungs of the planet, locking in damaging carbon and breathing out oxygen. Global deforestation is threatening this: it destroys precious biodiversity and is one of the greatest threats to warding off runaway climate change. Yet here in the UK we continue to import over 80% of timber, some of which is from nations that have damaging track records of deforestation.

“We must make sure the domestic timber industry is fit for the future and can support our net zero ambitions, while better understanding the impact any imports have on the wider world.”

The inquiry will also examine key questions, including:

- Does the UK Government have an adequate understanding of the future demand for timber, including what tree species should be grown?
- Does the UK government, working with the devolved administrations, have an effective, joined-up plan with appropriate incentives to increase the production and use of sustainable, domestically grown timber in the UK to reduce its reliance on imports?
- How well is the UK Government managing its plans for the domestic timber industry in tandem with meeting its woodland creation targets and related climate change, biodiversity and other environmental goals?

Stuart concluded: “These are exactly the questions Confor has been asking, and supporting efforts to answer, for years – to develop a forestry and wood industry that delivers multiple benefits for our environment, economy and society.

“Parliament has the opportunity now to undertake a robust assessment of the issue and send a strong and clear message to Government that is finally time for action.”

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- UC014G:** Chain Oil Capacity 260ml, Chain Gauge 0.043", Chain Pitch 0.325", Chain Speed 0-25.5m/sec, Bar Size 30cm, Maximum Output 1,600w, Weight 6.1-7.4kg. Captive nut change and adjustment of saw chain, IPX4 rated.
- UC011G:** Chain Oil Capacity 260ml, Chain Gauge 0.043", Chain Pitch 0.325", Chain Speed 0-25.5m/sec, Bar Size 35cm, Maximum Output 1,600w, Weight 6.1-7.4kg. Captive nut change and adjustment of saw chain, IPX4 rated.
- UC006G:** Chain Oil Capacity 200ml, Chain Gauge 0.050", Chain Pitch 1/4", Chain Speed 0-24.8 m/sec, Bar Size 25cm carving bar, Maximum Output 1,400w, Weight 3.8-4.7kg. Captive nut change and adjustment of saw chain, IPX4 rated.
- UC003G:** Chain Oil Capacity 200ml, Chain Gauge 0.050", Chain Pitch 1/4", Chain Speed 0-24.8 m/sec, Bar Size 30cm, Maximum Output 1,400w, Weight 3.8-4.7kg. Captive nut change and adjustment of saw chain, IPX4 rated.
- UC002G:** Chain Oil Capacity 200ml, Chain Gauge 0.050", Chain Pitch 1/4", Chain Speed 0-24.8 m/sec, Bar Size 25cm, Maximum Output 1,400w, Weight 3.8-4.7kg. Captive nut change and adjustment of saw chain, IPX4 rated.

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# How safe is your site?

## The impact of rural crime on forestry

**April Armstrong** looks at the new strategy from the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC) and investigates the incidents rife in Scotland's forestry sector.

For the past 12 months, rural crime in forestry has been on the rise. With price increases and supply limitations, thefts of consumables and products across the supply chain have increased. In addition, there is a growing concern that crime is substantially underreported, leading to a false representation of the issues we are facing.

Damage to property and equipment, and the subsequent costs and consequences cause unnecessary stress and upheaval. Here we explore what crimes are being committed in relation to forest machinery, what you can do to report and help prevent rural crime in your area, and what is currently being done to tackle rural crime at a national level within Scotland.

### SPARC of inspiration

Within Scotland, rural crime falls under the remit of the Scottish Partnership Against

Rural Crime (SPARC). SPARC is a multi-agency partnership bringing together key stakeholder organisations to work collectively to prevent and reduce rural crime in Scotland. The partnership was formed in April 2019 and its initial three-year strategy provided a clear vision for tackling rural crime.

SPARC has gained momentum and is now perceived as a partnership that delivers positive change, listens to issues identified by those individuals living, working and enjoying Scotland's rural communities and environments, then seeks to solve them by tackling the source and not merely the symptoms.

SPARC now consists of 22 partner organisations who aim to work together to provide a strategic focus in tackling crime across the rural sector.

The newly revised strategy for 2022 to 2025 was launched on 24 June at the Royal Highland Show. It consists of seven priority areas - agricultural and forestry

### LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST RURAL CRIME (PARCS)

One of SPARC's current ambitions is to strengthen and establish PARCs within all Local Authority and/or policing divisions across Scotland. These provide a platform to address and resolve any issues that occur locally whilst also working in unison with other PARCs under the national rural crime strategy.

There may already be local PARCs operating in your area, both within and beyond Scotland. If you are struggling to identify your regional group, please get in touch with your National Manager to identify suitable networks.





machinery, plant & quad bike/ATV theft; livestock offences; fuel & timber theft; equestrian crime; hare coursing; heritage crime; and fly tipping.

Each priority area has an associated Action Plan headed by a SPARC lead partner who responsible for overseeing delivery. The action plans provide a consistency of approach at individual, local and national level. Confor will be representing the private sector within forestry and working alongside SPARC priority area leads to aid in the delivery of the action plan to the benefit of the industry.

### Reporting Rural Crime

SPARC representatives stress the need for all those living, working or visiting rural communities and environments to report any criminal activity. When incidents are reported, an incident number is assigned and patterns in crime can be monitored.

Only by gaining an understanding of what is going on will SPARC be able to drive a cohesive response designed to tackle sources rather than symptoms.

### Rural Watch Scotland

Rural Watch Scotland (RWS), a product of SPARC, is an initiative that sits within Neighbourhood Watch Scotland (NWS) and has been designed as a specific gateway for rural communities to share information and support each other. Individuals can sign up for free to join a watch, set up a watch, or to receive timely, targeted and trusted alerts from key information providers.

### Next Steps

In the coming months Confor will be highlighting different aspects of rural crime and addressing the steps we can collectively take to minimise its impact.

We will be releasing a survey to Members to help us, alongside Police Scotland, identify hotspots for criminal activity and take action to benefit those impacted. Keep an eye out for future coverage.



## EXAMPLES OF CRIME AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION

### FUEL

Due in part to the significant increase in prices, there has been an 80% uptick in fuel thefts. It is suspected that many criminals may not be aware that the forest industry is continuing to use red diesel on harvesting sites and theft is occurring on the presumption that white diesel is being used.

In addition to this, the value of red diesel has increased threefold, making it more desirable. There are reports of bowsers being drained on harvesting sites, vehicles being syphoned, and fuel stores being tapped. In one instance where harvesting machines were stored on site away from public access, thieves broke into harvesting and forwarding vehicles, drove them off site, and syphoned the fuel at the roadside.

AdBlue has also been a target for theft due to shortages in supply.

#### **What you can do to minimise fuel theft:**

- Prevent excess storage by only ordering what you need.
- Avoid storing fuel on-site over weekends or periods of inactivity.
- Where fuel is stored on-site, ensure that bowsers are away from roads or access points, and disguise with brush or timber where possible.
- Be alert to criminal surveillance. Keep an eye out for drones, suspicious vehicles, and general activity within the forest.
- Report suspicions and alert your local network – your site may not be the only target.
- On high-risk sites, consider investing in security monitoring systems or employing security staff.

### **Personal safety and Serious Organised Crime Groups (SOCGs)**

Personal safety is paramount, and caution should always be practiced when addressing any aspect of crime. Recently, safety concerns for forestry workers have been on the rise.

For example, the rise in fuel theft has left machine operators vulnerable and there have been instances of individuals needing to lock themselves in their vehicles while fuel is stolen.

Theft can be spontaneous; however, it is increasingly likely that criminal activity is being carried out by SOCGs. The SPARC strategy outlines the definition of serious organised crime with the essential criteria being that it involves more than one person and is committed as a result of an arranged plan.

If you are challenged by an individual, please be aware that there may be others nearby and you could be quickly outnumbered.

#### **What you can do to minimise personal risk:**

- Always follow your employer's health and safety guidance, especially regarding lone working.
- Assess the risk level of the site before beginning operations. Some sites are higher risk, especially in peri-urban areas.
- Remain alert and always be aware of who is accessing a site.
- Do not challenge an individual as they could be armed or operating as part of a gang.
- Report any criminal activity and work with your employer, staff and land manager.

*continued on p18*





continued from p17  
agement team to deter and reduce the likelihood of crimes being committed.

**MACHINERY**

The theft of entire units is rare but not unheard of. Within the rural industries, machinery has been targeted by SOCGs with reports of multiple vehicles being stolen and loaded onto a lorry for sale overseas. The removal of these vehicles can span across multiple targeted sites in a coordinated operation.

Theft of components is more likely and the vandalism that results from their removal can often have significant costs associated. Items that are frequently stolen include:

- Onboard computers/tablets
- GPS and tracking
- Batteries
- Headlights
- Tools in vehicles overnight or stored locally for maintenance
- Personal possessions
- Chainsaws

**What you can do to minimise occurrences of machine related theft:**

- Make machines easily recognisable/traceable with identification numbers, personal logos or anything that makes them easily distinguishable. In some cases where vehicles have been recovered, personalisation has been key.
- Don't leave operational machinery close to site access points and when not in use, ensure it is parked out of view. Be conscious of criminal surveillance especially drone surveillance from above.
- Don't leave valuable items in unattended vehicles. Consider vehicles that have detachable GPS/computer units for removable/safe storage.

**“THEFT OF COMPONENTS IS MORE LIKELY AND THE VANDALISM THAT RESULTS FROM THEIR REMOVAL CAN OFTEN HAVE SIGNIFICANT COSTS ASSOCIATED.”**

**VANDALISM**

Vandalism can occur as a crime in its own right, or as a result of theft. Whilst theft of parts or smaller items associated with machinery are an inconvenience, it is often the resulting vandalism that causes the biggest problem.

For instance, one report of headlight theft resulted in multiple associated costs including replacement of four lights, replacing severed wires, removal and straightening of a harvester door, labour costs, and loss of production.

There are other occasions where thieves have successfully broken into cabs and vandalised interiors. In one case, the thieves set off a fire extinguisher inside a harvester cab which resulted in door repairs, loss of production due to extensive valeting, and operational failure down the line as the extinguisher fluid had caused wire and metal corrosion.

**What you can do to help prevent vandalism:**

- Monitor sites, including with remote monitoring systems.
- Prevent theft of parts or tools/equipment

which may result in vandalism to obtain.

- Report crime and raise awareness of criminals operating in your area.

**UNAUTHORISED FOREST ACCESS AND UNSOCIABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Our forests are sometimes the target of antisocial behaviour and unauthorised or illegal access. This can cause major issues, especially when sites are in operation as illegal access can disrupt production by causing additional safety concerns.

In areas that have been heavily targeted, a unified local response can be invaluable and may be coordinated via your local PARC.

In one area of Scotland, where forests were being illegally accessed by cross-border bike groups, local parties across the rural sector came together to fund the purchase of police quad bikes and police officer training to help combat the issue.

Their united efforts have enabled a police patrol resulting in warnings and fines being issued.

**What you can do to help prevent unauthorised forest access and unsociable behaviour:**

- Be aware of activity within the forest, particularly during peak times such as evenings and weekends.
- If you are aware of the groups accessing local forests, monitor updates on social media and alert the police ahead of time where possible.
- Form networks with other invested parties or join your local PARC to plan a coordinated response.
- Report incidents to the police, ensuring you get an incident number, and raise awareness.



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- Ash Die Back (Chalara) is now present throughout the UK.
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# PUTTING UP FENCES, BUILDING BRIDGES

Fraser Hall, Managing Director of new Confor Members M&M Timber, spoke to **Eleanor O'Neill** about ensuring the quality of their products from Forest to Field.

Operating from a 25-acre site at Clows Top, near Kidderminster, M&M Timber has grown from a family business supplying the agricultural sector of the Midlands and Wales with wooden fencing, to one of the UK's leading manufacturers of machine rounded timber products.

M&M have supplied the timber for automotive circuit spectator platforms, viewing shelters in wildlife parks, and the durable climbing, swinging and balancing structures of playgrounds.

Fraser Hall has been Managing Director of M&M Timber for over four years, having started his career at the company in 2010.

"It's a diverse and rewarding role," he said. "Developing our key customer base is hugely important to me, whilst at the same time streamlining our operation. Each day presents a different opportunity and I have the benefit of working not only with a talented team, but with the backing and security of the Forest Garden Group."

The business has certainly expanded from its beginnings as a local fencing supplier in 1984. Today, they are the country's largest producer of machine rounded timbers, offering both 15- and 30-year warranties for timber-in-ground contact.

M&M's product catalogue caters to the agricultural, rail, commercial landscaping, play, and garden building markets. They



have further developed their manufacturing expertise into the premium buildings sector in recent years, manufacturing fully insulated home offices and pressure treated modular sheds through the Timberdale range.

And, crucially, everything is crafted with timber procured from certified, well-managed forests and other controlled sources.

“We are proud to be a UK employer and manufacturer, using UK material from forests nationwide,” Fraser stated. “This gives us a greater deal of certainty and control throughout our supply chain, right the way through the manufacturing process, and into our finished products.”

“The performance of our products in their end use is paramount to the sustainability of timber specifications in our industry. Our processes of species selection, incising, kiln drying, and pressure treatment are rigorously controlled to ensure absolute compliance to industry standards.”

This conscious approach was only strengthened when the business was acquired by Forest Garden Group in December 2013.

“Being a part of the Group means we have the benefit of vertical supply routes for components and raw material,” Fraser explained. “It was a perfect fit. Utilising group expertise and distribution channels we have widened our customer base whilst reducing our carbon footprint.”

“As a Group, we are proud to be a carbon neutral business.”

Though Forest Garden Group’s head office is located just 14 miles away in Hartlebury, Worcester, M&M Timber has retained an independent operation.

All manufacturing happens at their Clows Top site, which is home to state of the art CNC machinery that makes the bespoke specifications required for custom



projects possible. A purpose-built Agri-cised incising head is also used on site to improve the treatable surfaces of posts and strainers, along with 180m<sup>3</sup> of kiln drying capacity which is fuelled using timber waste products generated by the site.

Fraser believes that such precision-

based considerations are vital to the company’s success.

“Consumer confidence in correctly specified and correctly processed treated timber is paramount. This is at the heart of every decision made within the business. While there is a cost to ensuring these benchmarks are met, we have proven performance in our warranted products.”

Though assured in the quality of what M&M Timber produces for the end consumer, as with much of the wider sector, the supply of raw materials to create those orders is an evolving concern for the business.

“The long-term availability and stability of raw timber has always been an issue, but it’s set to become particularly difficult towards the back end of the 2020s.” Fraser admitted.

“Robust supply chains and a constant strive to innovate products and processes are at the forefront of our investment here at M&M. With the impacts of the conflict in Eastern Europe yet to fully impact the UK market, 2023 will provide some further uncertainty around supply routes.

“We’re continuing to innovate, to develop our offering, and to protect in the future ability of the business while supporting the main Group functions.”





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# Woodland projects recognised at Royal Highland Show

Primary school that moved 80% of learning outdoors during the pandemic named among winners of Scotland's 'Tree Oscars'.

Scotland's Finest Woods Awards celebrate the contribution that woodlands can make to the people, environment and economic prosperity of Scotland.

Màiri McAllan, Minister for Environment and Land Reform, presented the winners with their awards at the Royal Highland Show in June.

She said: "Scotland boasts a strong woodland heritage that is admired by many countries and its international reputation for good woodland management is well deserved.

"This year, the judges' results shine a special spotlight on young people of both nursery and school ages, farm and community woodlands - and excellence in creating new productive and native woods.

"I'd like to congratulate all the winners who are keeping Scotland's woodlands the finest they can be."



Cormilligan received the Dulverton Flagon award

Mike and Fiona Coulthard won the New Native Woods prize for "patience and perseverance" in planting trees on a croft on the exposed peninsula at Ardnakille, Scalpay, off the Isle of Harris.

The Isle of Scalpay is a two and half square mile exposed peninsula of rock and

peat constantly buffeted by wind and salt, making growing anything a huge challenge. As well as the weather conditions, the couple had to protect saplings - grown from seed in fish boxes - from grazing sheep.

The judges reported: "Growing any trees on this site is an achievement - both ecologically and culturally - and for this the applicants are to be congratulated. This project sets out an example to others of what can be achieved under the least prepossessing environments - and that we can all make a contribution to the environmental challenges we are facing."

