

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

June 2023 Issue 117

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TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
FUNDING FOR AFFORESTATION
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DEVELOPMENT



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Tustins

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Forestry Investment Specialist



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Forestry Expert & Agency Specialist

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STUART GOODALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
CONFOR

With the days getting longer I've taken the opportunity to get out and visit Members. Speaking to hard-working, impressive people along the supply chain is hugely motivating and helps me to understand what's important to Members, both now and longer term.

I've been struck by people saying they feel increasingly unable to utilise their own knowledge and experience, constrained by externally imposed 'rules'. I've heard from tree nurseries who have geared up, often with financial support from governments, to provide many more millions of trees which are now going to be destroyed because of actions outside their control.

Recently, many companies across the UK actively considering business investment wrote to ministers seeking a meeting before a decision is made to move ahead with a UKFS amendment that will reduce the maximum percentage of a single species permitted in an existing or new woodland. While recognising climate change related threats, the concern is that this is a blunt action, a one size fits all approach that will come with downsides, especially when it comes to existing woodland.

The common theme here is how much, or indeed how little, many people in the sector feel able to determine their own business's activity.

We've become accustomed to felling licence legislation, the UK Forestry Standard, EIA regulations, plant health notices, the rules of grant schemes etc. To that list we can now add the Woodland Carbon Code as carbon trading moves from a niche activity to a key consideration in much new woodland creation.

The extent of such control is not new, and all regulated industries have such concerns. Plus, it's important to say that the industry has and does benefit from the support of the various forestry agencies and governments.

However, I'm now hearing more often from policy makers that productive forestry and timber businesses need to 'do more' or that the UKFS is only a baseline that should always be exceeded. To me, the UKFS and UKWAS should be the best balance of economic, environmental and social factors, not a constant shift in one direction.

People I speak to outside the sector are surprised at how little 'room for manoeuvre' there is in forestry, and at how the short-term financial health and long-term resilience of so many businesses are heavily influenced by the decisions and actions flowing from regulation and rules.

I recognise this isn't a black and white issue, and the context varies from country to country, but maybe the current shade of grey isn't quite right?

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

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TECHNOLOGY TO SCALE WOODLAND CARBON

Offsetting carbon emissions is a key driver for investment in tree planting and new woodland creation. However, newcomers to the area are often faced with a complicated process and no easy path to crucial information. **John Goffin**, Commercial Development Officer of Kana Earth, explains how uniting the entire UK Nature Carbon space could accelerate climate action.

The UK Forestry Industry faces several challenges, not least of which is meeting the planting targets set by the UK Government in 2019: to reach 30,000 hectares of new planting annually by the end of 2024.

Irrespective of the ability to meet this target, one thing is clear: we need to plant more trees. This means persuading landowners to undertake a permanent land-use change on suitable ground. The Woodland Carbon Code, as the most developed carbon code in the UK, spearheads the market but is narrow in its current design and focuses on non-productive woodland creation.

Although there are some current limitations, carbon and biodiversity markets are emerging as significant vehicles for incentivising and promoting planting. For these markets to be effective, they need to be easy to access, free of reputational risk, and capable of delivering sustainable revenue streams with high integrity.

Organisations involved in developing new woodlands need to demonstrate the quality of their management. Natural capital is no longer a fringe benefit but a key driver of woodland creation, and it will grow exponentially in the next few years.

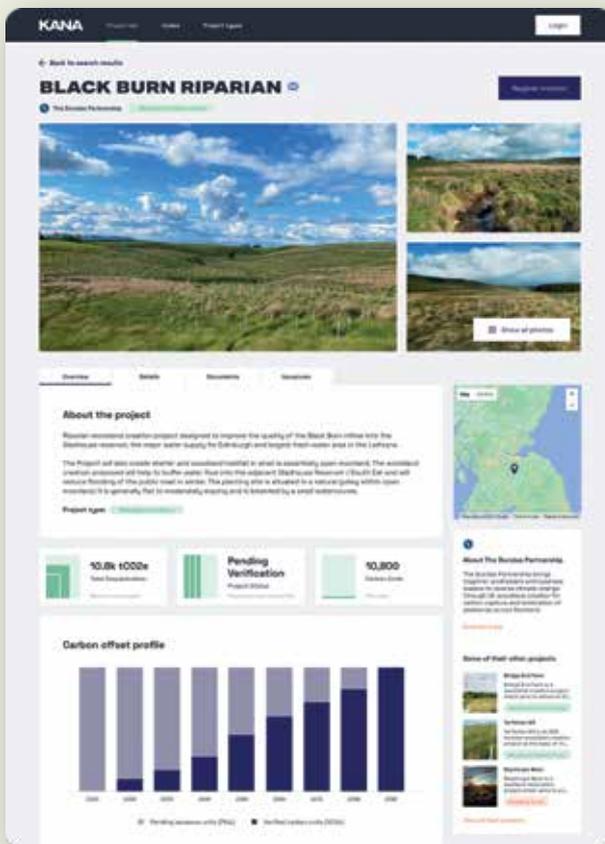
However, we need to be crystal clear that if we do not act now, private investment poised to enter the sector will not wait and will instead go to other domestic and offshore markets to deliver natural capital at scale.

This is where innovative approaches

partnered with technology solutions can really deliver and promote wider industry confidence and efficiency. Ultimately, we need to fast track the maturity of the market, get it delivering the investment at scale and growing the number of projects and new woodlands to reach our national

targets as quickly as possible.

At Kana Earth, we are focused on delivering a suite of innovative technology solutions to create efficiency, help the carbon market grow, and allow the forestry industry to deliver more woodland. Our technology is deployed in four key parts.



Project overviews on The UK Nature Directory offer rich content and quality assurance to potential buyers.

UK Nature Directory

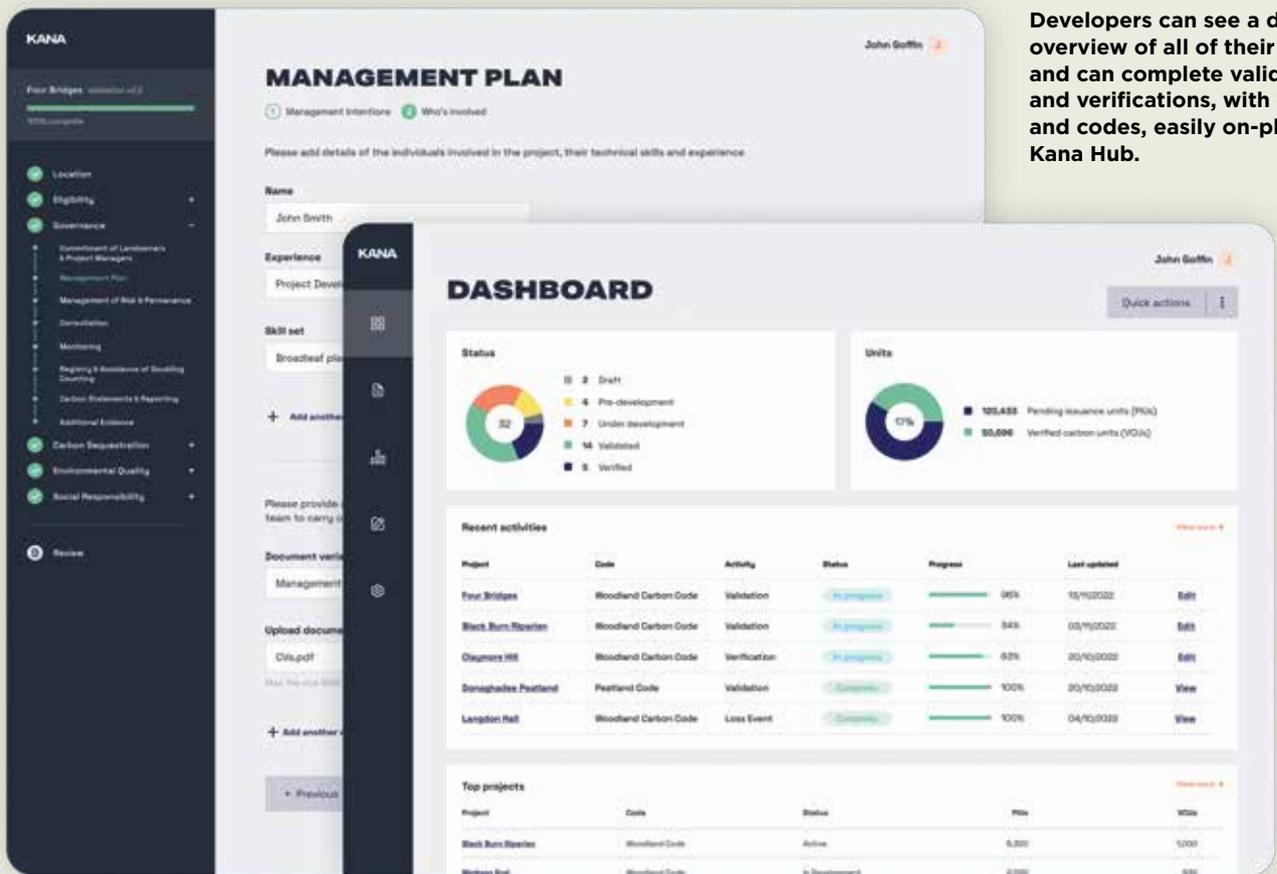
This directory is designed to showcase every natural capital project in the UK. It allows woodland managers to tell the full story of planting and show its progression over time with imagery and drone footage. It also offers the ability for multiple projects from different developers to be grouped together under a collective marketing badge.