Grandtully Primary in Perthshire was named joint winner of the Schools Award for their efforts to move 80% of learning outside. The judges said: "This is a beautiful example of how Covid helped take learn-

*continued on p24*

*continued from p23*

ing outdoors. The school grounds are wonderfully developed by the children and the community for human play and learning, but also for wildlife.

“The children have planted many trees and hedges, built structures from wood, made a wildlife watching area and much more.”

Priorsford Primary School in Peebles was the other award recipient, recognised for a “superb example of how a school can take learning and play outdoors plus make connections to the local woods”.

Angela Douglas, Executive Director of Scotland’s Finest Woods, said: “We’re delighted to have such a tremendous collection of winners and to be able to honour them in person for the first time since 2019.

“The large number of excellent entries from schools and early years settings was particularly pleasing, showing the future of our fine forests and wonderful woodlands is clearly in good hands!”

Winner of the Quality Timber Award for New Commercial Woods was Succothmore in Cowal, Argyll managed by Bryan Pearce for Tilhill. Judges described the project as “an exceptional scheme from design to successful establishment”.

They added: “Both biodiversity and public access will benefit, including important botanical species and strong links into the Cowal Way.”

Additionally, there was a rare presentation of The Dulverton Flagon, last awarded in 2016 and made at the Quality Timber Award judges’ discretion. Cormilligan, a large new commercial wood planted in Dumfries & Galloway, received the honour. The Tilhill managed site was lauded as “an excellent example of modern Scottish forestry, delivering multiple objectives, focusing on quality timber and climate change mitigation”.

In the Farm Woodland Awards, Allanfauld Farm, near Kilsyth, North Lanarkshire, was a double winner. Farmer John MacGregor and Scottish Woodlands for-ester Andy Maclachlan won the Young People’s award, and the farm was highly commended in the overall award - as an excellent example of integrated farm forestry.

*Confor is a proud supporter of Scotland’s Finest Woods Awards.*



**Succothmore winner of the Quality Timber Award for New Commercial Woods**



## Scottish farmers encouraged to plant trees

A report launched at the Royal Highland Show identifies the benefits, barriers and opportunities of trees on farms.

Agroforestry was a key theme at several stands and tents around the 200th Royal Highland Show. The event made a great backdrop for Woodland Trust Scotland and Soil Association Scotland to launch their new report: Integrating trees on farms and crofts in Scotland.

Introducing woodland to Scottish agricultural land is a crucial hurdle on the path to net zero and the achievement of ambitious planting targets.

This publication sets forth initial recommendations for land managers and policymakers to support farmers and crofters looking to incorporate trees into their agricultural system. These include:

- Creating policies that acknowledge the widespread benefits of trees on farms e.g. carbon sequestration, water management, soil health, biodiversity and animal welfare.
- Developing appropriate funding mechanisms and grant schemes to facilitate planting projects of all sizes.
- Increasing forestry and woodland elements in agricultural education and training courses.

Roger Howison, a Fife-based farmer, is one of several case studies featured in the report and he attended the launch event to share his experiences with integrating apple trees alongside arable crops.

Parkhill Farm, which Roger runs with

his wife Rachel, now sells apple juice and cider made from the fruit of their trees. The silvo-arable system has resulted in an additional income stream through this route, as well as providing shelter for livestock and biodiversity benefits.

Màiri McAllan MSP also spoke at the event in the Woodland Trust Scotland tent, highlighting the similar themes discussed at a Scottish Land and Estates/Integrating Trees Network event earlier in the day.

David McKay, Soil Association Head of Policy for Scotland, said: “Integrating trees on farms and crofts offers a viable and cost-effective way to enhance tree planting without reducing agricultural production and therefore offshoring the impacts of the food system.

“New tree planting and farm woodland can provide a range of environmental benefits and improve the performance and resilience of food production in the face of the twin climate and nature emergencies. Agroforestry – integrating trees on farms – can also open up potential new markets for farmers in timber products, fruit and nuts.

“We know that there are barriers, not least in terms of the mindset change that is required, but we also know through workshops organised by Soil Association that there is a significant level of interest in this from farmers and crofters in all parts of Scotland.”



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# Prestigious woodland creation award presented at the Great Yorkshire Show

Broughton Sanctuary was named the recipient of this year's John Boddy Award

Among the many competitions and celebrations that took place at the 2022 Great Yorkshire Show, the John Boddy Award stands out as a mark of excellence for forestry in Yorkshire.

The honour rewards exemplary forestry creation, design and management, and judges focus on a different theme each year. For 2022, the category was woodland creation.

The Broughton Sanctuary, near Skipton, is part of an ambitious nature recovery programme to transform a third of the wider estate into new native woodland; 160 hectares were planted during the 2020-21 season.

It is the long-term intention for the project to increase biodiversity, provide a high-quality retreat for visitors, and reduce flood risk further down the Aire catchment.

Judges were impressed by the scale, vision, and professionalism of the Broughton Sanctuary scheme in a location that has traditionally not seen large-scale planting schemes coming forward.

They said the trees were healthy and looked to be establishing well, with provision for recolonisation. Planting was sympathetic to the existing landscape, and the commitment by the estate to partnership working and engagement with a range of other agencies and individuals was well noted.



**Broughton  
Project Manager  
Kelly Hollick**

**“I CONGRATULATE THE TEAM AT BROUGHTON, AS WELL AS OUR OTHER WORTHY APPLICANTS, AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THESE SCHEMES GROW WELL INTO THE FUTURE”**

Sam Cooper, Partnership and Expertise Manager at Forestry Commission and one of the judges, said: “These exemplary schemes demonstrate the huge va-

riety of benefits that new woodlands can bring, from carbon sequestration, to improving biodiversity, to helping to reduce flooding.

“They also highlight what can be achieved when landowners with commitment and vision work with forestry sector professionals and agencies to help make that vision a reality.

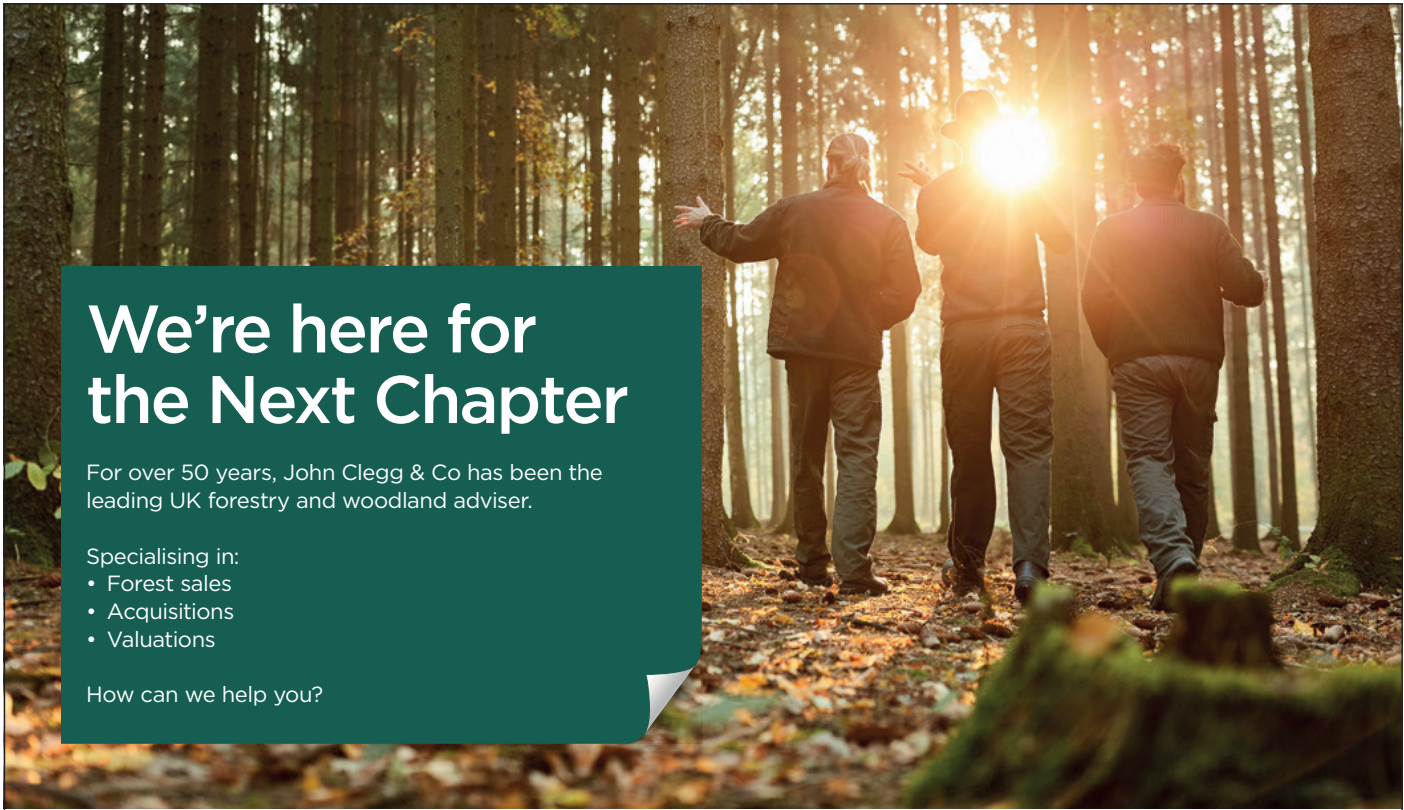
“I congratulate the team at Broughton, as well as our other worthy applicants, and look forward to seeing these schemes grow well into the future.”

The Award is organised and judged by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, Royal Forestry Society and Forestry Commission. This year attracted a high number of entries and variety, from large-scale productive woodland, reclaimed pits and golf courses, and smaller scale amenity woodlands.

Three other schemes were named as finalists and highly commended by judges. These were Howgill Side woodland in Beamsley, Howe End in Danby, and Silver Hill in Aske.



**Great Yorkshire Show**



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# BACK IN THE SUN AND SPOTLIGHT

## Anthony Geddes rounds up the highlights from the Confor Forest Business Hub at RWAS 2022

The Royal Welsh Agricultural Show 2022 has closed for another year, but it will stick in my memory for a good while.

With a new format and location for the stand following a two-year Covid hiatus, Confor and our Members were back in style and numbers. A big thank you must be extended to Pontrilas Sawmills and Tustins for sponsoring the events and enabling Forestry Day to be such a success.

The new layout of the Confor Forest Business Hub saw exhibitors from Bronwin & Abbey, BiFor, DSH Timber, Pryor & Rickett, Pontrilas Merchant and Tubex join us in the marquee. With the help of one of the site's Great Wellingtonia casting some welcome shade, I'm pleased to say we survived the heat and welcomed a great number of visitors to the stand, including old friends and new clients.

As part of our engagement work with stakeholders connected to afforestation, Confor hosted the second in its series of



Virginia Crosbie MP visited the Confor Forest Business Hub

events seeking to reboot the conversation for tree planting. The discussion needs to move forward and recognise the values that matter to communities and landowners whilst also starting from a fundamental level, sharing the reasons and benefits of planting trees.

This event posed the question 'How and when should we start the conversation about tree planting?'. Simple on the face of it, but a complex and insightful debate ensued. Audience participation from farmers,

ENGOS, foresters and policy leads created a clear list of priorities for us to focus on going forward to our next event.

Having received some pressure from Plaid Cymru in preceding months about afforestation, we were pleased to welcome Cefin Campbell MS and start the process of allaying some of the parties' concerns and challenge some of the misconceptions. He was joined on the panel comprised by Jenny Knight, Ceri Davies, Helen Roderick,

*continued on p30*



*continued from p29*

Olly Hughes and Shona Forster, all braving the heat and grilling on what turned out to be rather a hot topic!

We'd like to extend a special thanks to Alice Lampard for her excellent chairing and facilitation of the panel. Alice is a proven mediator and coach working with groups and individuals across the land management sectors (<https://www.alicelampard.com>).

The RWAS is always a busy week for policy and government events and this year was no exception. With the launch of the Sustainable Farming Scheme in early July and a 10% minimum of woodland proposed for every farm in Wales, there was no shortage of conversation about trees and farming.

The invitations from beyond the Confor tent stepped up a gear for 2022: I had the pleasure to represent at the CLA breakfast on Food and Land Security. The opportunity to challenge why timber security is perceived as less important than food security certainly made a few people consider farm outputs in a different light.

We were pleased to have engaged with the First Minister Phosphate Summit and RWAS Reception, the Farmers' Union of Wales panel discussion asking if we can have nature, food and timber (yes, we can!), and several other National Farmers' Union and Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors events. There was opportunity for informal conversations with the Senedd Members too, and great interaction with Mabon ap Gwynfor, Lesley Griffiths, Llyr Gruffydd, Sam Kurtz, as well as Virginia



Crosbie, the MP for Anglesey.

Of course, the highlight of any Welsh show (for our hungry Members at least) was the Confor Foresters Lunch, kindly supported by Tustins. Our guest speakers this year were Olly Hughes, Managing Director of Forestry at Gresham House, and Rob Penn, Author and Co-Founder of Stump Up for Trees.

Although on almost opposite sides of privately funded afforestation in Wales, there were many common themes and a real resolution from both highlighting that public sector grant funding won't cut it for afforestation at the scale we are seeking to hit.

There is a layer of uncertainty from the farming sector regarding private finance,

which is proving challenging to break through, but as Andrew from Bronwin & Abbey posed, we need to win the emotional argument in favour of tree planting to really get traction.

Finally back in person for 2022, the forestry awards were a well-fought competition with gold status going to Natural Resources Wales, Bronwin & Abbey, and Pryor & Rickett. A more detailed report of the winners will be in the next *Forestry & Timber News*.

Thank you to all Members who came to visit us at the show and took part in the events. If you have feedback, we'd love to hear it and help improve the show again for 2023 - contact [Anthony@confor.org.uk](mailto:Anthony@confor.org.uk) and tell us what you think.

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# THE BEST FORESTRY SHOW IN THE UK JUST GOT BETTER



**Ian Millward**, APF Exhibition Secretary, looks ahead to this year's show and the highlights you won't want to miss





**FREE ENTRY  
FOR CONFOR  
MEMBERS  
SEE P.41**



**A**fter a four-year break, APF 2022 returns with a bang on 22-24 September at the Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire.

Despite the delays and cancellations of recent years, the Demo Committee have not been idle and APF 2022 is shaping up to be bigger and better than ever before. A massive 300 exhibitors and around 25,000 visitors are expected to attend over the three days, with new and exciting competitions, events and features to enjoy.

As you may be aware, we have also joined forces with The Arboricultural Association to bring The ARB Show to APF 2022 and offer an increased arboriculture focus at the event.

After such a long time away, there's tangible excitement for the show in the forestry and arb industries as visitors look forward to catching up with old friends. The sector is coming together and pretty much every industry organisation will be represented.

Many Confor Members will already be familiar with the show as being the place to check out all the latest equipment in the sector, and to see around £80 million of machinery on display or shown working under realistic conditions.

We want APF 2022 to not just be a chance to buy machines and meet colleagues, but also an opportunity to learn new skills, catch up with all the latest news, see the newest technology developments in action, and talk with industry experts about every aspect of forestry, woodlands, arboriculture and fencing.

**“AFTER SUCH A LONG TIME AWAY, THERE’S TANGIBLE EXCITEMENT FOR THE SHOW IN THE FORESTRY AND ARB INDUSTRIES”**

Additionally, thanks to our sponsors, the list of high-class competitions at the show is longer than ever. Attendees will be able to watch and enjoy the Husqvarna World 25m Pole Climbing Championships, the Tilhill Forestry and A W Jenkinson European Chainsaw Carving Competition, the Harkie UK Open Tree Climbing competition, and the McVeigh Parker UK Open Fencing Championships.

In the Forest Worker Zone, there will be a Komatsu harvester simulator, chainsaw maintenance workshops, information on





## EVENTS & WHAT'S ON

### Areas of Interest

- The Arb Worker Zone
- The Fencing Village
- The Forest Worker Zone
- Traditional Woodland Crafts Area

### Competitions

- Husqvarna World 25m Pole Climbing Championships
- Tilhill Forestry and A W Jenkinson European Chainsaw Carving Competition
- The UK Open Fencing Championships
- The UK Open Tree Climbing competition
- World 'Log to Leg' Pole Lathe Turning Championships

### Seminars

- Biosecurity, bioenergy, wood fuel and tree health
- Forestry education, training and careers

“THE NEW ARB WORKER ZONE WILL SHOWCASE EXAMPLES OF NEW CLIMBING AND RIGGING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES.”

chainsaw competency and the new guides for using tree shears.

Advice will also be available on the new rules for producing and selling firewood, the new Forestry Commission funded project for mapping the UK's coppice resource, winching safety demos, and discussions on the training needs for forest workers as well as the infamous chainsaw holdout competition.

The new Arb Worker Zone is being organised by The Arboricultural Association. This area will showcase examples of new climbing and rigging equipment and techniques. Manufacturers will be running technical demonstrations on the latest hand tool technology and maintenance, and the Arborists' Workshop will host seminars by industry experts on topical is-



sues like plant health, worker safety, and training.

In the new tree climbing arena, in addition to the premier UK Open competition, there will be a competition for the novice climbers and an exciting team rigging challenge. There will also be the opportunity to try out brand new Harkie equipment under expert guidance.

Another new, unique feature in this area will be crane dismantling demos. Visitors can watch as a 20T mobile crane is used to dismantle a tree and chat to the team about the technicalities of this difficult operation.

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and City and Guilds on hand to give details of the latest courses and assessments. If you have ever wondered about the cost to become an instructor and if you've got what it takes, Lantra will be giving a presentation to talk you through the process.

The British Horse Loggers will also be offering a fantastic opportunity to have a go at horse logging.

A truly remarkable range of crafts will be on display in the popular traditional woodland crafts area. Visitors will have the chance to watch highly skilled craft-people in action and try their hands at many of the techniques on show.

Among the unique offerings will be rake making, hazel hurdles, coracles, oak >>



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Our stands this year are H1-H2, and we will be displaying the latest machines from Husqvarna, Stihl and Echo, as well as PPE from Arbortec, SIP Protection, HAIX, Stein and many more. We're really excited to have the chance to speak to you all in person again after three years of deals done increasingly online and over the phone.

We'll also have loads of climbing kit, forestry kit, winches, rigging gear, hand tools and more from all your favourite brands. Deals will be available throughout the show, covering all categories, so be sure to come and see us at what is shaping up to be the biggest event of the year for the forestry and arboricultural sector!



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## THE ARB SHOW AT APF 2022

Bringing the ARB Show to APF 2022 delivers an expanded offering for arborists at the show and helps the event reach beyond its traditional forestry base. The Arb Worker Zone will be a key interactive attraction, giving arborists the chance to receive impartial advice about climbing kit and techniques, and have a go with practical demonstrations alongside a timetable of events each day.

The Arboricultural Association CEO John Parker said: "This is fantastic news for arborists. ARB Show has been a highlight of the event calendar for more than 20 years, and after years of virtual events, we are delighted to be able to announce this collaboration with APF 2022, bringing the show to a greater audience than ever before.

"Attendees and exhibitors will benefit from this change, and we feel certain that the whole arboricultural profession will be out in force to celebrate the return of ARB Show in 2022."

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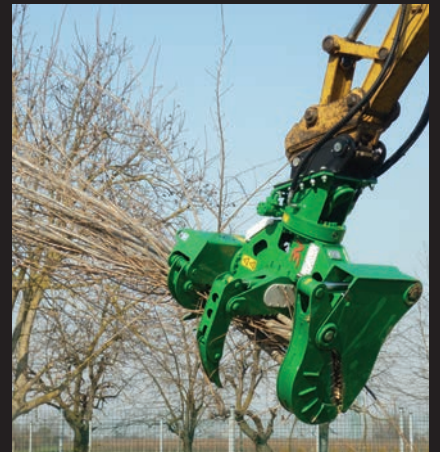
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ple in our industry and increased planting targets, education is an important focus of this year’s exhibition. We are working closely with the Royal Forestry Society to organise school visits and Confor hopes to introduce university students to career



opportunities in the forestry sector.

Readers will be pleased to learn we have engaged a traffic management expert for APF 2022 and will be implementing a completely new system to get visitors safely into the show. With active traffic management and on-site CCTV in place, we are able to direct traffic between our four different entrances in real time.

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- Lantra
- City & Guilds
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- National Coppice Federation
- The Landworkers Alliance
- The Association of Fencing Industries

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Full details of events and competitions, exhibitors, tickets and campsite bookings, and much more can all be found in the visitor section of our website ([www.apfexhibition.co.uk](http://www.apfexhibition.co.uk)).

Book your tickets now and, from all the APF Team, we hope you have a fantastic visit.



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We would like to offer a huge thank you to all our sponsors of APF 2022:

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## FREE ENTRY FOR CONFOR MEMBERS

All Confor Members are entitled to free entry to APF 2022 on production of a Membership Card.

You should have been sent this already but, if you have yet to receive yours, please contact [eliza@confor.org.uk](mailto:eliza@confor.org.uk). Note that each card is valid for one attendee only and can be printed or displayed on your device.

There will be no other way to confirm your membership status at the gates, so be sure to double-check you have your card before you leave for the show!

We sadly will not be able to reimburse any Members charged on entry due to a missing card. >>



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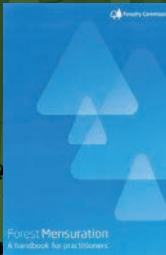


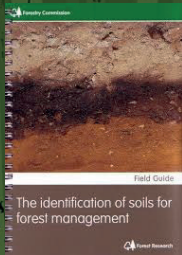
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## SAY HELLO TO THE CONFOR TEAM

The Confor tent will be located at Stand 1640, near the First Aid tent. Our team will be delighted to catch up with Members in person and hear all your views on the latest news.

Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive of Confor, said: "The entire sector has been looking forward to the return of in-person exhibitions like this and we are so grateful to the APF team for bringing the show back for 2022.

"As the largest event of its' kind in the UK, the APF is a unique and valuable experience for anyone with even a passing interest in forestry, arboriculture or biomass. From climbing and chainsaw carving to new machinery and professional training, there really is something for everyone.

"Exhibitors are joining us from as far away as Japan and the United States this year, which speaks to the international appeal and acclaim the show has earned."

We will also be ready to discuss the benefits of joining Confor with any prospective new members, so please do invite your colleagues along.



### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

All details subject to change. Visit our website for the up-to-date programme.

#### THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

- 9-10am Confor breakfast  
*Sponsored by Tustins*
- 12-1pm Confor AGM & lunch  
*Sponsored by John Clegg & Co*
- 1-2pm What is Confor doing for you?  
*Hosted by Confor team*
- 2-3pm Woodland, Hedgerows, Agroforestry and Trees  
*Forestry Commission*

#### FRIDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

- 10am Skills tour departs
- 10-11am Decarbonising Timber Transport  
*Timber Transport Forum*
- 1pm Skills tour departs
- 1-2pm Plant health  
*Forestry Commission*

#### SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

- 10am Skills tour departs
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# Managing the risks of employees using machinery



**Kate Donachie**, Managing Associate at Brodies LLP, answers our questions on the responsibilities of employers whose workers use machinery.

## SHOULD I BE DOING ANYTHING ABOUT LONG TERM HEALTH & SAFETY RISKS?

In short, yes. Aside from the immediate dangers arising from the use of machinery, prolonged exposure to the noise and vibration produced by equipment can cause disease or physical impairment.

Vibration from hand-held tools, such as hedge trimmers or chainsaws, can cause damage to workers' hands and fingers known as hand and arm vibration syndrome (HAVS). Your employees may also be at risk from back and muscle pain caused by whole body vibration from certain types of vehicles – for example tractors with mulchers fitted or log loaders.

Equipment can also emit noise, and excessive noise exposure can result in tinnitus, hearing impairment or hearing loss.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF MY EMPLOYEES ARE AT RISK?

The law imposes limits on the amount of noise and vibration to which you can expose your employees. Those limits are found in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 and the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005.

For vibration there is a lower level of 2.5 m/s<sup>2</sup> A(8) where action should be taken to

avoid exposure; and a higher value of 5.0 m/s<sup>2</sup> A(8) which should not be exceeded; there are separate action and higher levels for full body vibration. The limits for noise are daily exposure of 87 dB(A); and a peak sound pressure of 140dB(C).

In order to work out whether you are exposing your employees to excessive noise or vibration, you will need to identify the equipment used by each employee, how long they use it for and with what frequency. This might involve careful consideration of work patterns across weeks or even the whole year.

You then need to confirm the levels of noise and vibration emitted by the equipment – this should be readily available from the manufacturer.

## HOW DO I REDUCE MY EMPLOYEES' EXPOSURE TO SOUND AND VIBRATION?

To protect against noise, you should provide appropriate hearing protection to your employees; it is essential that you also train them on how to properly use the protection and the risks of not doing so. There should be procedures in place to check for compliance and to impose sanction if the protection is not used.

Where hearing protection cannot be used or does not adequately reduce the noise exposure, you will need to reduce the time each worker spends on that equipment, and you may need to implement job rotation.

To control exposure to vibration it is important to plan and record the time spent on equipment as this will allow employers to ensure the exposure limits for each worker are not breached. There are mechanised options available which will record individual employees' vibration exposure or alternatively the vibration emitted during each use of the equipment.

You will need to prepare plans at an organisational level so that workers know what they are expected to do, and so you can avoid workers inadvertently being exposed to excessive levels of noise or vibration.

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD DO TO PROTECT MY EMPLOYEES?

You should have a robust programme of health surveillance which will involve initial health assessments to establish a baseline



for employees and regular checks thereafter. Health surveillance should be carried out by a qualified occupational health professional.

You should also encourage employees to self-report hearing issues and musculoskeletal symptoms as early as possible, and you should monitor sickness or absence reports and refer any suspected cases to a health professional.

You should have a clear plan for employees who display symptoms of noise induced hearing loss, HAVs or other vibration related conditions. This may involve more frequent checks, job rotation or, in some cases, finding an alternative role for the employee.

## IS THIS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE IN PRACTICE?

With care and management, the risks posed by noise and vibration can be readily managed and it should be possible to continue working with tools and vehicles while avoiding any harm to workers.

## CONFOR MEMBERS FREE LEGAL CONSULTATION

Confor has partnered with law firms Brodies LLP and Atkinson Ritson Solicitors to run a legal clinic for members looking for guidance on key issues that impact forest owners and the forestry sector.

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# Interest in forests remains high in turbulent times

Rising interest rates, war in Europe, falling timber prices and a substantial hike in inflation, particularly for fuel: all factors that affect sentiment. Despite these headwinds, the forestry market remains in generally good health.

Demand for commercial plantations and planting land is strong, even with a dip in timber prices. A range of buyers are present with the funds still dominant. Amenity woods are also in demand and interest in carbon and wider biodiversity continues to attract new buyers into the market.



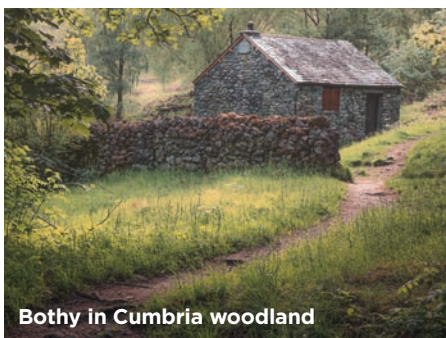
## England and Wales

**Hugh Williams**  
FICFor, Forestry  
Sales Agent,  
John Clegg & Co.

Sales of woodlands in England and Wales are still popular with a range of buyers, especially small woods and those that can be sub-divided and sold on. For example, if a Welsh woodland owning client runs a successful firewood business, as product prices rise this will positively impact on broadleaf woodland values.

We feel that potential woodland buyers are becoming more selective - woodland with perceived or actual constraints over access can, for example, deter even the bravest buyer. Ash dieback is widespread and many woodland owners are using this as the impetus needed to manage or sell their woodlands.

Whitney Timber reports good sales of ash as an alternative to oak, with customers appreciating its attractive appearance, durability, and its competitive price when compared to oak. However, concerns over *Phytophthora ramorum* remain and there is



Bothy in Cumbria woodland

a low but developing awareness regarding *Ips typographus* and *Phytophthora pluvialis*.

Poplar plantations vary greatly in price, depending in part on the presence or absence of rust, with poor plantations struggling to sell at £1,700/acre and better condition poplar woods being valued at over £4,000/acre. Plantations of eucalypts can be like marmite - you love them or hate them - and their condition and growth can vary greatly between and within sites.

Broadleaved woodlands, especially those in the southeast and regional hot-spots including Devon, Cornwall, Hereford and Cumbria, attract good prices that can exceed £7,000/acre. Sales of young (c.25-year-old) woodlands in the National Forest have guide prices of £6,320 to £9,600 per acre, the latter being a mix of woodland, parkland and a restored bothy.

A productive second rotation Sitka spruce woodland in Wales, aged 15-25 years old, recently sold through John Clegg and Co for just over £5,000/acre.

Buyers who have access to cash and who can proceed quickly to exchange are in a strong position, and these factors are being taken into account by vendors.

The time taken to complete a sale can be a frustration, with six months being commonplace. This is in part by solicitors being "swamped" by the sales/purchases of domestic properties. Both buyers and sellers need to assist transactions with clarity and accessibility to the relevant information, combined with reality regarding their expectations.



## Scotland

**Simon Hart** FICFor  
FRICS, Head of  
Forestry Scotland,  
John Clegg & Co.

We are continuing to see strong demand for planting land in Scotland. There has been much fractious debate about the revisions to the Woodland Carbon Code Additional clause over recent months. While the merits of the change can be debated elsewhere, the upshot is that commercial conifer schemes in the uplands are now effectively excluded.

Some buyers were factoring carbon into



Dumyat, a hill in the Ochils close to Stirling in Scotland

their financial equation, with up to 200 tonnes/ha and with PIU's at some £15/t that was a £3,000/ha carbon premium. However, despite the removal of carbon, buyers are still paying some £15,000/ha for land suitable for spruce. There have been some higher prices paid, such as Todrigg in the Borders selling for over £20,000/ha across the whole property.

The commercial market is underpinned by strong forest economics, not carbon.

That being said, the demand for land for native woodland planting is substantially supported by carbon payments. Two good examples of this are Dumyat Farm, and land at Dumbrae. These two adjacent farms in the Ochils, close to Stirling, are characterised by variable soils, some very steep slopes, poor access, high use by the public and visually prominent sites: all red flags to commercial buyers.

Dumyat came to the market early in 2021 and was bought by the Future Forest Company for an extensive native woodland scheme. The price was about £5,000/ha, although less than half of the area is proposed to be planted. Dumbrae is on the market in July 2022, with a guide price of some £4,200/ha and again targeted at buyers more interested in carbon than timber-based forestry investment.

Demand for commercial plantations also remains strong, for example West Tullyfergus, planted on better than average ground, is an interesting mixed woodland, with a good component of high YC spruce, planted in 1994.

This was guided at £18,500/ha through and through for the woodland area, which included a good proportion of broadleaves, and is now under offer at a figure well above the guide.

Demand for commercial properties is being led by the funds, but some private buyers are also being successful. At present that demand seems fairly robust, and it will be interesting to see if sentiment changes over the forthcoming months.



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# Old truths from a new country

This issue's Woodland Owner piece comes from Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland) in southern Africa. Although I'm here continuing a long-term research project investigating the sustainability of fast-growing pine plantations, one cannot fail to notice what small woodland owners and entrepreneurs are doing. And it has set me thinking.

## MANY SMALLHOLDERS GROW A FEW TREES

It is common throughout much of highland Africa that, even on a hectare of land, trees will be grown for domestic use and occasionally for sale. Eswatini is no exception.

Almost always the trees grown are exotic and not native. Indeed, indigenous trees have often been cut long ago or, if present, provide the wood for carvings, high quality furniture, and similar artefacts.

The exotics planted in Eswatini are confined to the ubiquitous eucalypts, mostly *E. grandis* and *E. saligna*, the almost as common wattle (*Acacia meurnsii*), and nitrogen-fixing *Casuarina*: elsewhere in the cooler tropics and subtropics *Grevillea robusta* would be found too. These species grow fast and provide the stick and pole products that no native tree can.

So, this is the first instructive lesson:

non-native species have an important role to fill gaps in a country's dendrological palette. It is no different in Britain with only three conifers among our 30+ native species and only one that feeds the industry's insatiable appetite for softwood.

## PRODUCT MARKETING IS EVERYWHERE

Whenever you drive to Eswatini's capital, Mbabane, or towns such as Manzini or Malkerns, or along any of the more important transit routes, there will invariably be two forest products for sale at the side of the road.