Foresters can add additional certifications they have achieved for the woodland, allowing them to evidence quality. The directory also captures and displays all carbon compliance information and audit records that the project creates. Critically, the directory showcases the developers as organisations, demonstrating their values and management integrity.

This is absolutely vital if we are to easily demonstrate on a large scale that these projects are not greenwash, have integrity, will achieve their anticipated outcomes, and as such can carry a higher price and be investable.

Kana Hub

Hub is designed to simplify the process of creating compliant documents and managing multiple carbon projects for project developers. It also serves another vital function for market integrity.



Developers can see a dashboard overview of all of their projects, and can complete validation and verifications, with verifiers and codes, easily on-platform in Kana Hub.

By integrating with independent verifiers and the codes themselves, it secures the audit trail and eliminates the need for disorganised emails and unsecure Word documents whilst standardising input consistency across the market.

Hub contains a custom code language, NatureScript, which allows Kana to work with a standard, such as the Woodland Carbon Code, to quickly update and generate necessary templates into convenient, user-friendly digital forms, with no need for complicated or custom development.

This update will immediately roll down into all associated compliance documents, eliminating the problem of version control and developers using outdated documentation.

Hub is also introducing a new feature for managing project groups. These projects are smaller in scale and are grouped together to allow cost savings in validation and verification. Previously, managing these projects was onerous, but with the Kana Hub solution, this process can now be easily performed. The solution can also help reduce the overhead associated with these groupings.

In addition, other innovations such as the ability to subcontract work, share access with multiple participants, and the intuitive navigation are fully integrated into the system.

Kana Market

This marketplace offers seamless trading of units, and is currently in the design

phase. Alongside a standard legal framework, Market will provide banking-grade settlement options for landowners and developers who wish to transact carbon and biodiversity units.

Kana Seed

This natural capital portfolio management system, currently in prototype design, will enable institutional investors to manage their natural capital and forestry funds in a manner similar to how they manage equities. With built-in risk management features, project and developer ratings, sensitivity analysis, as well as prospectus compliance and drift, Kana Seed will allow investment managers to act with confidence and invest in projects, unlocking private investment opportunities.

We are not pioneering this effort alone and there is no monopoly on good ideas. The Kana technology suite is designed to encourage the integration of third-party technology. As technology advances rapidly, geospatial data analysis on landholdings will become a standard feature of the industry, alongside remote sensor monitoring.

To incentivise land use change to woodland, we must address the challenge of annual revenue streams. Existing land use, primarily livestock agriculture, generates an annual revenue stream. Shifting from this to a periodic income is a significant challenge. To address this, verification cycles will need to move toward annual assessment. This will require the use of re-

mote, self-assessed, or modelled analysis to inform the assessment, backed up by more traditional verification at wider intervals.

Our aim is to support any such changes to the current direction of travel.

We believe in open data and that the owner of the data should be the owner of the underlying project. This is key because it encourages the development of specialist technologies and applications that can link to public data in an open but secure manner.

We recognise that as we collect data, it will inform our models and the way we value projects and manage risk. Science may inevitably change over time, but we can understand its impact at micro and macro scales from a technological perspective. This allows us to deploy change efficiently and manage market risk, reducing the possibility of systemic failure.

Although the technology itself is innovative, the potential it unlocks for the market is significant. It is clear that in order to create more woodland, we need to recognise where the investment is coming from, embrace new technology, and innovate the way we work. Doing so will allow us to grow and manage these projects efficiently, showcasing our talent and quality in the process.

If you are interested in learning more about Kana and what it can do for your business, get in touch with John at john.goffin@kana.earth.

MPs and peers call for funding to help veterans find a career in forestry

Politicians to ask Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer for financial support to help ex-military personnel find a career in forestry.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Forestry and Tree Planting heard that taster sessions giving people the chance to drive large forestry machines had been successful in Scotland.

The sessions, organised by Confor, were funded by Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Forestry, and supported by John Deere, which provided machines worth up to £200,000.

However, at present, no funding is available to support the taster sessions in England or Wales.

Richard Hunter, Confor's Technical and Industry Support Manager, urged the APPG to request funding. He was supported by Guy Opperman, Conservative MP for Hexham, and by Ben Lake, Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion.

Mr Lake, who was earlier re-elected as Chair of the APPG at its AGM, agreed to write to Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer MP on behalf of the Group.

The APPG had also heard from Scott Cooper who spoke about his own journey from a mechanic in the REME (Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) to a supervisor with Forestry England.

He served more than 23 years in the military, mainly in Germany, working on a variety of vehicles including Challenger Tanks.

Preparing to leave the army, forestry hadn't been on Scott's radar until he was

told about a mechanic role in the industry. He later became a machine operator and then supervisor, and now oversees safety and operations on harvesting sites. Scott has worked in forestry now for ten years and said he regularly recommended friends - ex-military and others - to consider it as a career.

The meeting also heard from Charles Bushby, Director (for Central Scotland) with Scottish Woodlands Ltd, who served as an officer in the Black Watch until 1994 before retraining as a forester in his 30s. He said the skills of communication and managing people he learned in the military were vital to becoming an effective manager in the forestry industry, as well as how to operate heavy machinery in difficult locations.

Charles added: "I also found that being able to write documents that are accurate and to the point (which I had done in the military) also helped in forestry."

Richard Hunter said forestry needed an estimated 3,000 people to plug UK-wide skills gaps. As part of Confor's strategy to address this, he works with High Ground (which helps ex-military personnel move into land-based careers) and the MoD's Career Transition Partnership (CTP).

Mr Hunter said taster sessions where ex-military personnel could try out large machinery were vital

to 'make it real'. Scottish courses had been extremely successful over the last two years, he said, but new funding was needed to hold these courses elsewhere in the UK, not least because it was costly and difficult to move such heavy machines.

"Industry is behind it, and will supply the kit, and the interest is definitely there - but we need funding to make it happen in England," he added.

Mr Hunter discussed transferable skills that helped ex-forces personnel make the transition to forestry. "The military trains people very well - making them good team players, good leaders and forward thinkers, all qualities that are needed in forestry," he said.

"Forward planning is crucial in understanding what actions are needed in forestry, now, or next year for a crop that takes decades to grow. Veterans in my experience get this long-term view. They have served for years, and see their input paying off over the long term."

He added: "Another excellent quality that veterans bring is life experience, skills not taught in colleges and universities - thinking on your feet, problem solving and taking action when needed. These are skills that take years to master, but to veterans they are second nature."



Above (Ltr): Ben Lake MP, Scott Cooper, Lord Clark, Lord Colgrain, Stuart Goodall & Richard Hunter. Right: Military veteran Scott Cooper, now of Forestry England, with James Wild MP.





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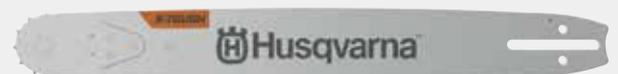
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Forestry a force for good in creating jobs for a net zero workforce

Tens of thousands of new green jobs could be created in the UK if ambitious tree planting targets are met, a report by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) has revealed.

A new report published by the CCC in May estimated that “afforestation could see up to 40,000 new jobs” being created in the UK.

‘A Net Zero Workforce’ highlights areas of the economy which could potentially have a significant impact on the UK’s efforts to meet its Net Zero targets by 2050 (2045 in Scotland). Forestry and horticulture are among those identified as delivering economic growth and employment.

Crucially, the report noted that the “development of afforestation could create opportunities across the UK, including in areas with historically low employment levels”.