Precariously stacked are columns of split logs for the fire. Already cut to grate size, pairs of logs are piled one on top of the other, a bit like the child's game of Jenga, with each tier at right angles to the one beneath. Air flows through freely to allow continued seasoning, but sometimes the piles are stacked two metres or more high which, it seems, the slightest push will bring tumbling down. The buyer can certainly see what they are buying!

Our second lesson is that this informal source of fuel, coming from someone's few trees, is everywhere.

The other product is long thin eucalyptus poles. They rest interleaved on a bar about 1.5m off the ground, looking like giant fishing rods without the tackle. Some

of these poles, which taper to only an inch or so, may be black from creosoting and the butt end held from splitting by a small gang-nail plate, but most are untreated in both respects.

They provide the stick size material for huts, poles for building and posts for fencing. The point is the same: these poles are everywhere.

In Britain we have strict laws about roadside retailing, but the lesson - or reminder - for us is that it is not sufficient to have a product ready for market; it has to be marketed. Just like books, it is no good writing something and having it published if (a) no one knows about it and (b) it is not readily available.

Books have to be sold; they don't sell themselves. It is the same for marketing products from one's woodland.

## THE LAST WORD

Of course, the above remarks apply to all marketing, whether the enterprise is big or small. What I saw in Eswatini - exotic tree species grown to meet domestic needs and vigorous marketing of them - is not new, it was just a reminder.

As for my sustainability research, each rotation of fast-growing pines is equally or even more productive than its predecessor. An account of that singularly important finding is for another journal.



Ezulwini valley in Swaziland

Photo credit: www.shutterstock.com/mbrand85

# Carbon, climate and conifers

## a look at how productive tree planting can enhance the UK's forest carbon removal

With emissions reduction efforts now unlikely to limit global warming to the critical 1.5°C, much focus is now on Natural Climate Solutions as part of efforts to capture and store carbon. **Stuart Goodall** looks at how productive forestry can play a significant role in carbon capture and argues the case for large-scale and urgent productive planting.

The risks of climate change now need little introduction. We are already starting to live with the impacts of a changing climate on the environment, communities, businesses and supply chains.

To have even a 50/50 chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C, the world must reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to net-zero by mid-century, with an emissions decline of around 40-50% achieved by 2030. The answer may lie in significant carbon dioxide removals (CDR) – and not only as an adjunct to emissions reduction, but as an essential part of its removal.

One of the key categories of CDR includes what is known as 'Natural Climate Solutions' which deliver CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration through the restoration of nature and the improved management of existing land uses. These solutions rely on photosynthesis – primarily of trees – to capture and store CO<sub>2</sub> and, in some cases, enhance that sequestration for longer-term or even permanent storage.

### The role of trees in reaching net-zero

With many technology-based CDR solutions in their infancy, tree planting is – at least for the time being – the only scalable 'negative emissions' strategy. And it comes with additional benefits for biodiversity, wildlife, flood management, health, not to mention considerable employment, production and trade opportunities.

Existing trees and forests are one of the most important stores of carbon on the

### TONNES OF CO<sub>2</sub> EQUIVALENT SEQUESTERED BY PLANTING PER YEAR PER HECTARE:

#### PRODUCTIVE TREE

**Years 0 to 5** = 3.49 tCO<sub>2</sub>e  
**Years 10 to 15** = 28.47 tCO<sub>2</sub>e  
**Years 20 to 25** = 29.06 tCO<sub>2</sub>e  
**Years 35 to 40\*** = 24.08 tCO<sub>2</sub>e\*\*

#### BROADLEAF TREE

**Years 0 to 5** = 0.52 tCO<sub>2</sub>e  
**Years 10 to 15** = 6.23 tCO<sub>2</sub>e  
**Years 20 to 25** = 21.59 tCO<sub>2</sub>e  
**Years 35 to 40** = 9.11 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

*\*Age when they are normally harvested  
 \*\*Delivering over 1,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per hectare sequestered and/or stored in wood products. The process can then be restarted with restocking the harvested site.*

planet. In the UK, for example, forests currently hold 3.7 billion tonnes of carbon – estimated to be the equivalent of ten years of UK's annual emissions.

However, the UK still has only 13% forest cover – with only 7% of native woodlands in good ecological condition. After years of declining tree-planting rates and with carbon accumulation falling as UK woodlands mature, the rate of absorption is projected to fall in the coming years.

In 2020, the annual rate of CO<sub>2</sub> accumulation by UK forests was around 18 million



tonnes, but according to Forest Research, this is forecast to decline to around 10 million by 2040.

### Choosing the right trees

Not all trees grow at the same rate or absorb CO<sub>2</sub> in the same way. Faster-growing, coniferous tree species – which make up the majority of productive woodlands – sequester carbon much more quickly in the early to medium term. And far more carbon is absorbed in mature conifers (40-50 years old) than in slower-growing broadleaf tree species at the same age.

However, broadleaf species can accumulate more carbon reserves in the longer term.

In order to determine the productivity of trees to absorb carbon, the UK forestry industry uses a 'yield class' measure to indicate how much wood (measured in cubic metres per hectare) is added through growth each year. As the added wood is made up of carbon, there is a link to speed of growth and the ability to sequester carbon more quickly.

While the Climate Change Committee (CCC) assumes an average yield class for conifers of 13 – based on research from 2003 – it is now accepted within the forestry industry that with modern improvements in tree breeding and silviculture,



## New vision for climate resilience set out by FCCCP

Forestry, conservation and government organisations have come together to reaffirm their commitment to work together to promote the importance of adapting trees, woods and forests to climate change.

The Forestry and Climate Change Partnership (FCCCP) published the Forestry and Climate Change Adaptation Accord on 30 June, setting out a collective vision that Britain's trees woods and forests are resilient to climate change.

There is an urgent need to improve the resilience of both newly created and existing woodland to climate change. This requires significant change to widely accepted and practised systems of woodland and land management.

Greater awareness is needed for the importance of adopting a broader range of species, diversity of genetics, age and stand structure, and improved connectivity in the landscape.

The FCCCP is working to communicate the case for adaptation, to provide training and education, inform research priorities and contribute to policy development.

Dr Gabriel Hemery, Chief Executive of the Sylva Foundation and Chair of the FCCCP said: "The recently renamed Forestry and Climate Change Partnership represents an unusual level of collaboration and a powerful agreement to work together to make change happen, fast.

"Our trees, woods and forests are faced with unprecedented rates of climate change and increased environmental threats such as pests and pathogens. Only by working together, and with the support of individual woodland owners and professionals, will we be able to rise to meet these challenges, with an ambition to bounce back better."

*Confor is a member of the FCCCP, a cross sector unincorporated body which promotes measures which enhance the adaptation of trees, woods and forests to climate change and associated impacts.*



**Forestry and  
Climate Change  
Partnership**

this figure is too low and should be a yield class of 16 or higher.

Essentially, these yield classes paint a picture of conifer species playing a vital role in locking up carbon quickly and meeting planting targets.

### What needs to be done

The CCC recommends increasing woodland cover in the UK from 13% to a minimum of 17% by 2050 with a 60/40 split of broadleaf to conifers - and ideally, to 19% to ensure the country achieves net zero carbon emissions. Such an increase equates to about 1.5 million hectares of additional woodland.

Confor has gone one stage further, proposing a 50/50 split between broadleaf and conifer planting.

Meeting these planting rates will require a significant and rapid scale up of the forestry sector to meet several urgent priorities. These include identifying space within the nursery sector to grow saplings, the manpower to undertake actual planting and subsequent management.

When looking at where to plant, this will inevitably result in some compromise, as the competing needs of agriculture, wildlife and the general public need to be balanced.

The CCC concluded in its most recent

land-use report that 22% of agricultural land must be turned over to carbon sequestration if the net-zero goal is to be achieved. In this scenario, the committee said farmland would be released as a result of reductions in meat and dairy consumption, increased farm efficiency and reduced food waste.

The problem with the CCC scenario is that it is just that - a scenario. In today's reality, the main issue is accessing this land and incentivising landowners to turn enough of it over to forestry in large enough numbers.

### Wrapping up

The UK government, devolved administrations and hundreds of local councils have declared an unequivocal climate emergency. But we have an unprecedented opportunity to be an enabler of the net zero economy and capture much of the residual carbon beyond the steps that industry and consumers have taken to reduce emissions.

The challenges are not always straightforward but the informed decisions and urgent actions we take now will have a lasting impact for decades to come.

*This article was produced as part of Changing Attitudes, Confor's campaign for more productive forests in the UK.*

# Is it time to go cordless?

For those in the timber and forestry industry, the choice of tools can make a significant difference to the ease of work, safety and even environmental impact. Here **Mark Earles**, Business Development Manager for Outdoor Power Equipment at Makita UK, looks at the benefits of using modern battery powered tools for forestry operations.

Petrol powered tools have been the go-to for chainsaws and other forestry machines for many years. However, advances in battery power mean that those in the industry can now benefit from the advantages of cordless.

In many ways, cordless alternatives offer comparable performance and ease of use to the conventional petrol machines, especially up to 40cc equivalents. In particular, cordless chainsaws offer the same flexibility and ease of movement, which is essential when working at height.

In addition, there are cordless versions of both top handle chainsaws designed for use at height, and rear handle saws suited to work on the ground. There are also battery powered alternatives to petrol pole saws for branch trimming. However, cordless machines also have a number of additional benefits, especially with regards to safety.

## Emissions and fuel considerations

One of the clearest advantages of battery power is that the machines do not burn fuel and so do not produce the emissions associated with petrol power. Although developments in recent years have meant that modern petrol engines are more fuel efficient, it is still an area of concern.

Firstly, there is the potential health impact on operators. The emissions from petrol combustion include a mixture of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, among other substances.

If inhaled, these pollutants can cause both short- and long-term respiratory is-



sues as well as other health problems.

Another factor to consider is the wider environmental impact of operations. With climate change and the effect of human activity on the environment now an apparent and immediate issue, it has never been more important to minimise this impact where possible. Many businesses are now looking at how to reduce the use of fossil fuels in their day-to-day operations and using electrical power and cordless tools where possible is an important and positive step.

In addition, using cordless tools removes the need to handle and transport fuels, and therefore eliminates the risk of spillage and fire, both in transit and on-site. There is also a cost implication of this, especially given recent sharp price rises for fuel. Switching to battery products can significantly lower running costs.

## Vibration

The vibration levels produced by tools, and the resulting Hand Arm Vibration, is an important health and safety consideration. Hand Arm Vibration, as the name suggests, is the vibration transferred into a user's hands and arms while using tools, operating machinery and even holding or guiding materials as they are being worked on.

Frequent or prolonged exposure to this type of vibration can cause a number of serious issues, including Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). This encompasses

a range of conditions such as Vibration White Finger and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, as well as severe permanent damage to bones of the hand and arm.

Sufferers of HAVS often experience painful, tingling or numb fingers and hands as a result of damage to the nerves and blood vessels. Weakened muscles, lower grip strength and reduced dexterity are also common symptoms and can make day-to-day tasks increasingly difficult.

Any vibration level over 2.5 m/sec<sup>2</sup> can be damaging and even well-designed chainsaws can produce levels around 5.0 m/sec<sup>2</sup>. This number, which manufacturers must provide by law, combined with the



usage time can be used to calculate the daily exposure (given in points) to assess the degree of risk.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has set two levels: the Exposure Action Value (EAV) at 100 points and the Exposure Limit Value (ELV) at 400 points. When the EAV is reached, steps must be taken to reduce or manage the user's exposure, and when the ELV is reached, work must stop. While the HSE recommends that exposure to vibration should be reduced where possible, the nature of forestry work means it is often unavoidable.

The choice of machine can make a significant difference to the user's exposure. The vibration levels of battery-operated chainsaws can be considerably lower compared to petrol tools - this is because there is no piston operating 90 degrees to the rotation of the crank shaft that generates significant vibration. Also, in contrast to the petrol engine that idles when not in use, the electric motor on a cordless machine only runs when activated.

### Noise

Exposure to noise during the course of daily work can be another cause for concern. Prolonged exposure to high levels of noise



can result in irreversible damage including hearing loss and tinnitus.

Cordless machines are significantly quieter than petrol versions and, as such, are safer for the user as well as those working nearby. Depending on the environment, a lower level of noise may also be required to minimise the impact on the surrounding area, which is especially important when working on urban forestry sites like schools, hospitals, care homes, residential and other public areas.

### Making the right selection

Cordless machines have an array of benefits for forestry work; however, it is important to invest in the correct products.

One of the most common misconceptions that users have is that cordless alternatives will not deliver the run-times required. The efficiency of the latest generation of motor and battery technologies means this is not an issue. There are high-powered twin 18V (36V) or 40VMax options available that are capable of delivering both the high levels of performance and the run times necessary.

In addition, it may be valuable to look for products that include brushless motor technology. In this type of motor, the tool is driven using contact-free electro-magnetism rather than relying on contact between the carbon brushes and a rotary electrical switch on the rotor.

While motors with brushes are effective, the friction generates heat and wastes energy. In contrast, brushless motors are more efficient because this issue is eliminated, in turn extending run times by up to 50% per battery charge.

To ensure minimal disruptions and improve productivity, it is also important to invest in a tool platform with batteries engineered for rapid recharging. For example, a 4.0Ah battery from Makita's 40VMax XGT range can be fully recharged in just 45 minutes.

Finally, investing in machines that operate on the same battery platform ensures maximum flexibility. This allows batteries to be switched between tools depending on what is required for the day's work.

Although petrol machines have traditionally been the most common choice for forestry work, cordless alternatives have a range of benefits. Not only are they quieter and produce lower levels of vibration, but they can also contribute to driving down fire risks, emissions and costs.

By selecting products from a leading manufacturer that have been designed around the needs of users, forestry professionals can make their work easier and safer while minimising their environmental impact.

Visit [www.makitauk.com](http://www.makitauk.com) to find out more about Makita's cordless range.

# Rich in fibre

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**Peter Kitt**  
 Woodfibre  
 Manager  
 Based in  
 Wales

**P**eter Kitt, A.W. Jenkinson's Woodfibre manager based in South Wales, is responsible for procuring all types of woodfibre - from sawdust to arb chip and forest residues - with an area that includes Wales and the South West of England.

Peter has more than 40 years of forestry experience that includes everything from practical hand felling, winching, machine driving, and timber haulage to managing operations on wood recycling and biomass energy generation sites.

In the 10 years that Peter has worked for AWJ, he has been instrumental in the development of the forest fibre recovery operations, encompassing the management of significant tonnes of ramorum-infected larch. Peter also manages a number of our key supply contracts to ensure we have enough of the requisite materials delivered week in week out, at the quality that our customers expect.

When not at work Peter enjoys dog walking through the forests of South Wales, and he is a keen motorbike enthusiast.

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**Mike Farrow**  
 Woodfibre  
 Manager  
 Based in  
 Norfolk

**O**riginally from a farming background, Mike made the move into forestry 25 years ago to operate an in-forest chipping operation for one of the original pioneers of residue recovery in the UK.

This led to him setting up his own in-forest chipper operation, as well as a 10-year stint as harvester operator for a forestry contracts business in East Anglia.

All of this prior experience has given Mike a great understanding of the fibre recovery industry, from the inception through to its current position, providing valuable additional volume to the biomass sector. Along the way Mike has also taken a keen interest in other innovative uses for wood residues and will continue to explore these with AWJ.

Day to day, Mike manages a number of key supply contracts for AWJ and supports this by securing the volumes required through a multitude of sources, from arb suppliers to private estate owners.

Mike's passions away from forestry are visiting new areas of the UK with the family and playing golf.

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**John Tunnicliffe**  
 Forestry  
 Contracts  
 Manager for  
 Northern  
 England

**J**ohn, who is based at our headquarters in Cumbria, joined the business in February 2021. He comes from a well-established Yorkshire forestry family that has seen him immersed in the forestry sector from his early years.

Initially helping out during school holidays, he progressed to working full time for the family business, undertaking the full range of forestry work from hand felling to machine operations. He became an owner operator, contracting for a number of key forestry management companies, as well as undertaking his own management work for a number of private estates.

John brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the business and is putting this to great use as a key member of our forestry team.

He focuses on in-forest fibre recovery to ensure continuity of supply to our biomass customers while maintaining high standards of work with our forestry clients.

Outside of work John is a keen rugby fan and an avid cyclist.