The CCC concluded that “with the right conditions, Net Zero can provide an opportunity for growth in high-quality jobs, distributing opportunities across regions and increasing diversity”. However, the report also stated that “without active management (of the transition), there are risks of an inadequate UK skills base to deliver the transition and inequitable or disruptive impacts for the workforce and communities”.

It advised that to unlock the greatest jobs and economic growth benefit, governments should identify key sectors and work with them to develop and maintain the momentum towards achieving net zero, while also seeking to support new employment that will benefit those sectors and geographies most impacted by the shift to a low-carbon economy.

Forestry and agriculture

The parallel issues of opportunity and challenge can be seen in land-use and agriculture, one of the key sectors that the CCC looked at. The report identified that tree planting/forestry will grow, as will non-livestock agriculture, but that livestock agriculture will contract.

Reflecting the language that the Scottish Government has used on a just transition, the report said that “the transition provides a range of opportunities, from driving growth in areas with historically low employment to diversifying the workforce of core Net Zero sectors”, but it also comes with risks that will need to be managed,

including “an inadequate supply of skilled workers, and potentially disruptive impacts to some communities”.

Achieving the levels of tree-planting ambition in the CCC’s Balanced Pathway could require between 6,600 and 39,000 new workers by 2030 in the UK (peatland restoration could produce up to 560 and 2,200 additional jobs), according to the CCC.

‘A Net Zero Workforce’ acknowledged that some of this work could be undertaken by people already employed in the agriculture sector (e.g. by incentivising farmers to diversify) and that barriers exist to finding new workers to enable the forestry sector to grow.

An increase in land used for carbon sequestration, and a shift in UK diets to less meat and dairy as set out in the CCC’s Sixth Carbon Budget, would result in a change to the way land is managed. The literature examined by the CCC suggests that 7,000 to 42,000 jobs could be lost from farming as a result.

continued on p13



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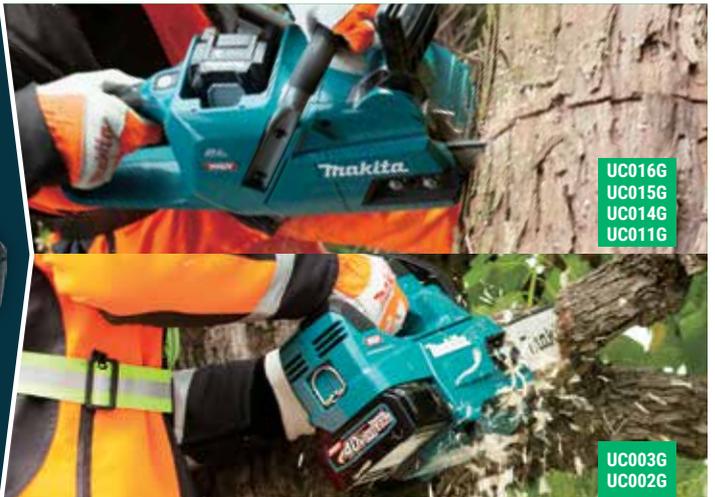
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continued from p10

Bringing these two sectors together, the report noted that livestock farming activity could be redirected to activities like tree planting and management on farms (i.e. on-farm diversification), and that lost farming jobs could be replaced by new jobs in forestry, while noting that the median age of a farm-holder in the UK is 60.

Interestingly, the report also examined the impact of job creation in “enabling sectors” that will support the transition to Net Zero. These include educators and skills providers as well as finance through bol-

stering green finance – an area where the UK government wants the country to be a leader.

Managing the transition

The report makes clear that governments can make a difference, to help enable a ‘just transition’. The key actions include:

- Identifying key sectors e.g. agriculture, land-use and forestry.
- Bringing the sectors together to plan for the transition.
- Offering government funding for retraining, accessible career advice and the availability of alternative employment.

While governments need not intervene in every sector of the economy, the report strongly recommended that government “should develop clear plans that identify when and where policy responses are needed”. Policy must be put in place if it is to harness the potential of the transition and manage its risks.

Confor has welcomed the report, stating that it is keen to work with governments and farming representatives in a strategic, considered way and called on governments to bring the parties together to maximise the opportunities for creating jobs in areas undergoing transition.

Setting out priorities for future afforestation in Scotland

A recent Scottish Forestry consultation sought views on the Forestry Grant Scheme, looking for ways to improve the funding across a number of goals. Confor’s National Manager for Scotland, April Armstrong, summarises the response submitted on behalf of our Members.

Following a process of significant engagement and discussion with Members across Scotland, Confor last month submitted a 20-page response to the Scottish Forestry consultation on the existing Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS).

Views were being sought on how the FGS may be invigorated and better integrated with other sources of funding, strengthening Net Zero, biodiversity, economic and community wealth building priorities.

Additionally, the consultation was used as a vehicle to gather insights on the development of grant support for forestry post-2025, namely through the Agricultural Bill when it replaces the current legislative framework provided by the Scotland Rural Development Programme.

The questions fell under five headings:

1. Introduction and rationale for providing grant support for forestry

2. Forests delivering for Scotland’s Climate Change Plan

3. Integrating woodlands on farms and crofts

4. Forests delivering for people and communities

5. Forests delivering for biodiversity and the environment

Our response set out a scenario for Scotland’s forestry industry that reflect the priorities of our Members, reiterating that priority should be given to

ensuring a smoother delivery of the current scheme rather than introducing additional requirements/constraints.

The need for grant support

We believe the FGS should remain a discrete offering within the future Scottish Agricultural Bill, and that it should remain under Scottish Forestry’s remit, albeit with the inclusion of annual recurrent maintenance payments. These are currently claimed through the Single Application Form (SAF) – a system that was not designed with forestry in mind.

Whilst requiring a discrete offering to ensure that the FGS reaches its highest potential, we would also like to see greater synergy with agricultural funding, integrating policy that allows farmers and other landowners to easily access forestry funding. Changes to specific areas under the existing grants framework would allow for better complementarity between the forestry and agriculture funding options, especially for smaller woodland creation applications.

Adjustments for inflation

Grant rates have remained stagnant for almost four years with the last review taking place in June 2019. Given recent inflation, which has seen deer fencing costs exceed double of that provided by FGS, these rates are no longer allowing our Members to “overcome” the high capital costs associated with the creation

of new woodlands.

An increase in grant rates is essential if we are to see planting targets achieved. We also highlighted the potential of elevated grant rates coupled with a lower administrative burden to incentivise smaller schemes and requested increased rates for more challenging woodland creation schemes, boosted support for woodland management, and the removal of fixed grant models in support of more diverse forestry.

The consultation additionally proposed a grant support mechanism that has more flexibility to maximise opportunities to blend private and public finance to support woodland creation. We agreed with this premise, recognising that this could facilitate greater levels of tree planting and help achieve government targets. However, we are cautious that it is planned appropriately and in conjunction with industry to avoid any unintended consequences.

Tackling climate change

Confor and our Members understand the importance of forestry’s role in tackling the climate emergency and achieving net zero with forests, and in particular productive forests, sequestering large amounts of carbon.

Our forests must be resilient to changes in climate to ensure the future of our industry, however we do not feel

continued on p14

continued from p13

it should be the role of the FGS to regulate compliance against baseline levels of environmental and climatic benefit. Instead, we see the FGS as the driver to forest establishment and would like to see greater support with woodland creation.

Requirements for resilience against the impacts of climate change and pests and diseases should, in our view, remain within the remit of UKFS. However, we have noted concern about the fixation on percentage of a single species at a given site denoting ‘resilience’, and instead believe in the right-tree-right-place approach as the percentage model fails to approach the issue at a landscape scale.

Confor stands ready to work with Scottish Government to establish and undertake the research that would inform resilience.

Forests for communities

The forest-based industry wishes to play an increasingly important role in supporting economically vibrant rural communities and areas. Woodland creation schemes are already seeking to support Community Wealth Building (CWB) and would welcome grant support to enable this to happen more consistently.

We would also like to see an improved Public Register to ensure that there is

greater transparency about proposals and the decisions that have been made on them. This is an issue that has long required attention and could reduce the time and administrative burdens of routine enquiries, whilst also providing stakeholders with all the initial information they require.

Support for biodiversity

Our Members have emphasised that one of the key issues in addressing biodiversity loss is the management of herbivore impact, particularly issues caused by deer. Grant support must provide a greater degree of flexibility for landowners and managers to tackle the impact of deer based upon the site and landscape conditions that an application resides in.

As such, Confor would like to see grant provision for deer management that allows wider management options and sits within

“OUR MEMBERS HAVE EMPHASISED THAT ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES IN ADDRESSING BIODIVERSITY LOSS IS THE MANAGEMENT OF HERBIVORE IMPACT, PARTICULARLY ISSUES CAUSED BY DEER.”

the standard grant offering.

We also identified regeneration and native woodland creation incentives, woodland creation grant aid for the repair of existing damaged woodland, and funded research into the biodiversity benefits of forests and woodland that are managed productively as areas requiring attention.

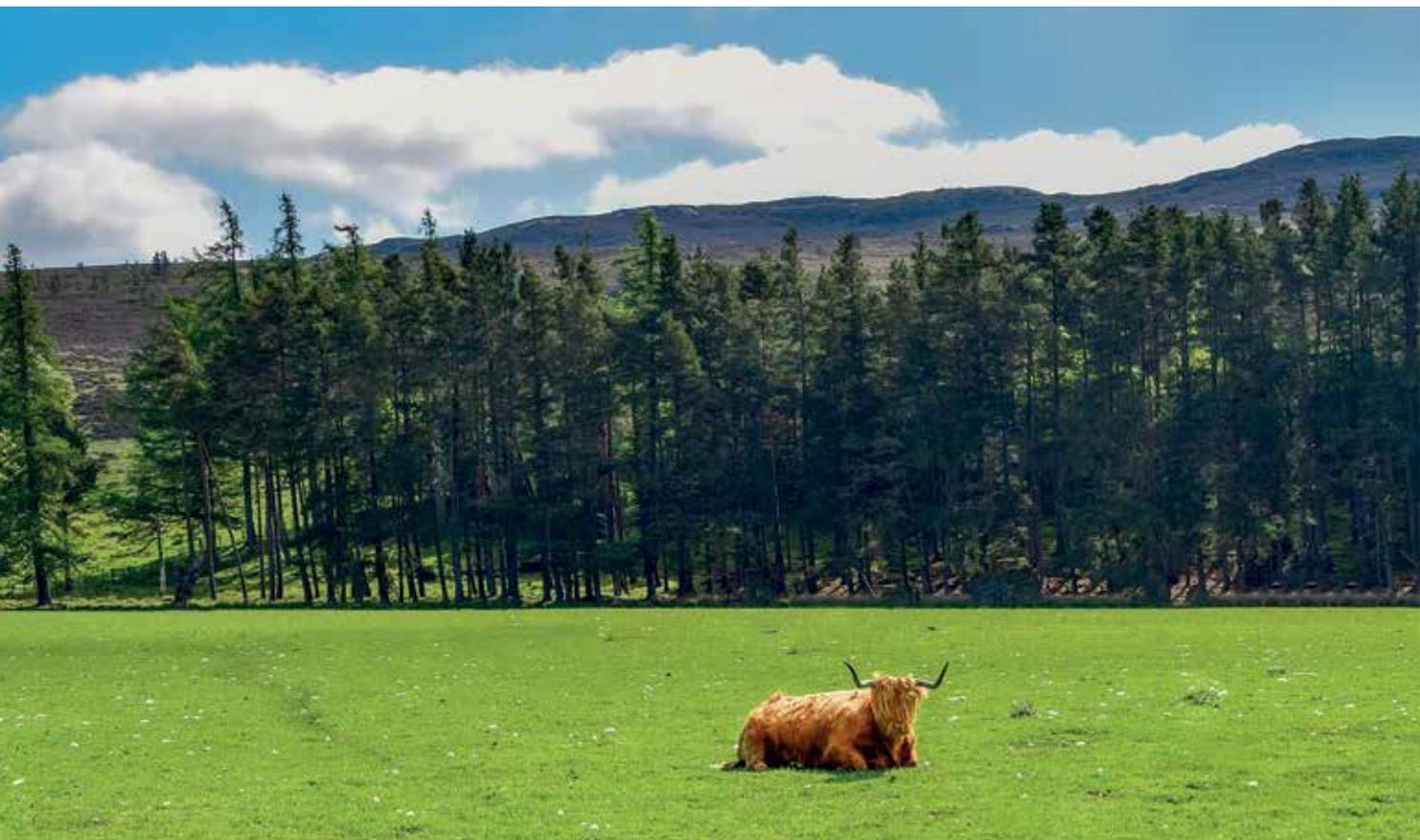
Applicant frustrations

Confor took this opportunity to raise the concerns of our Members around severe time delays for application approvals. It is difficult to ignore that this is a major constraint to woodland creation and is impacting the industry’s ability to deliver and meet targets in any given year.

Applicants awaiting a decision are prevented from being able to plan resources, including the hiring and training of staff that is essential given the current skills shortage that the industry is facing.

Going forward, Confor hopes to see more support and training being delivered to Scottish Forestry staff to improve effective and timely decision making, in addition to the implementation of a defined timeline for the consideration of grant applications.

More information Links to the Scottish Forestry consultation and Confor’s full response are available on our website: <https://bit.ly/43O7Xwu>



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Royal Welsh Show

Anthony Geddes gives a preview of what's on at this year's event

Following the success of the Royal Welsh Show 2022, I am pleased to share that we will be back with our Confor forest industry expo for this year's event. We have huge support and representation from the forestry sector with new and familiar faces joining us, including Pryor & Rickett, A.W. Jenkinson Forest Products, the Institute of Chartered Foresters, Small Woods Association and SAF Woodland Management.

Please take the opportunity to drop by our stand, discuss your needs with our partner businesses, get up to speed on current forestry matters, and take some time to enjoy our hospitality.

Sponsors

The support from the sector has been overwhelming and I'd like to offer special thanks to our sponsors.

NexGen Tree Shelters

NexGen supply environmentally friendly tree shelters, spiral guards and vole guards that are a viable alternative to plastic. All their products are manufactured from a mix of British wool, a biodegradable polyol made from ethically sourced cashew nut-shell liquid and castor oil, and an innovative custom polymer.

Tilhill

Tilhill offers a full range of forest and woodland management services to owners, including forestry and woodland investment expertise. Our forestry management services are fulfilled by qualified and experienced managers who care for your woodland or forest to get you the best possible return and access to the premium timber prices providing an unrivalled service to our clients.

Tustins

Tustins is a bespoke business aimed at providing the highest levels of independ-

ent service to clients using their extensive knowledge of forestry and woodland investment.

John Clegg & Co

John Clegg & Co have specialised in the forestry and woodland market for over 50 years and are one of the leading agents in the UK, selling, acquiring and valuing hundreds of woodlands each year. Whether you are selling or buying woodland, require a forestry valuation or independent asset management we can provide professional advice throughout the UK.

Bronwin & Abbey

Bronwin & Abbey prides itself on offering a bespoke service that accommodates every individual owner's requirements. We recognise the importance of making woodlands profitable and have a proven track record in maximising returns from timber sales and grants as well as a good knowledge of the newly developing carbon and natural capital markets.

SPONSORS





WHAT'S ON

Monday 24 July

2-2.45pm

Wood Fuel & Rural Economy Small Woods & Confor

Tuesday 25 July, Forestry Day

8.30-9.30am

Contractors Breakfast

Ash Safety Update & Managing the Public. *Sponsored by John Clegg & Co.*

10.30-11.30am

Forestry Training Service UK Seminar Update by Confor

12.30-1.30pm

A new paradigm for forestry Seminar & Lunch. *Sponsored by Tustin's*

2-2.45pm

Young Forestry Professional Presentation

3.30-4pm

Woodlands Competition

Wednesday 26 July, Farming Day

8.30-9.30am

Tree Planting - Healthy Trees

Contractor Talk. *Sponsored by Tilhill*

12.30-1.30pm

Trees on Farm. *Sponsored by Bronwin & Abbey*

2-2.45pm

Forest Research Presentation

A full programme of events will be communicated to Members and published on the Confor Website prior to RWAS 2023.

Push for continued use of Gazelle

Colin Palmer gives an update on the regulatory status of forestry uses of Gazelle for Hylobius control.

Representatives from Confor, Forest Research and the manufacturers, Certis Belchim, will be meeting with the pesticide regulator at the start of June to press for the continuation of the use of Gazelle for the control of Hylobius.

At the time of writing, the outcome is uncertain, and if unsuccessful, then the final date for purchase of product bearing MAPP number 13725 which permits forestry use is 31 July 2023, with final use and storage by 31 July 2024.