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# Making mechanisation safe for forestry



**Gillian Clark**, CEO of the Forestry Industry Safety Accord (FISA), recounts the latest guidance for forestry workers operating machinery.

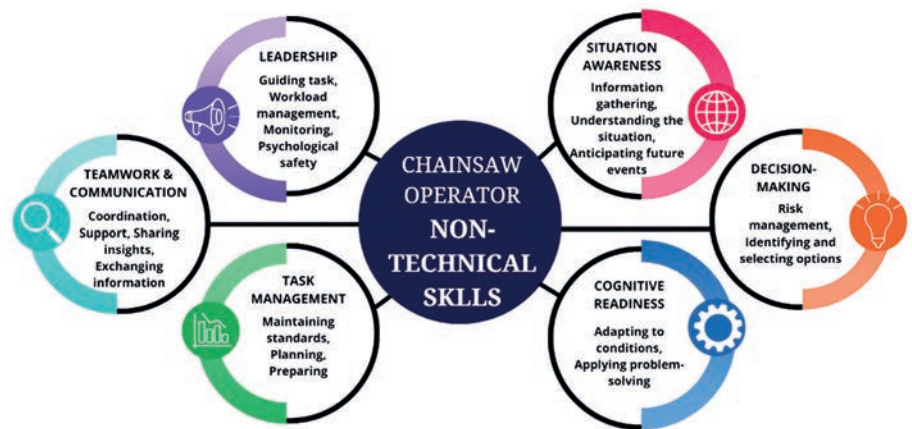
A dreadful record of 11 tree work fatalities between December 2020 and February 2022 in the UK arboriculture and forestry sectors led the FISA High Risk Sub-Group to hold a review into serious and fatal tree work accidents.

The meeting focused on chainsaw operations and involved key FISA Working Group members; representation from the Arboriculture Sector, a cross section of the forestry industry, experts from accident investigation, the HSE, and Aberdeen University.

The meeting looked at what could be learnt from around the world and other industries taking a data-based approach to steer industry recommendations. Data review looked at the direct causes of tree work injuries and fatalities for GB and worldwide, looking at the underlying root causes and contributory factors in tree work accidents.

The data review explored in great depth elements including accidents by age, by agent, and by region; and considered the effects of human factors and non-technical skills:

- Planning works ahead of felling the tree are crucial.
- Unexpected events are part of felling even for experienced operators, the ability to respond and react to unexpected events is vitally important.
- Introduction of the need for the operative to also be physically and mentally ready to adapt.
- The effects of diet and nutrition can influence reaction times by up to two-thirds of a second; dehydration can significantly impair cognitive and motor reaction times.
- Other key issues are chronic pain; mental health issues and fatigue – one study



**Overview (categories and elements) of the skills identified within the chainsaw operator interview study.**

suggests fatigue factors in 80% of accidents.

The second stage of this in-depth review will involve the FISA Working Group and wider industry contacts developing actions to take forward and help address the problems identified by the High Risk Sub-Group review. FISA will share updates via their website and member e-updates.

## Chainsaw operator non-technical skills

What are non-technical skills and why do we in forestry safety need to look toward these skills, particularly within chainsaw work?

Non-technical skills are recognised across high-risk industry as the social (interpersonal) and cognitive (thinking) skills necessary, alongside technical know-how, for safe and effective work performance, meaning these skills can affect the working day, and ultimately the safety of the chainsaw operative.

A recent video ([https://youtu.be/BF\\_sGKWQLSM](https://youtu.be/BF_sGKWQLSM)) shared by Doctor Amy Irwin of Aberdeen University delves further into a recent study designed to investigate these skills in forestry.

FISA is pleased to share this work with the wider industry and will offer further outcomes and videos as the studies progress. This work is being carried out in con-

junction with the Forestry and Land Scotland safety team and Aberdeen University. Our thanks go to those in site-based roles who have given their time in the interviews.

## Increasing the drive for mechanisation in tree work

Recent media stories relating to the tragic circumstances of the death of tree surgeon Debbie Austin, whilst working on an Ash tree in Kent, highlight the hazards of working with diseased trees and the importance of managing and controlling risk.

Diseased ash trees have progressively weakened over several years of disease and many are now very brittle. It is important for those in control of operations, and operators themselves, to ensure that:

- A competent person properly plans all tree work, including specific consideration of the risks presented by diseased trees. Planning needs to be site and tree specific.
- Mechanisation should be used whenever possible, using tree shears and grapple saws – many of which offer a range of reach and scope. Some arborists will use Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) to avoid climbing a brittle ash tree.
- Mechanised assistance (winches) sometimes needs to be used to reach more inaccessible trees.

*continued on p59*

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*continued from p57*

• Those undertaking the work must have the correct training and experience and should be supervised and monitored.

FISA is a coalition of representatives from leading industry organisations and is determined to raise the standard of health, safety, and welfare in forestry – working closely with the Arboricultural Association, joining efforts on driving safety in tree work.

An outcome of this joint working is the published safety guide FISA 608 Tree Shear & Grapple Saw. This guidance provides recommendation on the safe working practices to be followed when operating mechanised tree shear and grapple saw equipment. In July 2022 FISA published the outline for suitable training for the user of Tree Shear & Grapple Saw.

FISA safety messages increasingly focus on the drive for mechanised tree felling to become the norm on sites with diseased ash trees. With technological progression of mechanisation, we're seeing a growing range of suitable carrier vehicles and hydraulic cranes fitted with tree shears or grapple saws; the need for working at height is also reduced/removed.

We're pleased that a growing number of contractors have this kind of equipment, and we hope that continues. The more we can encourage the industry to mechanise, the better. However, as with all mechanised work, there are still some risks: for example, chain shot, whereby if a chain is broken, bits of it could injure the operator or others in the vicinity.

Part of the problem in tree work can be

the lack of planning and proper preparation; it is high risk work with the added unknown from the tree. Each tree and site present different risks.

It's all about going through the hierarchy of risk control and assessing how to manage forestry works at every step. Risk control starts with questions like:

- Does the tree actually need to be removed?
- If the tree needs to be felled, can the work be done mechanically?



**Clark,  
FISA CEO**

**highlights:** "It fills me with dread when we receive a call from someone who has recently bought a chainsaw and wants to know where they can get a training certificate to clear some dead ash.

"Effectively, they want to tackle the worst possible trees with virtually no experience. Mechanisation must always be the first thought, planning the work is crucial, and ultimately competency is vital, both for those planning and those carrying out the work."

• What type of machinery is needed to get the job done safely?

• If the job can't be done mechanically, is it safe for an operator to complete the work?

The winter storms of 2021/2022 brought down more than eight million trees in the UK. Lingered storm damaged trees (on their side, snapped or hung-up) present timber of a different proposition to standing timber. Many under tension can spring violently when released by cutting and chainsaw operators may also be at risk of being crushed by the root plate.

It is essential that anyone using a chainsaw at work should have received adequate training and possess the desired level of competency. FISA continues to raise the profile of the need for competency to help those who directly employ and/or engage chainsaw operators undertake the necessary checks to ensure that they have the desired level of consolidated practice.

### **Forestry Works Manager Competency CPD Framework**

The Forestry Works Manager (FWM) role and associated responsibilities are laid out in the FISA Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry (GMHSF) document.

The FWM is pivotal in ensuring safety, health and welfare standards are established, implemented, and maintained with the aim of protecting all site personnel along with others who may be affected by the work, including third party visitors and members of the public.

The FWM CPD framework, now on the FISA website, lays out the core areas of Health & Safety Competence required for those with FWM responsibilities and supports the role as defined in the GMHSF document.

It is essential that those fulfilling the role of the FWM be competent to do so. This includes identifying limitations within organisations and individuals and recognising when it is necessary to acquire competent assistance. The framework also emphasises the essential skill of effective leadership.

Typical tasks that may be delivered by those engaged in the role of a FWM, fully or partially, are indicated in the Core Health & Safety Skills and Operational Hazard tables in the framework. Organisations and individuals may use these tables to identify or review competency, both within their organisations or in the individuals involved:

- for the work scope they deliver;
- for a change or extension of their scope of work;
- following a change in their management structure which may affect the delivery of the FWM role.

As an interim position, the existing FISA FWM one day awareness training remains to support during the industry adoption of the new FWM CPD system. For those still wanting this course, please confirm your interest with [training@ukfisa.com](mailto:training@ukfisa.com).



# Times they are a-changing



**Andrew Smith**, Forestry Lecturer at Scottish School of Forestry, UHI

This year has certainly seen a rocky start. Whilst many people were optimistically looking forward to leaving the pandemic behind as the world opens up again, Covid-19 is never too far away in the news.

Then we have Mr Putin, who decided he needed to invade Ukraine and set in motion economic sanctions designed to halt his war machine. Whether or not they have the intended effect remains to be seen, but they have certainly impacted our everyday lives.

First, the widely reported cost-of-living increase hasn't helped matters, hitting everything from the food in your shopping trolley to the energy powering our homes and businesses.

Demand is outstripping supply everywhere. And, of course, energy and raw material price increases for the manufacturer have led to costs for the consumer,

with 5% price increases per calendar quarter affecting some brands.

### Tough on the pocket

The big price hike on a lot of people's minds currently is the price of diesel.

I know of at least one large harvesting contractor whose weekly diesel bill has risen by a staggering amount. Forestry and agriculture are still permitted to use red diesel, but that has increased in price from around £0.52 per litre last year to £1.23 per litre (excluding VAT) here in the north of Scotland. For contractors working on a basis of 1 litre per 1m<sup>3</sup> for a harvester, that is a substantial increase.

White diesel too has become more expensive, and is currently hovering around £1.60 per litre (excluding VAT) or nearly £2 per litre including VAT. This substantial increase affecting people heading to work on sites, hauliers (remember, a loaded tim-

ber lorry would be doing well to return 7 miles per gallon), and processors who are no longer permitted to use red diesel in their yard machinery.

Availability of new equipment and spare parts has also been affected, with stories of 15-month long lead times for new lorries becoming less uncommon, particularly in forestry where bespoke requirements are often necessary.

### A continual climb

Then there's the big one: inflation. At the time of writing, it sits at the highest rate for 40 years, around 9.1% with an expectation it will exceed 11% by the end of the year. Economists are predicting that inflation will stay higher for longer in the UK, with projections indicating that it will not return to pre-pandemic levels until Q4 2023.

*continued on p63*



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Following the implementation of FISA 608, we have recently launched **Safe Use of Tree Shears and Grapple Saws Training**; providing competency training to those who operate tree shears and grapple saws, at work.

We are also excited to announce that we now deliver **Forest Works Manager Training**; in line with FISA requirements and recommendations for FWM continual professional development (CPD).

**Come and see us at this years APF Exhibition 2022, stand 195-205 OUT, to discuss your Training, Assessment and Refresher requirements.**

## PONSSE

Ponsse recently added two new models to their range of purpose-built harvesting machinery, namely the Scorpion Giant harvester and the Mammoth forwarder. The Scorpion Giant was not unexpected and was released in response to feedback from users who liked the Scorpion format but wanted to fit the Ponsse H8 harvester head for increased capacity.

The new harvester does share some similarities with the smaller Scorpion and Scorpion King machines, including the Active Crane and the award-winning frame lock. New features include the Future Cabin and greater lift capacity – a necessity for the larger harvester head offering.

However, in somewhat of a surprise move, Ponsse also released the new Mammoth forwarder. With a load rating of 25 tonnes and an empty weight approaching 29 tonnes, the new machine certainly has mammoth proportions!

It's worth remembering that Ponsse are a global brand and this machine is more likely aimed at the South American and Australian markets, but we know what UK contractors are like – someone will have to have one!

## VALTRA

Well known tractor manufacturer Valtra released their G series tractors in 2020. The range features five models, all fitted with 4.4 litre Agco engine and outputs ranging from 103-135hp (110-145hp with the boost function). These compact machines would be ideal in front of a forwarding trailer.

The G series was awarded the prestigious title of Utility Tractor of the Year 2022 at the Farm Machine awards in March.

Therefore, there is some excitement brewing with the announcement of a



new tractor range from Valtra, the Q series. With 2 September 2022 slated as the official launch date, details are a little sketchy at present. However, you can expect a tractor to fill the gap between the popular T series and the high horsepower S series, and it's likely to include the iconic Vario transmission from Valtra's stable-mate Fendt.

Perhaps a tractor suited to those of you who do a lot of road work, or power-hungry tasks such as chipping or mulching? More details, once we know them, will follow in a future edition.

## STIHL

Stihl have been producing battery powered equipment for both commercial and domestic users for some time now. The range for professional users includes pole



pruners, brushcutters, chainsaws and hedge trimmers to name but a few.

Some of the key attributes of this equipment are reduced noise, great for working in urban areas and communicating; reduced vibration – if it is not running it is not vibrating; and batteries that can be used across a range of machinery.

The most recent addition to the range is the MSA 300 Cordless Chainsaw, their most powerful cordless chainsaw to date. Fitted with .325 chain, the MSA 300 is capable of running up to an 18" bar. The speed setting can also be adjusted at the flick of a switch, permitting chain speeds of 20/24 and 30m/s depending on the task and user preference.

Fitted with the AP 500S battery, typical usage time will vary between approximately 20 and 44 minutes, depending on bar length and the type of work being carried out. While this may not seem very long, bear in mind how much a saw is actually actively used over the course of a day.

Stihl expect a battery to last up to 10 years based on around 253 charging cycles per year.

cently hit the market or is expected to very soon (see above).

## Brighter days ahead

Storm Arwen brought a stressful end to 2021 for many of you, as did the subsequent storms we experienced throughout the winter. Coupes were flattened long before their scheduled harvesting date, and others which were due suddenly became a much more challenging task to tackle.

Though the recovery operation may not be complete, most will now know what they have to deal with and will be working through it as quickly as possible. I do hope that you will now have an opportunity to take a well-deserved summer holiday, be that at home or abroad. Enjoy.

*continued from p60*

Not only does high inflation mean that things physically cost more, but it also usually means that interest rates will increase too. The Bank of England base rate was increased to 1.25% in June – the highest since January 2009 – with the money men predicting it will be around 2% by the end of the year. As the next date for a decision is scheduled for 4 August, this may have risen again since writing.

In the short to medium term, it seems that most forestry businesses utilising machinery will be looking to make some cost savings or to at least make the business more efficient. Could that take the form of double shifting machinery? Will hybrid ranges of equipment like the Logset 8H

GTE Hybrid, become more common in the UK? Or will alternative fuels become the norm in our industry, with both Scania and Volvo producing fully electric articulated lorries?

All this sounds very gloomy, and that's before we even think about the housing market slowing down. However, as always, the manufacturers whose equipment we rely on day in, day out continue to research and develop new ideas and equipment. After all, to stand still is to actually go backwards.

This month, we'll have a wee look at some of the new equipment that has re-



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# Cutting down the competition

**Richard Hunter** finds out more about the UK Loggers and the skill involved in precision chainsaw competitions.

To be great at any sport requires practice, practice and more practice – something the UK Loggers know all too well.

The concept of the sport is straight forward enough: handle your chainsaw better than the rest of the competitors through a series of precision events. These are all point scored for speed, accuracy and safety.

First is changing the bar and chain on your chainsaw, which you then can't tweak or even touch before the first cutting event. I have seen new competitors try to gain time on the chain change only for the chain to come off while cutting, losing more points than they gained before.

The bucking by combined cuts is next; competitors cut a disc off both logs, ensuring that the cuts meet within the painted mid-section and are at perfect right angles. Plus, just for added difficulty, the logs are not set at 90°: one is tilted up, the other down.

Precision bucking is next. It requires you to cut a disc from two separate logs while they are sat level on a board. The base of the log is hidden in sawdust and, if you hit the board, you score zero.

Of course, as this competition is based around the traditional skills of a chainsaw operator, it wouldn't be complete without a felling event. Competitors must fell a tree as close to the pre-set mark as possible in under three minutes, with all cuts made within the set parameters.

This is done either with real trees, or with poles set in the ground. Once felled you also have to limb your tree. Speed matters but so does the cleanliness of the cuts; stubs or stem damage greater than 5mm loses points.

The final event is a four-person team relay involving cutting disks off standing or laying poles. Bonus points are awarded if the cut disc remains on the upright pole. This event is just an extra bit of fun and does not count towards the scores of the individual or team competitions.

So, all in all, those who compete in the UK Loggers must be better than good.