As this product runs out in merchant stores it will be replaced by product with MAPP number 20034, which will not permit forestry use unless the regulator agrees to forestry continuation.

Foresters wishing to use the product before expiry in 2024 should therefore obtain supplies without delay.

Fortunately, we have persuasive arguments to defend current use, both as a pre-planting treatment, and as a post-planting spray, with particular emphasis on demonstrating that current practice will have minimal or no adverse effects on non target ecology. In addition, Certis Belchim have been assiduous in generating data which will hopefully assuage the regulators particular environmental safety concerns.

There are three potential outcomes

following these discussions:

1. Current recommendations for Gazelle SG in forestry are permitted in full.
2. Gazelle SG usage is permitted but with one or more of the following restrictions:
 - a. Pre-planting only
 - b. Post-planting only
 - c. Reduced rates for pre-planting treatments
 - d. Reduced rates for post-planting treatments
 - e. Restrictions on the number of post planting applications
3. All forestry uses of Gazelle SG discontinued after 31 July 2024

A case for continued use in Christmas trees and by forest nurseries in seedbeds and transplant lines is also being made at the meeting. Though, realistically, the regulatory hurdles to be overcome in these sectors are likely to make a positive outcome even more of a challenge.

Confor recognises the importance of this issue and considerable time and effort is being devoted to obtaining the best possible outcome. Members will be updated as soon as the regulatory decisions have been communicated to us.

Colin Palmer, Rural Services, represents Confor's chemical & pesticide helpline for Members. www.ruralservices.info

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON!



Eliza Hibbins-Cline,
Membership
& Marketing
Manager

I am excited to announce that advance tickets are now available for our Confor Woodland Show, due to be held at the Bath and West Showground on 21-22 September 2023. You can visit the Events section of the Confor website to see purchase options.

Please note that all Confor Members can gain FREE entry to the show! More details on how to secure your entry to the showground will be shared closer to the time. If you have any queries in the meantime, please email me at eliza@confor.org.uk.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank David Gittins, on behalf of Confor and all the Members, for his work over the years as Confor's tax helpline advisor and wish him a very happy retirement. Nicholas Smail will now be taking over the role; all his details can be found on our website.

Remember that as a Confor Member you are entitled to 30 mins free advice from all our helplines!

Lastly, a warm welcome to our newest Members: **Peter Jones** (Greengold Timberlands) and **Dafydd Powell** (Scottish Woodlands) in Scotland; and **Tom Coxhead** (Leeds Coppice Workers), **Darren Phizacklea** (E&D Phizacklea), **Henry Gunn**, **Kelly Morss** (Student) and **Jasmine Ely** in England.

Contact Eliza on 07918 880285 or email eliza@confor.org.uk

New site, new thinking

The Confor Woodland Show makes its long-awaited return at the Bath & West Showground this September.

The Confor Woodland Show is a place for anyone interested in forestry and woodlands to hear about the latest products and services, receive practical advice, network with peers, and enjoy the demos and seminars offered over the two days.

Held this year at the Bath & West Showground on Thursday 21 September and Friday 22 September, the Show promises a valuable snapshot of the industry. Whether you work in forestry or are looking to find out more, there's something for everyone.

You can also drop by the Confor tent at any time to chat with the team, grab a cup of tea, or join one of the seminars discuss-



ing issues currently impacting the sector. Topics this year include bioplastic innovations, trends in the forest marketplace, and modern management techniques.

Forest Workers Zone

The Forest Workers Zone will again be attending the Confor Woodland Show this year. Acting as a 'one stop' place for people working in the practical side of the industry to come for information, advice and networking.

Organisations attending include Perennial, Land Workers Alliance, Forestry Contracting Association, Small Woods Association, Mid Wales and Marches Assessment Centre, The National Coppice Federation, and others campaigning on behalf of forest workers.

They'll be holding practical demonstrations on skills such as chainsaw maintenance and tips for looking after our bodies, as well as being on hand to answer your questions or discuss any issues you are facing.

The theme of this year's panel discussions is diversity - come along at 14:00 on both Thursday and Friday and let us know why you feel it's important, what it means to you, and how we as an industry can widen the gene pool of the workforce.

Plus, we're not forgetting the ever popular 'Chainsaw Hold Out Contest'! See you there.

Exhibitors & Sponsors

Exhibitor bookings are open until 1 August 2023. Confor Members benefit from a discounted booking rate and all APF 2022 exhibitors get an additional 5% off.

Various pitch options are still available throughout the showground.

Sponsorship packages and other promotional opportunities have limited availability.

Visit www.conforwoodlandshow.org.uk for more information..

Advance Tickets

Visitor tickets can now be purchased online. Bookings made before the event will cost less than tickets purchased at the gate.

Follow the QR code or visit our website: www.conforwoodlandshow.org.uk

Confor Members are entitled to free entry to the Show with display of a valid Membership Card. Further details on entry for Members will be communicated directly before the Show.



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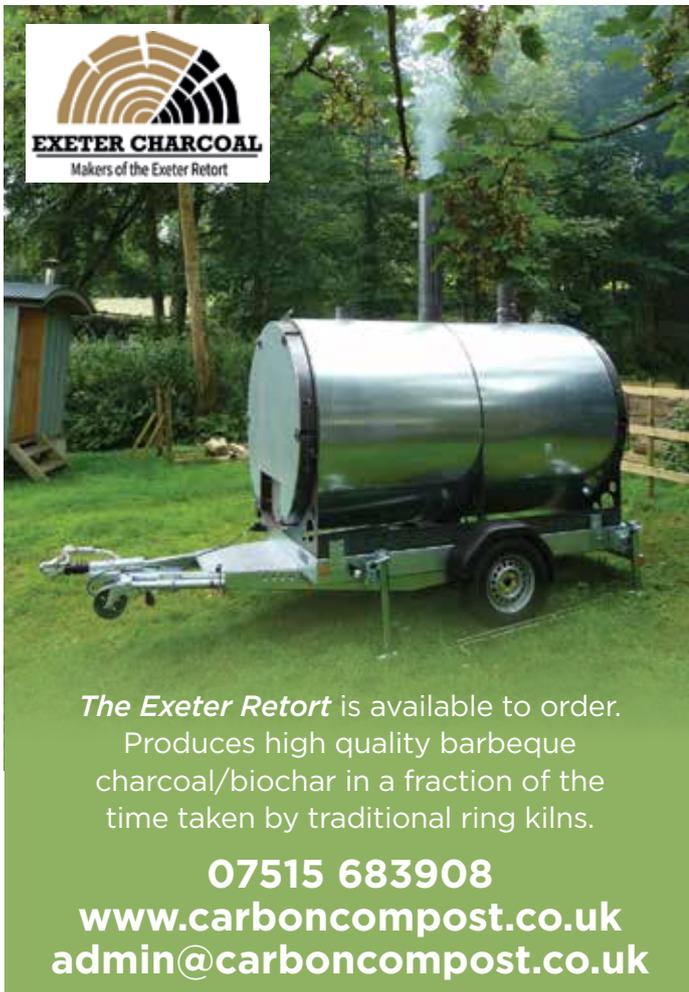
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A tale of two careers fairs

Confor's **Richard Hunter** shares his recent experiences representing the forestry industry at career fairs for military and school leavers.

Murrayfield: the home of Scottish rugby, and where training and skill are on the greatest display. It made a fitting venue for an Armed Forces careers fair to showcase what forestry can offer veterans.

Highlighting their transferable skills is the key to attracting ex-Forces personnel. They have bags of life experience, such as the ability to deal with people often in stressful conditions. Confor's presence at the event was intended to showcase the breadth of roles available in forestry.

Of the 600 people that attended Murrayfield, it felt that the majority stopped to chat or at least pass comment. One senior officer asked why we were there as we didn't have job opportunities within Confor that he could apply for; 10 minutes later he was a solid convert to what forestry can

WHAT IS THE CTP?

When leaving the Armed Forces, a considerable amount of assistance is available through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), including access to funds for training, release from duties for career fairs and taster/shadowing events, plus dedicated CTP staff to point veterans in any direction.

offer for those in his command when they plan to leave.

Regret was not something I had expected to hear much of going into the day, but that was the perspective for one veteran. Three years ago, he could have started a forestry degree, the course would have fit around his duties, and it would have been fully funded by the Army. It was a route he didn't take at the time, and he said he had been kicking himself ever since.

Thankfully, he is still interested in forestry and is now looking at distance learning routes and short courses.

Surprisingly, the interest wasn't all about machinery and management. A few attendees had a passion for growing and had never considered tree nurseries as a future career path.

The Confor stand was designed to highlight the whole supply chain of seed to sawn. Using a variety of props to grab attention, we received several positive comments and the quality of materials supplied by members such as James Jones and Sons, Egger, Trees Please and Forrest Estate really enhanced our display.

The work situations and 'day in the life...' materials from Euroforest were a particular hit as they allowed the veterans to see for themselves what a life in forest management involves. The other successful handout was the Forestry Induction Pack, a great document designed to give a brief overview of forestry to potential recruits. A new edition is planned to include processing.

Confor's activities are, of course, not limited to the CTP and I also recently attended a careers fair hosted by Forestry Minister Trudy Harrison.

It is common for most MPs to host a careers fair within their constituency, and we took advantage of that fact to further our engagement with the minister while raising the profile of forestry in West Cumbria. To ensure that our stand stood out, we borrowed a forest machine simulator from Blacklock Harvesting which proved to be a hit with the minister and other attendees at the event.

In speaking with the other stand holders at the event, such as from the nuclear industry, it was clear that they too are struggling to attract new workers. They talked about many of the same issues we see in forestry, like young people not knowing about their industry and the lack of training dedicated to their sector.

Only through regular attendance at these types of events, plus engagement with young people through schools and the STEM network can we raise the profile of forestry as potential career and create a pipeline of new young people to enter the industry.





Wood Protection Association

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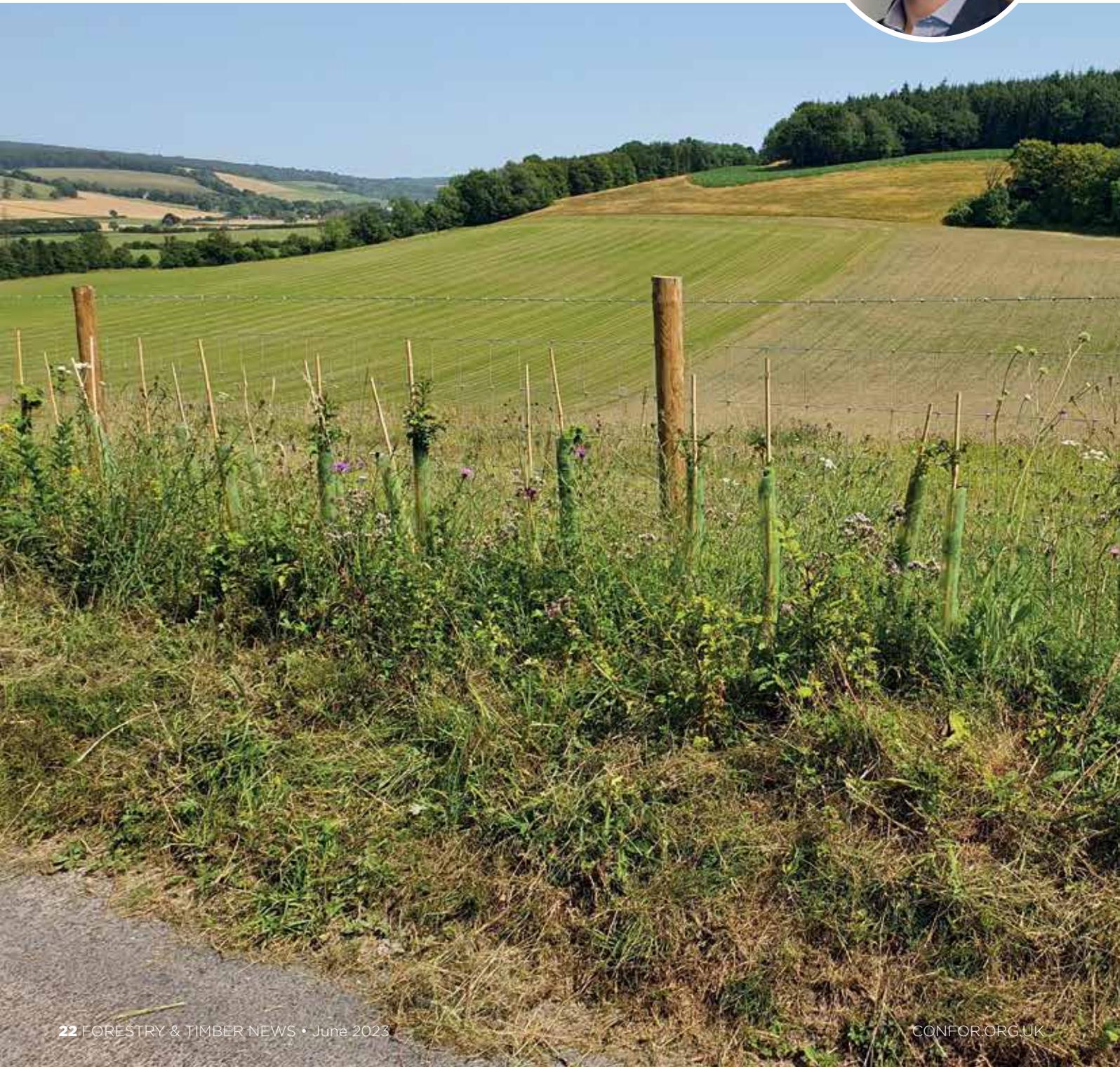


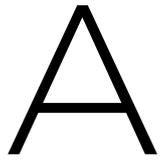
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BRINGING PLANTING FULL CIRCLE

Eleanor O'Neill spoke to Pierre Talpe (*pictured right*), Director at Rainbow Professional Ltd, about how the company is still staying innovative after 60 years.





familiar name to those in the forestry, landscaping, and horticultural sectors, Rainbow Professional Ltd is a leading manufacturer of tree care and landscaping products based in Hull, East Yorkshire.

Founded in 1963, Rainbow is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year and is set on upholding a legacy of innovation, entrepreneurship, and positive environmental impact.

“Rainbow was the first in the market to launch 100% plant based and biodegradable products,” explained Pierre Talpe, Director of Rainbow Professional. “For over 25 years, Rainbow has had a strong environmental ethos and focus on carbon.”

Pierre and his brother Alex bought Rainbow Professional Ltd in 2019 and have maintained the business as a privately owned, family-run enterprise, supplying products across the UK and to over 30 different countries worldwide.

In their four years at the helm, Pierre and Alex have furthered the company’s commitment to developing new products that contribute towards the industry’s pursuit of net zero.

“Our focus on only working with low carbon materials uniquely positions us to deliver a great carbon story and start working on reducing on decarbonising our production process,” Pierre said. “To date, our recycling operation has avoided over 50 million kgs of carbon by not using any new, virgin plastics to make spiral guards or tree ties.

“In fact, every box of 100% recycled spiral guards avoids 50 kgs of carbon by avoiding the use of virgin plastics.”

Recycling is a core principle of Rainbow’s production cycle, and they use 100% recycled materials. Their operations in Hull are not traditional manufacturing sites, but recycling centres, and the company recently announced the launch of a recycling scheme in partnership with wholesalers and recycling partners to recycle any old PVC spiral or PVC vole guard.

Any professional end user can have their used products collected and transported to Rainbow’s facility in Hull, where a local network of recycling partners find the best possible outlet for each waste material.

According to Pierre, forestry, landscaping and horticulture should be leading the way on decarbonisation. “We manufacture our products for tree planters and tree care profes-



sionals, and it is their day-to-day activities that we need to support.

“It is amazing to work on the ground with our highly motivated engineering team, who are so passionate in tackling the challenges relating to plastics and deliver genuine responsible solutions.

“The main challenge we see for the sector is tackling greenwashing,” he continued. “The opportunity in this lies in providing transparency by sticking very close to existing internationally accepted certifications and creating chains of custody.”

Pierre pointed out that you may often see a company install solar panels on their roof or start using recycled paper and stop there with their efforts to decarbonise, thinking they’ve done their bit. However, the end-to-end impact of those products against their actual offsetting can be overlooked.

Rainbow is attempting to close the circle on their products as much as possible and therefore make it easier for

protect young trees.

“With the advent of the Rainbow Terra, we have manufactured a tree shelter that genuinely biodegrades in any environment that it may end up in – soil, freshwater and marine environments and is fully certified in line with authorized certifications.

“The product is fully made from renewable resources, 100% plant based, and we have made a commitment to manufacture the product fully carbon net zero by 2025,” stated Pierre.

“The wood used to manufacture the Rainbow Terra has the Grown in Britain chain of custody, supporting our forestry sector. Research also shows the little pieces of dead wood that fall on the forest floor after their useful life provide an essential role in processes such as soil formation and nutrient cycling, supporting healthy growth of the new tree.