For several years, the group has been keen to bring new people into the competition, hosting annual training competitions at colleges such as Newton Rigg, Sparsholt, Coleg Cambria and Reaseheath. These events allow the group to come together and hone their skills with some friendly competition.



Photo credit: DRL Photography

**“IT IS A TESTAMENT TO THE UK TEAM THAT THEY SELF-FUND THEIR TRAVEL TO THE WORLD STAGE.”**

While working at the Rigg, I promoted the competition to the students as a way to get to know their peers and potential future employers. It worked well until I was challenged to enter and was promptly beaten by my own students!

At least one of them has since qualified for the UK team at the next World Championships in Estonia.

The UK Loggers competition is a way to promote our industry in the sector, to the public, and around the world. We have highly skilled professionals in the UK, and I would urge anyone who has not thrown themselves into this competition to give it a try. If cutting is not your thing, then become a judge and make sure that the high standards are upheld.

The competition categories are split into professionals and under 24s. There is also usually a separate prize for the best newcomer. The top three professionals and highest placed under 24s from the UK competition then form the team that competes at the World Championships.

These are held in different countries every two years and the UK has won world medals since 1994 in many of the categories and classes. While some of our competitors are sponsored with equipment from Stihl and Husqvarna for use at the big competitions, the majority are not and purchase their own equipment.

It is a testament to the UK team that they self-fund their travel to the world stage, something entrants from other countries do not.

The group is dependent on the good will of the industry to get by. The high prices of timber for felling and bucking and preparation of limbing poles which need to be turned and sawn all put pressure on the group's limited finances.

Practice sites such as the colleges are hosted in good faith and the prizes donated by judges, ex-competitors or forestry organisations.

The UK team are representing on the world stage, so we should be supporting them and ensuring they look the part when they get there. Long-term commitments would mean that this group of highly skilled chainsaw professionals will be able to continue to promote safe working practice and high cutting standards to other chainsaw users in our industry.

**Contact** For more information visit [www.UKloggers.co.uk](http://www.UKloggers.co.uk).

# The world beneath your feet

**Dr Frank Ashwood**, a Soil Ecologist at Forest Research, walks us through the importance of forest soil biodiversity.

## Soils are a major biodiversity reserve

If I asked you to close your eyes and imagine the biodiversity of a forest, you might picture walking through the trees and observing mammals, birds, ground plants, and the insects flying past in a blur of tiny wings. But dare I say this would be missing the wood for the trees, since most of the biological diversity in forests lies hidden beneath your feet.

It may not seem like it at first glance, but soil is one of the most biodiverse habitats on Earth. In fact, most terrestrial systems have more biomass in their soil than they do above ground, and there is more carbon locked in the soil beneath a forest than in the trees above.

To many people, soil may look inert and frankly a bit dull, but it is a highly complex living system, maintained by a myriad of wonderful and often bizarre-looking creatures, occupying a wide variety of ecological niches, and ranging in size from almost-invisible microscopic organisms to large, burrowing mammals.

The immense biodiversity in soil is intimately linked to the delivery of many of the ecosystem services that we depend upon, such as climate regulation, carbon and nutrient storage and cycling, flood mitigation and food and timber production.

## Life at multiple scales

Soil ecologists like myself tend to categorise the diversity of soil life into convenient groups based on their body size and the functional roles they play in the soil. The smallest soil organisms, the bacteria and



© Frank Ashwood

**A typical soil mesofauna sample from the mineral soil in a Sitka spruce plantation**

fungi, are invisible to the naked eye (less than 0.01 mm in size) and are termed 'microbes'.

These are the master chemists of the soil world, breaking down dead organic matter and converting nutrients into available forms for plants and other organisms to utilise. Soil microbes can cooperate with other soil organisms (through symbiosis) or compete with them (e.g., pathogenic fungi or bacteria).

For example, most trees in temperate forests form ectomycorrhizal fungi associations, enabling the trees to take up es-

sential nutrients by increasing the surface area of their roots with fungal hyphae, providing greater soil-to-root contact. There's a mind-boggling number of these various micro-organisms in soil - in fact, there are more microbes in a teaspoon of soil than there are humans on earth.

Moving up a body size category, we get to the 0.1 mm long 'microfauna', which include tardigrades and nematode worms. These tiny animals live mainly in the water held within small pore spaces in the soil, where they regulate microbial populations and help break down organic matter. Incredibly, it's estimated that one in five animals on Earth is a nematode worm.

The next body size category is the 'mesofauna' (0.1 mm to 2 mm in body size), which are microarthropods such as springtails, mites, pseudoscorpions, and countless other strange looking creatures. They tend to live in larger air-filled soil pores or in leaf litter, and actively digest soil organic matter, as well as regulating microbes and microfauna through feeding on them and on each other.

Then come the macrofauna (> 2 mm body size), which are truly the underappreciated workhorses of the soil. These

**"Forest soil fungi and invertebrate communities are intrinsically linked and shaped by the tree species present in a woodland. As tree relatedness diverges, so do the fungi and invertebrates in the soil beneath them.**

**"These are important considerations where we have ambitions to expand woodland cover in the UK for carbon capture and to 'diversify' forest stands to enhance resilience. There is evidence that combining tree species with contrasting**

**traits will enhance the diversity of soil fungal and invertebrate communities with related benefits in terms of improved tree access to nutrients, nutrient cycling and carbon stabilisation.**

**"Taking a successional forestry approach in former unplanted land may also improve planting success and carbon capture targets by helping woodland soil fungal and invertebrate communities regain a foothold."**

**Dr Nadia Barsoum**



**A rosy-tipped earthworm (*Aporrectodea rosea*)** © Frank Ashwood

are the earthworms, ants and termites - animals which are often called 'ecosystem engineers' because they are so effective at moving soil around, creating air space and incorporating surface organic material into the soil, making it available to all the other soil organisms.

Finally, the largest soil animals are the megafauna; vertebrates such as mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, who regulate the populations of earthworms and other invertebrates through predation, and create large open burrow networks in the soil, facilitating water and air movement beneath the forest floor.

### Soil biodiversity is essential for healthy forest soils

In all forests, soil biodiversity is key for healthy ecosystem function, but the complexity of soil biological communities can vary greatly depending on soil type, forest type and climatic region. Forest soils have different inherent characteristics based on their geology and development, and are influenced by a wide range of biotic and abiotic factors that determine which organisms are present and how effectively



**A pseudoscorpion hunting for prey in compost** © Frank Ashwood



**Ectomycorrhizal fungi (*Scleroderma* sp.) on oak roots** © Nadia Barsoum

soil processes are carried out. In temperate deciduous forests on good nutrient soils, dominant tree species and soil type are defining factors for the soil communities present, which may be very diverse and highly locally abundant. Conversely in boreal coniferous forests, the low pH and nutrient-poor soils result in less diverse soil communities dominated by fungi and small arthropods. Surprisingly, soil biodiversity in tropical forests tends to be lower in comparison to its characteristically high aboveground biodiversity, although our understanding of tropical soils remains limited. Regardless of type, across all forests there is an intimate link between soil biodiversity and soil functions, particularly organic matter decomposition and nutrient cycling. Effective carbon and nutrient cycling are essential to the healthy function of forest soils and is largely regulated by soil organisms.

### Threats to forest soil biodiversity

Soil biodiversity is highly sensitive to environmental changes, and globally forest soil communities face huge threats from invasive species, climate change and deforestation for agriculture.

Deforestation and land-use change typically result in high levels of disturbance and the loss of soil structure, nutrients, and organic matter, which can irreversibly reduce soil species diversity. Since healthy and stable forest soil food webs are dependent on continuous inputs of organic matter from forest cover, forest management practices (e.g., cultivation, drainage, planting, harvesting, prescribed fire and brush management) have the potential to influence soil biodiversity and the delivery of associated soil functions.

As a rule, management approaches which reduce soil disturbance and retain forest microhabitats such as deadwood, help to protect soil biodiversity and function.

### Monitoring forest soil biodiversity

Despite its importance, soil biodiversity is still a poorly studied area of research, and this is doubly so for forest soils. With limited large-scale data that links soil animal diversity with soil and ecosystem functions, we have little idea of how soil biodiversity will respond to global drivers of ecosystem change.

To help tackle this, myself and colleagues such as Dr Elena Vanguelova and Dr Nadia Barsoum at Forest Research are at the forefront of coordinated global efforts to monitor forest soil biodiversity and soil and ecosystem functions.

One such global partnership is The Soil Biodiversity Observation Network (Soil-BON) and their Foodweb Team, a community dedicated to observation, understanding, and prediction of soil biodiversity across spatial, temporal, and taxonomic scales. This research network shares common sampling protocols, experimental projects, knowledge and datasets on soil animal communities to help conserve soil biodiversity and manage future threats.

Forest Research is also leading on a national assessment of forest soil biodiversity over the next five years for the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) science innovation and transformation programme. By collaborating with partners such as Natural England and Fera Science Ltd, and aligning sampling within the National Forest Inventory and the EU's ICP Forest Long term monitoring network (BioSoil), we hope to better understand and value the contribution of soil biodiversity to forest ecosystem function.

These projects, alongside many others, are working to help ensure the protection of forest soil biodiversity to deliver sustainable forest systems and ecosystem services for future generations.

If you would like to further information on the projects mentioned above, or to find out how you can help support forest soil biodiversity research in the UK, please visit the Forest Research website or contact Dr Frank Ashwood (francis.ashwood@forestry.gov.uk).



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# New timber technology centre to teach next generation of engineers

To help meet the demand for the next generation of timber engineers, a new specialist timber training centre in Herefordshire will open its doors this summer.

Led by Professor Robert Hairstans, seconded from Edinburgh Napier University, the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT) at the New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering (NMITE) in Hereford aims to become a leading national location in timber education.

NMITE is a higher education institution which opened to students in 2021. Aiming to create industry-ready graduates, NMITE collaborates with industry partners and SMEs to share knowledge and practical skills.

## Exemplar building

The CATT building is an exemplar in timber technology and design, with biophilic design principles at its heart. Architect Bond Bryan has left as many surfaces as possible exposed within the building so that students can clearly see the different elements of a building's inner workings and how it is constructed.

Designed to be a 'living lab' the building itself will act as a research centre and incorporates a series of 48 sensors to collect data on thermal, acoustic and structural performance with feedback loops to digital models carrying out performance evaluation.

Working with Stora Enso, who supplied the cross-laminated timber for the building, the data will be shared with industry professionals including insurance and warranty

providers so that the building itself can be an information source. Data will be shared over time for the benefit of the whole timber industry to inform further innovation in timber engineering.

The new facilities house two 700sq m workshops and a 2,500sq m building accommodating five studios for classroom learning. In addition, there are breakout spaces for informal teaching, continuing professional development (CPDs) and spaces for the wider industry to hold events.

NMITE's aim is to showcase the wide variety of ways timber can be used in construction and architecture. The buildings incorporate wood and steel, using a combination of cross-laminated timber (CLT) panels for the external walls and ceiling, internal and external glulam beams, and timber insulated closed panels. Internally, acoustic panelling and exposed oriented strand board (OSB) lining to the back of the timber insulated panels has been used within the CATT workshop.

Externally, the walls are clad in larch for its natural durability and the workshop spaces utilise additional metal panels. The timber has been left in its natural state where possible, with UV treatment to the external elements.

## Environmental benefits

The buildings take advantage of bioclimatic design and are positioned to minimise

heat gain whilst maximising natural light. The studio spaces face west and have solar shading provided by a series of timber battens that continue the language of the timber façade.

The studios also benefit from northlights that bring natural light into the spaces. In contrast, the workshops have slim slot windows to minimise solar gain from the south.

Embracing offsite construction and the local supply chain, all timber and steel panels, frames and beams were manufactured elsewhere before being delivered to site and slotted easily into place. The local workforce was heavily involved in the construction project, bringing real benefit to the Hereford economy.

A pedestrian path has been extended from the centre of Hereford to the CATT to encourage eco-friendly travel and the site includes shelters for 60 bicycles.

## Centre of excellence

The educational approach of NMITE is to combine student-centric learning with a curriculum focused on real-world challenges.

NMITE's timber educational programme was developed in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University and with its hands-on model of teaching and learning, the university aims to deliver the next generation of work-ready engineers.

CATT will welcome its first cohort of students in September 2022.



Photo credit: Bond Bryan



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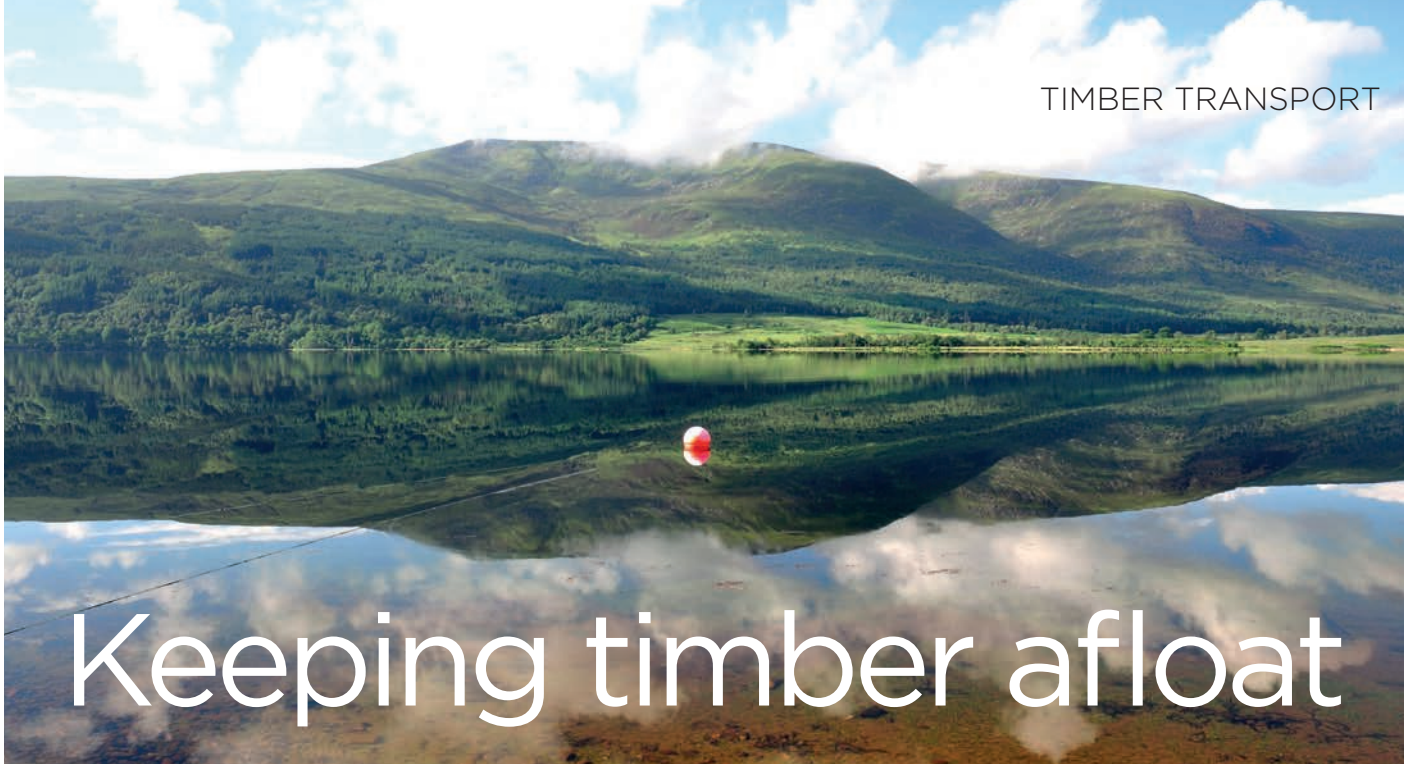


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# Keeping timber afloat

Earlier this year, Scottish Forestry received an unusual Strategic Timber Transport Scheme application from Creel Consulting on behalf of the Woodland Trust Scotland. **Paul Boobyer** examines why Loch Arkaig is the perfect cast-off point for a battery-powered timber barge.

Loch Arkaig runs from east to west near Spean Bridge, around 10 miles north of Fort William. It's known for its scenic beauty, diversity of wildlife and a 1,092-hectare remnant of ancient Caledonian pine forest on the south shore.

The forest is comprised of two blocks: Glen Mallie and the Gusach (Gaelic for 'pinewood') and include significant areas of planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS), as well as upland birch and oak stands and wet woodland.