“This makes sure it presents a truly ‘Use it. Leave it.’ scenario – great for the environment and saving on removal and recycling costs.”

The large-scale launch of this new product is set to be the company’s next big milestone. Pierre said: “We are slowly ramping up our production levels, well ahead of next planting season. We are receiving a lot of support from wholesalers and closely work with them to plan in enquiries, which is great to see.”

Contact Interested end users can find out more about Rainbow Terra and request samples on the dedicated website. <https://rainbowterra.eu.com>





Finding new ways of working

BH Wildlife Consultancy and Forestry & Land Scotland were awarded the Innovation & Research Award at the Confor Dinner & Awards 2023. We caught up with **Ben Harrower** MSc MICFor, Co-Founder of BH Wildlife Consultancy, to talk about their work.

How do you feel about your innovative work being recognised by others in the industry?

Winning this award alongside Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS) was a really big honour and has been a great boost to our business!

We started out offering thermal drone surveys in a full-time capacity last summer, having spent a number of years developing the methodology and systems, and it's fantastic to be recognised for our work at such an early stage.

Have you learned anything new about the sector while working with FLS?

Conducting drone surveys constantly brings revelations about the UK's deer population. The density that Muntjac and Fallow deer can appear in is astonishing, and much higher than many of the published studies often suggest.

Sika densities in the west coast of Scotland also flag up hot spots that go undetected when conducting foot counts and helicopter counts, which are inherently geared up for counting Red deer. Our methodologies are constantly being tweaked and developed with two main methods being deployed – a minimum



count method and a plot-based approach that is still in the development stage.

How do you see new methods like these changing or impacting the industry?

The new technology is able to give an instant snapshot of a population with high accuracy. Having quick, reliable data is really useful to landowners/managers who have to make the decisions on the ground, often responding quickly to high impacts on woodland caused by browsing.

The maps and imagery from the survey remove conflict by allowing an evidence-based approach to inform decisions backed up by indisputable evidence (all imagery being date/time stamped and geo-referenced). This ability to evidence a minimum population of a given wildlife species makes the job of the landowners/managers easier to communicate and allows for more cooperative working between organisations and people.

What has been the biggest achievement for BH Wildlife Consultancy so far?

We have been involved in a number of large landscape scale projects this past year that have involved a huge amount of planning, organising and liaising with different groups. The results from these surveys have been really insightful and help to paint a picture of deer and their movements over large areas.

But one of our personal favourites was counting the wallaby population on the Isle of Man – the results showing that there was up to five times the number of wallabies that previously thought to be present. Seeing a field with up to 40 wallabies grazing on it was quite a sight!

What comes next for you?

Going forward we want to continue to develop what we are doing with the drone technology and have expanded our operations across the UK. More organisations and land managers are showing an interest in this relatively new survey method and booking in for the 2023/2024 season.

We are also starting to survey species other than large herbivores and have a few overseas projects later this year that we are very excited about. There is also a lot of interest in using the same technology to find the rarest animals as opposed to counting the most abundant, so we are also going to be exploring that further this coming season.

The Innovation & Research Award 2023 was sponsored by Forestry & Land Scotland and Forestry Commission.



Gresham House appointed as asset manager to Irish forests

Gresham House Asset Management has been appointed by AXA Investment Managers as the exclusive asset manager to a 4,074-hectare portfolio of mature Irish forests on a long-term contract.

The scope of the forest land, which is historically very large by UK and Irish standards, is divided across 185 estates throughout Ireland. Comprising one of Europe's fastest growing wood types and the main and most valuable commercial conifer species in Ireland and the

UK, it benefits from good local infrastructure and proximity to a number of sawmills.

With an existing portfolio of real assets ranging from renewables, infrastructure and forestry, Gresham House is the UK's largest commercial forestry manager, harvesting circa 10% of the UK's total softwood annually. Following this major appointment, it will manage over 129,000 hectares of forests on behalf of institutions, endowments, family offices

and private investors.

Tony Dalwood, Chief Executive Officer of Gresham House, said: "The strategic rationale for this partnership, alongside the potential financial returns, are clear and exciting for Gresham House. As the UK's largest private forestry investment manager, this portfolio marks the first step in our ambition to develop a long-term international business platform, increasing assets under management across a wide array of real asset investments."

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Uplift to payment rates for tree planting in Wales

The Welsh Government is calling on all farmers in Wales to help tackle the climate emergency by planting trees as higher payment rates for woodland creation are confirmed.

Payment rates for woodland creation will be uplifted to pay 100% of 2023's actual costs as part of Wales' drive to plant 86 million trees by the end of the decade to combat the climate emergency.

Climate Change Minister Julie James said: "We are in a climate emergency and trees are our lifeline, by planting trees it removes greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere through carbon storage."

"Earlier this year, we spoke to the farming and forestry sectors to better understand potential blockers to woodland creation.

"Payment rates were an issue; we listened and are very pleased to confirm a substantial uplift today - we will now keep the rates under review, particularly



while inflation remains high."

Lesley Griffiths, Minister for North Wales and Rural Affairs, added: "We want to work with farmers on the principle of 'the right tree in the right place'. Planting trees can also become an asset over time - such as by providing shelter for livestock or income from the timber.

"Funding is available now and the higher rates should make it a more attractive proposition to farmers.

"We would encourage farmers throughout Wales to take advantage of the support now both in terms of funding and guidance, so we can all play our part in tackling the nature and climate emergencies and help secure the sustainable future for the industry."

Anthony Geddes MICFor, Confor National Manager for Wales, commented: "This substantial increase in funding for afforestation is a welcome boost to those farmers and foresters who are

seeking to create new Woodlands at any scale across Wales.

"It is important that we not only plan and plant saplings well, but we also ensure they become established trees, delivering on their timber, decarbonization and ecological potential. The increase in both fencing rates and management support signify the importance of protecting trees from predation and committing time to manage them well.

"This commitment to appropriate funding, along with the work that has been done to improve the planning and grant application process is a very positive indicator of how seriously Welsh Government Ministers take afforestation. The potential for Wales to become a high value forest nation relies on insightful leadership to ensure there is a good and appropriate mix of all types of afforestation to address our environmental, climate and wood fibre crises."

Funding to restore storm-damaged woodlands



The Great Northumberland Forest has secured funding for a scheme to restore and enhance woodlands damaged by Storm Arwen.

Newly announced support from Defra will enable The Great Northumberland Forest team to support landowners in restoring and enhancing approximately 300 hectares across the county over the next two years.

Eligible landowners can expect to benefit from grant funding to restore small individual woodlands and shelterbelts which have suffered significant storm damage.

Resilient tree species will be planted, enhancing biodiversity and nature recovery as well as improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions in the county - helping Northumberland reach its carbon

neutral target by 2030.

Northumberland County Council Leader Glen Sanderson said: "I'm thrilled that we have been awarded this funding as part of an incredibly important scheme. It's fantastic news for our county.

"There are lots of small farm woodlands and shelterbelts in our county which have been damaged or destroyed by recent severe weather events, particularly Storm Arwen. This has seen many landowners dealing with costs associated with timber recovery, clearance, repairs and replanting.

"It is for these woodlands that there is
continued on p29



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ICF grants accreditation to three sector graduate programmes

Members of the Institute of Chartered Foresters' (ICF) Professional & Educational Standards Committee have approved the accreditation of graduate schemes offered by Savills UK, Scottish Woodlands, and Tilhill.

Successful completion of the respective graduate schemes now offers individuals two additional Professional Membership Entry (PME) qualifying points, meaning graduates without an honours degree specifically in forestry or arboriculture may be able to present for PME two years earlier than before (subject to eligibility).

The accreditation of graduate programmes represents a step-change for ICF, offering a more flexible route to chartered status – a route that acknowledges additional qualifying points for vocational skills and professional development in a real-world setting, rather than replicating the learning outcomes of academic studies.

“As the sector looks to recruit more and more capable individuals from non-traditional routes, it is vital that the Institute reflects this, and rewards those employers with rigorous and respected, structured training programmes,” said Dr Stuart Glen, ICF Member Services Director.

Mark Townsend MICFor, Head of Woodland Management and Arboriculture at Savills UK, worked with ICF to develop this new accreditation. He commented: “It will enable Savills to show its commitment to new and existing graduates by providing a clear and transparent training framework which will set our graduates on their way to a PME submission, professional membership of the Institute and a fulfilling career in our sector.”