The forest is a haven for wildlife, including ospreys, pine martens, red squirrels and wild boar.

Arkaig Community Forest and Woodland Trust Scotland bought the forest for £500,000 from Forest Enterprise Scotland in 2016 under the National Forest Land Scheme. A further £4 million has been invested in restoration efforts by the partnership, mainly extracting non-native trees, removing invasive *Rhododendron ponticum*, and managing herbivore impacts.

The project also received an award of £750,000 from players of People's Postcode Lottery. Arkaig Community Forest have formal ownership of two areas of the forest, which total around 53 hectares.

## Timber extraction

Woodland Trust Scotland's management strategy includes removing non-native trees. Some naturalised species such as beech may remain; although these are a minor component of a few stands, and their regeneration will be prevented.

Currently, a track allows timber to be extracted from the eastern end of the forest. However, extraction from the western forest compartments isn't possible due to the nature of the terrain, so additional for-

est tracks and bridges would need to be constructed to enable harvester and forwarder access.

Given the environmentally sensitive nature of the forest and the costs involved in building forest roads and bridges, the best way to extract the timber to roadside is by barging it across the loch from four landing areas to a stacking area on the north side of the loch, which would be accessed from an adjacent public road.

Whilst pollution of water bodies is always serious and to be avoided, it is particularly important while transporting timber across Loch Arkaig, as smolts (young salmon) are reared in the loch prior to being sold to fish farms. The loch is also a popular destination for recreational fishing.

## Electric-powered barge

Woodland Trust Scotland, in collaboration with Creel Consulting and JST Services, have come up with a novel solution to eliminate the potential, albeit unlikely, of pollution of the water environment.

They plan on using a unique, electric-

powered barge to transport a loaded forwarder (running on HVO fuel and bio-oil) to the landing and stacking area on the north shore, which is hoped to be constructed as part of this project. Planning consent for the barge landing and timber stacking areas has yet to be granted.

The application for a funding contribution from the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) includes an EV charging unit at the north shore landing area. Power would be supplied from the national grid.

Notably, moveable infrastructures like barges are not eligible for STTS funding. However, JST Services, who will own and operate the barge if the project goes ahead, have offered to construct the vessel without grant funding. The barge will enable access to around 29,000m<sup>3</sup> of softwood timber.

The other benefit of using an electric-powered barge is of course the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

According to calculations by Creel Consulting, using electricity rather than diesel would result in a reduction of nearly 317 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over a 3-year period, which is equivalent to the emissions produced from heating around 117 homes for a year.

Emissions from building a forest road would also be avoided and, as Woodland Trust Scotland intend for the forest to remain as remote and wild as possible, avoiding the construction of a forest road through the site is a priority.

This electric barge may be the first of its kind in the world and is a tangible example of the decarbonisation of the timber haulage sector. It is likely that in the years ahead, the STTS will receive more applications for projects that facilitate decarbonisation as the timber haulage sector evolves.

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to legend, there is a chest buried somewhere in the forests of Loch Arkaig containing gold brought from France to support the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Allies of Bonnie Prince Charlie reputedly hid in the woods during the period, and gold coins found in 1850 support this tale. Harvesters and foresters in the area may be on track to uncover a hidden treasure!



# Deserving of its popularity

**Eamonn Wall** gets behind the wheel of Volvo's bestselling SUV, the XC60



Following the original introduction 12 years ago of the XC90, Volvo's very successful large SUV, Volvo soon introduced a smaller version: the XC60.

A second generation XC60 was launched a few years ago and recently got a refresh with slight cosmetic changes. The new car is priced from £42,485 for the two-wheel drive petrol, and £43,370 for the four-wheel drive tested here. A petrol hybrid is available from £53,070 and there's a wide range of models to choose from.

This Momentum B4 AWD diesel entry model tested here came with some extras, giving an on the road price of £48,205. The 2-litre engine provides 197bhp and 420 NM of torque, and is the only diesel available. The more powerful B5 diesel engine, available on the XC90, is not an option on the XC60.

It has a top speed of 112mph, being Volvo's new upper limit, and accelerates from 0-60mph in 7.8 seconds. It weighs 1,898kg and is 4,708mm long and 2,117mm wide, which compares to the larger XC90 at 4,953mm and 1,856mm respectively.

Volvo's current interior design style was heralded by the launch of the new XC90 six years ago and it has since been adopted by all new models. The second generation XC60 was no exception and it's a unique and well-designed interior for sure.

The XC60 is a good size with a useful sized boot. The rear seats fold down giving a flat area which slopes slightly upwards. The fuel tank holds 71 litres and, in my hands, averaged 38mpg, though 40mpg should be achievable. The car can tow a 2,400kg braked trailer and ground clearance measures at 216mm, so makes it a useful country car.

Standard features include the 8-speed automatic gearbox, the 9-inch centre console touchscreen, automatic headlights with active high beam, rear parking camera, front and rear parking sensors, power-operated tailgate, cruise control, heated front seats and 18-inch alloy wheels.

The test drive car had optional interior lighting and bending headlights, heated rear seats and heated steering wheel, a fancy stereo, a temporary spare wheel and jack (£150 and very necessary in this busi-

ness) and 19-inch wheels.

The interior is a very comfortable place to spend time, though the cream leather seats would not suit forestry. The central screen controls all functions and personally, I do prefer when the heating controls are physical knobs.

The XC60 is a very nice car to drive, handling well and braking without fuss. The auto gearbox works decently, and the car feels nippy without being overly fast. The engine noise is not as well insulated as in the XC90, but it's fairly quiet really – just a little whinny if you are doing a lot of back road driving, going through the gears.

Power goes to the front wheels and, once slippage has been encountered, power is diverted to the rear wheels.

The colour, wheel and chrome window surround on this particular model work really well, making the vehicle look very smart. I enjoyed my time with it.

*Eamonn Wall is a forestry consultant and Managing Director of Eamonn Wall & Co Woodland Design and Management.*





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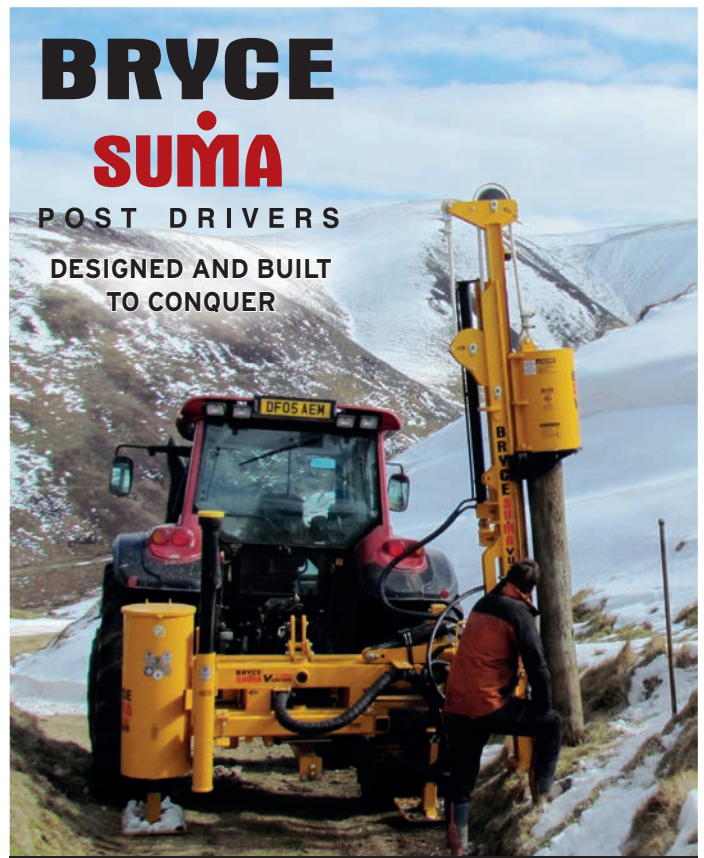
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Becoming an ambassador:

# Promoting forestry in schools

The question of how to get forestry into schools has been talked over and over. However, now that forestry is officially a STEM subject, we have a new avenue to explore.

For me, forestry is the ultimate STEM subject. Other industries may claim to cover it all but let's be honest: Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths - that's forestry all over.

STEM Learning is a nationwide organisation that promotes the four topics throughout the school curriculum by hosting events for pupils and teachers, and by connecting industry to schools via their STEM Ambassador Programme.

Due to Covid, the STEM team hadn't hosted a large-scale event for a few years but, with nothing stopping them, they went big for STEMfest Net Zero. From 4 - 6 July, St James' Park, Newcastle, hosted over 2,000 school children, from primary ages to end of secondary. The Northumberland Forest Partnership, led by Mark Child, hosted a forestry stand and asked for help from industry representatives.

I jumped at the chance along with Egger, Savills & Forest England.

As we were dealing with children, we needed to make the stand as appealing and interactive as possible - they don't want to just be talked at. I created a set of wooden jigsaws - thin cut discs, dried, sanded and cut into a few pieces. No matter the age of the pupil, they all wanted a go at a puzzle and from there, it was an easy conversation about growth rings, tree age, carbon sequestration, and carbon storage in timber products with some examples on the stand.

The stand also benefited from other

**Richard Hunter** went along to STEMfest Net Zero in Newcastle to help inspire young kids towards a career in forestry. He shares his highlights from the event.

sponsors; Tree Please donated several species of conifers which gave the stand a connection to the outside world, something that was missing from the other exhibitors. Although we were keen to promote the many different roles within forestry, the battery chainsaw provided by Stihl did get a lot of attention, especially as Forestry England's James Ramskir-Gardiner spent the day dressed in full PPE. This generated many questions which allowed for natural conversation about forestry in so many ways.

The event wasn't just about getting the children interested - we needed to make sure the forestry message landed with teachers as well. Thankfully, by the time we had finished, every one of them was completely sold.

Each school left with a bag of trees (a mix of broadleaves and conifers), provided by Forest England and ready to plant. It was very encouraging to hear that many of the schools already have a gardening, wildlife or eco club - all great ways to link in education on the role of trees.

The key will be getting children thinking positively about trees from an early age and recognising that they are a harvestable crop.

All three days were extremely busy, but the positive comments and feedback were great to hear from pupils, teachers, STEM staff and other exhibitors.

## How to get involved

The STEM Ambassador Programme can be accessed by any school across the UK. On the website, schools can book guest speakers or highlight events they are hosting and want ambassadors to help with. Having become a STEM Ambassador recently, I can testify the process is easy and painless: a simple form, online tutorial about pupil safety and a paid for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Once signed up, the website will suggest events best suited to your skills. I've been matched with obvious ones like careers fairs, as well as 'Biology - how it can lead to a STEM career' as an example.

At the moment, schools know very little about UK forestry and the STEM network is a way to change that. These are opportunities to access schools on their terms rather than trying to 'break in'.

Anyone who does sign up as an ambassador will have access to a lot of great resources. You don't need to reinvent the wheel. The Forestry STEM Ambassadors pack produced by Lantra and endorsed across the sector has ideas for all age groups and links to appropriate materials. Plus, the jigsaws I created are available for anyone to use - or are easy to make yourself!

I encourage anyone considering becoming a STEM Ambassador to get in touch and find out more: [richard.hunter@confor.org.uk](mailto:richard.hunter@confor.org.uk).

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# School pupils given chance to showcase work at the Scottish School of Forestry

**Eleanor O'Neill** joined students and teachers in Inverness for the latest Young Engineers and Science Clubs event.

Young learners from primary and secondary schools across Highland and Moray descended on the Scottish School of Forestry in June for SCDI's Young Engineers and Science Clubs (YESC) Regional Celebration of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths).

The YESC programme seeks to encourage young people across Scotland to take an interest in and get involved with STEM subjects at an early level, opening up career paths beyond the classroom.

For this reason, hands-on challenges and opportunities to learn were the order of the day.

Industry volunteers and partners provided a series of five-minute, interactive sessions focusing on teamwork and problem solving. The pupils competed in timber construction and tree identification challenges set by Tilhill and the Scottish Forestry Trust among other head-scratching STEM activities.

Thanks to the event's location, the school groups also took part in a tour of the Scottish School of Forestry. Guides showed them through the surrounding woodland and working yard, explaining what students learn and the varied career routes available within the forestry sector.

Finally, the clubs each presented evidence of their STEM projects to compete for the titles of 'Club of the Year' (primary and secondary). I was delighted to be asked to help judge the entries and found



- **Primary STEM Challenge Winner:** Avoch Primary
- **Secondary STEM Challenge Winner:** Elgin High School
- **Climate Smarter Primary Winner:** Muirtown Primary
- **Climate Smarter Secondary Winner:** Culloden Academy
- **Primary Regional Club of the Year Winner:** Kyleakin Primary
- **Secondary Regional Club of the Year Winner:** Charleston Academy

the awareness of real-world issues among the 60 pupils who presented their work to be extremely impressive.

Sustainable and environmentally friend-

ly solutions to energy consumption, construction and urban planning were common themes, along with ambitious plans to build cars and rockets.

Trophies were also awarded for the Climate Smarter project models on display. YESC provides schools with the resources and training for pupils to reimagine their surroundings using sustainable materials, energy storage, and smart technologies.

Rooftop gardens, water wheels and playgrounds that store kinetic energy stood out in the imagined school buildings.

Confor and the Scottish Forestry Trust have committed to be a sponsor of the Climate Smarter initiative for three years, and we are grateful to Dave Mills of BSW and Logie for supplying the wood samples for the school packs.

Choosing the day's winners was not an easy task but the prizes went to the teams who had presented well and shown real enthusiasm for their projects. All the schools involved should be very proud of what their pupils have achieved.

This event was held in partnership with Confor, Crown Estate Scotland, The Scottish Forestry Trust and The Royal Academy of Engineering Ingenious Award.

Over 1,500 primary and secondary schools are currently a part of the YESC network, engaged in a variety of in-classroom and extracurricular projects to build knowledge and skills.



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# New contraceptive measures to manage grey squirrel population

Oral contraceptives that could significantly reduce grey squirrel populations in the UK are displaying positive results in ongoing research, according to the UK Squirrel Accord (UKSA).

Invasive grey squirrels frequently cause damage to woodlands by stripping bark from young trees aged between 10-50 years. They target broad-leaved varieties, including oak, which are ecologically important because they support so many other species.

It is estimated the UK is home to around three million grey squirrels and these interlopers are also largely responsible for the decline of our own native red squirrel.

UKSA is funding research into a fertility control for grey squirrels that will offer an additional, non-lethal method to manage the population of this species. The resulting oral contraceptive will support reductions in grey squirrel numbers to protect red squirrels and trees.

Laboratory trials are being carried as part of research by a team at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), with further tests being carried out to ensure it is safe and effective.

“The grey squirrel is an invasive species that is causing untold damage in the British countryside,” stated Environment Minister Lord Benyon. “These pests continue to wreck our fledgling broadleaf trees like oak by stripping bark, and disrupting the delicate balance of nature and biodiversity, whilst diminishing our ability to tackle climate change.

“That’s why we continue to support the UK Squirrel Accord and APHA as this important research on oral contraception shows promising signs that could help to eradicate the grey squirrel in the UK in a non-lethal way, as well as helping to recover our beloved red squirrel.”

UKSA is celebrating reaching its funding target for the research phase of the grey squirrel fertility control development.

Vital progress has also been made in developing methods to deliver the oral contraceptives to populations of grey squirrels, which is essential for practical field applications.

APHA has shown that a feed hopper with a weighted door will exclude most other species of wildlife, while still allowing more than 70% of local grey squirrel populations to access and eat from them.

APHA is now testing different methods of keeping red squirrels out of the feeders, so contraceptives could be used in areas where there are both types of squirrel.



## 4 PHASES NEEDED TO DELIVER THE FERTILITY CONTROL ARE:

1. Research and development - ending January 2024
2. Landscape-scale trials - in development
3. Testing for registration - in development
4. Widespread availability of registered methods

So far, research has suggested that body weight could be used to distinguish between greys and reds. No oral contraceptive has been used in the field at this stage of the research.

Kay Haw, Director of the UK Squirrel Accord, said: “Wonderful to see support for this novel work increasing exponentially. We are incredibly thankful to everyone that donated to the research phase.

“Donations came from across the forestry and conservation sectors (including UKSA signatories), private individuals and estates, and grant-making organisations. We will now focus on fundraising for the next key phases of the programme and wider UKSA activities.”

UKSA’s funding focus will now shift to the landscape-scale field trials and testing needed for registration of the final products, and knowledge sharing and awareness raising activities.

Rebecca Isted, Squirrel Policy Advisor, Forestry Commission, commented: “We have supported the grey squirrel oral contraceptive project from its inception and I’m optimistic these trials could eventually lead to a significant change of approach in the management of these animals.

“The Forestry Commission is currently updating the Government’s Grey Squirrel Action Plan, and will set out our plans to better understand and manage the negative impacts of grey squirrels in due course.”

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** or to donate to support this important work, visit [www.squirrelaccord.uk](http://www.squirrelaccord.uk).

# 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

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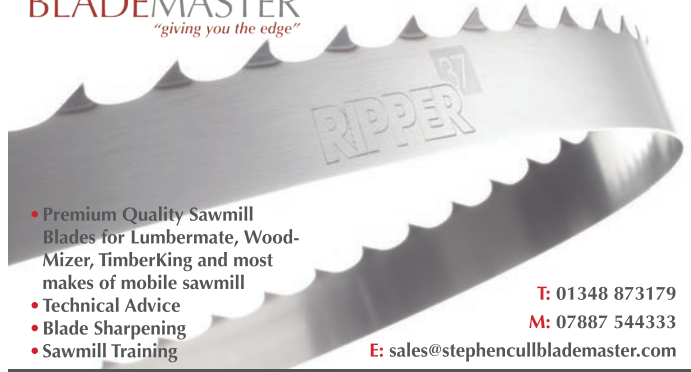


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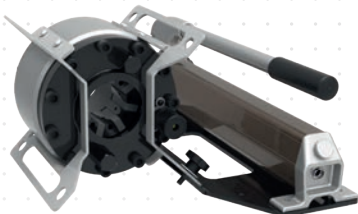
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# Demarcated area expanded in southeast England to combat spread of *Ips typographus*

As part of continued surveillance work, the presence of *Ips typographus* on spruce has now been confirmed at sites in Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey. In response, a revised Notice expanding the already demarcated area in the southeast came into force on 20 July.

Under powers conferred by The Official Controls (Plant Health and Genetically Modified Organisms) (England) Regulations 2019, the Forestry Commission had previously introduced restrictions on the movement and methods of forest operations in a demarcated area to protect the country against this pest.

Confor has met, and continues to meet, with the Forestry Commission and the Defra plant health team to monitor and assist with the eradication of *Ips typographus*.

## What should you do?

All landowners and timber processors in the demarcated area and wider southeast England should remain vigilant for the pest and:

- Check whether they have spruce
- Identify stressed trees
- Consider removing stressed during their next harvesting season

Active management will help reduce the risk of infestation. All suspected symptoms of the bark beetle must be reported to the Forestry Commission via the TreeAlert portal under Plant Health Regulation or, if the pest is suspected in a private residence or nursery, to your local APHA Plant Health Inspector.



Over the longer term, the Forestry Commission is encouraging landowners to remove susceptible spruce (stressed, wind-blown) from this region and replant with other species. There is a Tree Health Pilot this year which provides funding for landowners who are eligible to facilitate this objective.

Additionally, the Forestry Commission has developed a detailed management plan with the objective of eradicating the pest from outbreak sites. The approach is based on the successful management of the 2021 and 2018 outbreaks.

Swift action is taken as soon as findings are confirmed to minimise the risk of spread. Following the discovery of a breeding population of the pest, it is necessary to fell and remove spruce within the immediate vicinity in a biosecure manner to prevent further spread.

At this stage Defra cannot rule out the discovery of further cases in other areas beyond the immediate infestation. If new

information becomes available, or there is a significant up-scale in the level of infestation or number of affected sites, then they will need to review the management approach.

## Further context

The outbreaks of *Ips typographus* in 2021, along with the previous outbreak found in 2018, are believed to have resulted from natural dispersal (blow over) of the pest from the continent. The 2018 outbreak site has been subject to intensive eradication action over the last three years, and all indications are that these efforts have been successful.

It is unlikely that the latest outbreaks are related, and evidence suggests they result from separate incursion events.

As part of the ongoing programme of work to manage the risks of *Ips typographus*, an extensive network of pheromone traps has been positioned across the affected area, to monitor for incursions of beetles from the continent and identify suspect sites.

These traps routinely catch a few beetles (<10), indicating a continual low level of blow-over from the continent. Monitoring activities are also continuing at wood processing facilities/merchants and nurseries trading in large conifer trees.

*Ips typographus* is regulated in the UK as a Quarantine Pest and Defra are obligated to act against the current findings to support maintaining this status.

The beetle poses no threat to human health but can be a serious and destructive pest of spruce tree species.

## Project launched to support management of woodlands in England

A new initiative known as PIES (protect, improve, expand, and sustain) has been initiated in partnership with Sylva Foundation, Forestry Canopy Foundation and Grown in Britain.

The PIES project is providing a network of independent forestry agents to deliver high-quality and standardised advice to landowners, supporting them in planning to comply with the UK Forestry Standard, achieving Grown in Britain certification, and improving access to the Woodland Carbon Code.

Funded by the Trees Call to Action Fund, which was developed by Defra and the Forestry Commission, the program

is being delivered across England by the Heritage Fund.

The PIES team is working closely with the Forestry Commission and the National Farmers Union (NFU) to support engagement, provide advice, and deliver long-term plans to foster and expand resilient woodlands over the next three years.

By combining the strategic work provided by the Sylva Foundation and the efforts of Grown in Britain to support the green economy, the project will provide a joined-up approach, helping landowners meet the objectives of the government's England Trees Action Plan.

Dr Gabriel Hemery, CEO of Sylva Foun-



dation, commented: "We are delighted to be working with our partners to deliver this innovative approach to supporting landowners across England."

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# Celebration and mechanisation themes at Nursery Producers' Group meeting

The Confor Nursery Producers' Group and the Horticultural Trades Association's (HTA) Tree and Hedging Group held a well-attended joint meeting in Elgin and Fochabers in June.

Around 50 attendees took part, visiting Maelor's new site at Darnaway and coming together to celebrate the 202nd birthday of Christies of Fochabers, an event that has been long anticipated to hold in-person.

Representatives from the public sector, including Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Forestry Commission, Defra and Natural Resources Wales, were also there on the day.

The hosts took the opportunity to showcase new machinery being used for soil sterilising, automation in planting, and then in grading.

A five-bed CM Regero steaming machine was on full blast. This is used by a number of nurseries across the UK to sterilise their soil prior to seed sowing, aiding weed and pest control due to the removal of Basamid as chemical sterilant.

Additionally, the warmer the soil, the less steam is required, which saves time and more importantly fuel!

PlantTape's automated treetape planter,



**“THE HOSTS TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE NEW MACHINERY BEING USED.”**

developed as part of a CivTech project and currently undergoing trials with a number of nurseries, was also demonstrated for the Groups.

Christies of Fochabers also showed how they are using technology to transform transplant grading to the benefit of their staff's wellbeing (*pictured above*), integrating raised working platforms; insulation for

a better working environment; use of lasers to grade transplant size; and greater automation of transplant spraying.

All in all, the summer meeting provided insight into the innovations happening in the sector and the Groups welcomed the chance to reconnect face-to-face over shared vested interests.

Nurseries are grateful for recent grants aimed at expanding capacity to meet growing planting targets, as well as to adapt and become more resilient, from the Scottish Government's Harvesting and Processing Grant, Defra's Tree Production Innovation Fund, and the newer Tree Production Capital Grant and Welsh Government's recent Forestry Industry Recovery Scheme (FIRS).

## Emergency approval granted for bracken control

Aerial and ground-based use of 'Asulox' (Asulam) has been given Emergency Approval for the control of bracken in Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the 2022 season.

To ensure that the conditions attached to the approval are complied with, everyone intending to apply Asulox to control bracken must read and understand the full authorisation document and the latest version of the product label. These are available at: [www.brackencontrol.co.uk/asulam](http://www.brackencontrol.co.uk/asulam).

### Key points

- Application is authorised from 1 July 2022.

- To minimise interaction with breeding birds, where feasible, application should take place after 1 August, or as late in July as possible.
- To protect mammals, application is not allowed where the hazel dormouse is known to breed.
- Aerial application has been authorised subject to an aerial spraying permit being obtained: the regulator will provide template application forms.
- There is no change to the no-spray buffer zones included in previous authorisations.
- The Emergency Approval period will end on 12 September for placing Asulox

on the market and for use – no spraying is to take place after this date.

- Returns of unopened containers will be accepted by distributors; it will be illegal to hold stocks of Asulox after 28 October.
- The Emergency Approval period will end on 29th October 2022 for storage and disposal of stocks.

**MORE INFORMATION** Colin Palmer, Rural Services, has prepared guidance on conditions of use in forestry. Visit the Confor website to read the full details of compliance.



## New electric truck taking to the roads in Sweden

Europe's largest private forest owner SCA, together with Scania, has developed the world's first electric timber truck with a capacity of 80 tonnes.

The vehicle was developed in close collaboration with research institute Skogforsk and is the latest advancement by the Swedish company to transition to sustainable transport.

"This is a first concrete step towards electric propulsion in the most difficult part of the landborne transport chain, which is extremely important," said Hans Djurberg, Head of Sustainability at SCA. "This is a global challenge that many have wrestled with and now we are showing together with an innovative partner, Scania, that Swedish industry can drive sustainability development.

"Sustainability and reduced carbon dioxide emissions are important for society as a whole, which means that the business is also dependent on us driving development.

"Our forests and forest products have created enormous climate benefits for a long period of time and our industries are very climate-efficient, which is why it is also obvious with high climate ambitions for our transports."

The truck, which can be driven with a total weight of 64 tonnes on public roads and 80 tonnes on private roads, will be test-driven this summer and monitored by Skogforsk before becoming part of SCA's regular operations.

It will transport timber on the stretch between SCA's timber terminal in Gimonäs and the paper mill in Obbola outside Umeå, building on the already impressive low-carbon credentials of the

mill, which has a virtually fossil-free production process.

Fredrik Allard, Head of E-mobility at Scania, said: "The 80-tonne battery-powered timber truck shows that even really heavy transport can be electrified. The partnership with SCA, is an early show of what is possible, is a clear signal that it is possible to electrify even heavy transport.

"A change of pace is needed to make Sweden fossil-free in time and meet the goal of the Paris Agreement. An electric timber truck is a symbol of something pretty cool. Shipping of timber has been talked about as something that might never be possible to electrify.

"The development in recent years and what we are now presenting together with SCA shows how fast the development is taking place both in terms of vehicles and batteries."

Continuous research will examine energy consumption, productivity, and compare costs against existing vehicles in the supply chain to map out what would be required for a broad implementation of electric timber trucks across the country.



## Confor bids farewell to Sarah Virgo



Since our last edition of *Forestry & Timber News*, the Confor team has said a reluctant bon voyage to Sarah Virgo, our Campaign Manager for Wood for Good and Confor Membership Manager.

Sarah was with us for over two years and in that time, she worked tirelessly to make improvements in all areas of her responsibility. Sarah was instrumental in developing and delivering our Wood CO2t Less campaign which achieved a very high profile across the construction sector and significantly increased the Wood for Good profile on relevant social media platforms.

She was also instrumental in ensuring Wood for Good had a notable presence at COP26 by creating a successful partnership with the then Construction Scotland Innovation Centre, culminating in a conference focusing on increasing the use of timber in construction.

In recent months Sarah has been working closely with Eliza Hibbins-Cline in cleaning up our data holding and developing new Membership benefits which you will hear about soon.

We wish Sarah, her partner Paul, and Luna the dog every success in the future.

## Vimek launch new and improved compact forwarder

The Vimek Next Generation (NG) 870.1 Forwarder is the company's first ever eight-wheeled forwarding machine.

Designed to meet the needs of contractors who need to work at a high pace with elevated levels of production, the forwarder has a load index of 1:1, which means that it loads as much as it weighs, (seven tons empty weight with seven tons load weight).

Sales Manager Johan Johansson said: "The contractors want to maintain a high production during their driving, while the landowner wants as little damage as possible after the end of the driving. Forest owners may not want a 15-tonne machine in their forest during a first thinning. That is why we have chosen to develop our new forwarder Next Generation."

Vimek have previously mainly focused on building smaller machines for self-employed forest owners. This new machine has been researched and developed over

# Forestry and Land Scotland to step up efforts to manage larch disease

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) have announced the integration of pre-emptive felling into day-to-day practices as part of plans to combat the spread of *Phytophthora ramorum*.

The fungus-like pathogen can affect Japanese, European and hybrid larch, and has been spreading aggressively up the west coast of Scotland for the past decade.

Graeme Prest, FLS Director of Land Management and Regions, said: "Like all other land managers in Scotland, we have been playing our part in working to control this disease.

"With no known cure and eradication of the disease considered to be unachievable, the only available counter measure is to slow the pathogen's spread by felling.

"Previously, we have been waiting until the disease arrives at a location and then have responded to the Statutory Plant Health Notice that requires us to fell infected and 'at-risk' trees in the vicinity by a set date.

"But a reactive approach puts a fairly hefty spanner in the works of our normal work programmes. We have to stop planned harvesting works, move people and machinery, deal with the diseased crop and also re-plan the work that we



would normally have been doing. It's a significant challenge for how we manage our resources to best effect for the business."

By planning more pre-emptive felling in key areas, FLS hopes to not only to create breaks in the pathogen's path, but also to be more efficient in the long term.

Graeme continued: "This new approach allows us to get more on the front

foot and build disease management into our annual felling programmes, making the effort to tackle the disease more cost efficient, manageable and sustainable."

Ultimately, FLS aim to remove all larch trees from the land it manages in south-west Scotland by 2032. In the next most vulnerable zone, a minimum of 50% will be felled, and 20% is targeted in the next area.



a couple of years, where the improvement of comfort, load index, innovative technology, and accessibility in various stocks has received the most attention.

Joe Litter from Oakleaf Forestry saw the NG 870.1 Forwarder in action at Elmia-Wood, the world's largest forestry fair. He commented: "It's been super busy. All day people have been coming to see the new machine. It's bigger than Vimex's previous offerings... it's been really well received."

Featuring a brand new Cranab crane with a reach of 6.7m and intelligent boom control specifically designed for this forwarder, it's powered by a 75hp, turbo-charged Caterpillar engine and Bosch Rexroth transmission.

Smart control programs help achieve durable and fast work, despite a relatively small 55Kw engine, and the unique steering bogie and its 7.5 tonne carrying capacity maintains a tight turning radius.

## Bronwin & Abbey acquired by farm business

Leading timber and forestry management firm Bronwin & Abbey Ltd is now part of Velcourt Group, a farming company that manages, invests in, and advises on farms throughout the UK.

Velcourt's Executive Chairman, James Townshend, said Bronwin & Abbey is an excellent fit for the Velcourt business with the increasingly important part that forestry is set to play within the UK's rural land base.

"Many farms and estates are looking to forestry to deliver on the biodiversity and natural capital agendas with an eye on the opportunities from sequestering carbon in addition to supplying the UK's timber markets," he explained. "Opportunities exist to realise the potential of established woodland in addition to plant new land areas which hitherto have been marginal farming land."



Ancient woodland regeneration at Kinveachy Forest in the Badenoch & Strathspey district of the Scottish Highlands.

### **Want to see your picture here?**

Forestry in Pictures is a regular feature in FTN. For every issue, we 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 [ftn@confor.org.uk](mailto:ftn@confor.org.uk). Please include your name, a short comment text to go with the picture, and an image 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.

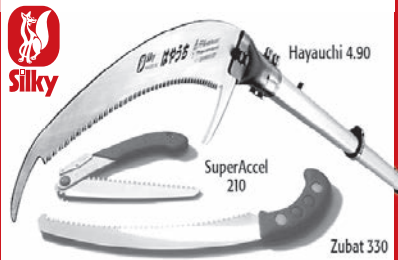
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## **COMING UP IN OCTOBER 2022 - GET INVOLVED**

In October, we will be running a feature on Environmental Innovation. Confor members, get in touch with stories about product launches or exciting activities you are organising for this year's show. Remember that FTN is your magazine - get in touch if you want to suggest editorial or give us feedback on articles we have published in the past. Confor members, send us your company's news updates or pitches for feature articles. Note that our general editorial deadline for the August FTN is 10 September 2022. If you would like to pitch an article idea, please do so by the end of August 2022.

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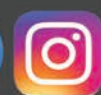
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