Ian Robinson MICFor, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands, added: “We are very proud to receive this recognition from the Institute for our industry-leading Graduate Development Programme. This year’s intake of five new graduates means more than 50 people have been through the high-quality programme, launched to tackle industry skills challenges by growing our own future leaders.”

“Tilhill’s Graduate Programme being awarded two PME qualifying points highlights our commitment to our people and to the development work we do in our ground-breaking and premier forestry graduate scheme,” said Tony Lockey, Group Learning and Development Manager at BSW Timber.



Women’s forestry heritage celebrated in new exhibition

They played a vital role in the war effort and spearheaded the careers of women working in the forestry industry. Now, the remarkable Women’s Timber Corps are to be celebrated through a photography exhibition at Forestry England’s Grizedale Forest.

The outbreak of World War II brought a sudden need to produce millions of tonnes of timber, just as thousands of young men were conscripted into military service. As a result, the Women’s Timber Corps was established in 1942 and up to 18,000 young women aged between 17 and 24 left their homes (often for the very first time) to take up axes and saws.

Battling discrimination, the women who came to be known as the ‘Lumberjills’ rose to the challenge. Their commitment and dedication made a tangible difference to the war effort, with the timber they harvested used in railways, mining, aircraft, and even for charcoal gas mask filters.

However, while many may have heard of the Women’s Land Army, the story of their Lumberjill colleagues has been all

but forgotten, until now.

In a first-of-its-kind celebration of women in forestry, the Forestry Commission, Forestry England and Forest Research commissioned The People’s Picture to create a photo mosaic that has now been unveiled as part of a special exhibition celebrating the contributions of the Women’s Timber Corps. It incorporates over 2,000 publicly submitted photographs, past and present, of women from across the forestry sector and general public.

‘*Women in Forestry, the Lumberjills’ Story*’ is free to view at Grizedale Forest until 10 December. The fascinating history of the women and their crucial work supporting the war effort is engagingly told through photos, tools and artefacts.

Hazel Stone, Arts Manager at Grizedale Forest said: “It’s been amaz-

Forestry apprenticeship celebrated in honour of the Coronation

The Forest Craftsperson (Level 3) apprenticeship is among a small number singled out by industry experts to mark the Coronation in recognition of their sustainability credentials.

In honour of His Majesty The King's Coronation, six apprenticeships have been selected for their contribution to creating a low carbon economy by ensuring the country's workforce is equipped with the skills needed to support the transition to net zero.

The official Coronation emblem will be used by employers and Government to promote the apprenticeships, including Forest Craftsperson (Level 3) which was designed by Confor's Richard Hunter, Steve Fowkes of the Forestry Commission, and Ros Burnley, Adrow Ltd. It was approved for delivery in August 2022.

Richard commented: "Developing the Level 3 Forest Craftsperson apprenticeship has been a crucial piece of our work to secure the place of practical forestry skills within further education. It's brilliant to see it being recognised and promoted as a de-

THE SIX APPRENTICESHIPS ARE:

- Countryside Worker (Level 2)
- Forest Craftsperson (Level 3)
- Low Carbon Heating Technician (Level 3)
- Installation Electrician and Maintenance Electrician (Level 3)
- Sustainability Business Specialist (Level 7)
- Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Practitioner (Level 4)

sirable career pathway for newcomers to the industry, whom we desperately need."

All of the apprenticeships selected for this honour have been recognised as the gold-standard for green skills training, encouraging more people to take up the opportunity to gain the skills to build an exciting career in the green industry while meeting the skills needs of employers and boosting economic growth.

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said: "As we work towards our net zero goals, it has never been more important to prioritise green skills and protect our natural environment. In recognition of the critical role education and skills play in responding to climate change, these green apprenticeships have been selected in honour of His Majesty The King's Coronation.

"These gold-standard, sustainable apprenticeships offer people the chance to embark on exciting new careers in industries from forestry to construction, and contribute to creating a more sustainable economy."



Great Northumberland Forest funding

continued from p26
justification for encouraging replanting with this grant aid."

It is also hoped that eligible landowners will see this as an opportunity to expand their woodland area where appropriate, contributing to England's target of increasing tree canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% by 2050 in England.

Sir William Worsley, Chair of the Forestry Commission, commented: "Woodlands are a critically important resource which provide a wide range of benefits to society as well as playing a key role in helping

us respond to the challenges of climate change.

"The England Trees Action Plan highlights the need to ensure woodlands are resilient to cope with future pressures from pests and diseases and climate change. The support being provided to the Great Northumberland Forest will help increase resilience in targeted woodlands to ensure the resource is protected into the future".

Areas where woodland is most at risk of being lost will be prioritised to ensure the most damaged locations in the county recover from this significant storm event.

The Faces of Forestry

This is a portrait of Kathleen Houghton, who was born in 1922. Before the war, Kathleen worked in the mill for 40 weeks in Blackpool. She joined the Forestry Commission in 1941 and worked as a berry picker, then through the war never taken a day's holiday, shearing urgent berry crops of 40 people for the vital needs of the children in Plymouth. This great mosaic created by The People's Picture is composed of over 4,000 images and celebrates the contribution of the Lumberjills, a group of women who played a vital role in maintaining the supply of timber in WWII. Alongside photos of the original Lumberjills are over 2,000 images submitted by women working in the forestry sector and women enjoying spending time in forests and woodlands. Together they illustrate the continued connection today's women have with forests and woodlands.



ing to see so many individual memories come together to tell the incredible story of the Lumberjills, not only here at Grizedale but right across the country. The exhibition includes text by author Joanna Foat, author of *Lumberjills: Britain's Forgotten Army*, and also includes photographs and artefacts from a series of private and public sources including the Imperial War Museum.

"The exhibition is so much richer thanks to everyone who responded to our calls for information and it's fantastic to share these amazing stories."

As well as celebrating the achievements of the past, the exhibition aims to inspire the next generation of women in forestry to expand, protect and improve our forests, woods and trees.

Forestry Minister Trudy Harrison commented: "The remarkable story of the Lumberjills highlights the important role women play in the forestry sector, which is fundamental to the country's tree planting and net zero ambitions.

"We must create a diverse and inclusive sector and open up even more careers for women - from foresters to ecologists, woodland officers and business planners. I'm encouraging women from all backgrounds to join this growing sector."

Applications open for boosted tree seed production

Domestic tree seed production to be ramped up and biosecurity enhanced with new Government funding and measures

The next round of the Domestic Seed Sourcing Grant is set to be allocated, with £747,000 awarded to boost domestic tree seed production, create green jobs, help meet the increased demand for trees and achieve net zero targets.

The grant is designed to enhance the quantity, quality and diversity of tree seed sources in England. Most tree seed planted in the UK is of British origin, but evidence suggests that British seed sources may struggle to meet future demand across all species.

Forestry Minister Trudy Harrison MP said: “This funding will improve the diversity of England’s seed supply, increasing the range of species. This will be crucial for creating diverse and resilient woodlands, which are better able to adapt to future climate conditions as well as emerging pests and diseases.

“Increasing seed supply will also be essential to meeting our target to treble tree planting rates by the end of this Parliament.”

In addition to boosting domestic tree seed production, the Domestic Seed Sourcing Grant is designed to support green jobs, helping meet the growing demand for new trees. Eligible activities include:

- Management of existing seed stands – the groups of trees in the landscape from



which seed is collected – to ensure they are productive for seed collectors.

- Desk studies and field studies to identify and bring additional seed stands onto the National Register of Basic material.
- Planning and planting of new seed stands.
- Planning and planting of new seed orchards – which are planted using seed or clonal material from known parents outside of the natural landscape in an area convenient for seed collectors.

An extension to the Biosecure Procurement Requirement Pilot was also announced in May, in line with the GB Plant Biosecurity Strategy, to further Government tree-planting funds and address risks to biosecurity.

“We need to have healthy and thriving

trees to help tackle some of society’s biggest challenges of climate change and nature decline,” explained Richard Stanford, Forestry Commission Chief Executive. “Protecting our treescape from biosecurity risks is vital to ensuring resilient trees and woodlands.

“Increasing funding for seed sourcing will help manage the risk of pests and diseases, minimising net loss to the existing treescape and protecting our investment in diversifying and expanding tree cover in England.”

Nicola Spence, Chief Plant Health Officer, added: “A healthy, high quality, and diverse treescape is integral to meet our target of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

“This vital funding will diversify our domestic seed source supply and reduce the need to import seeds from abroad. In addition, by extending our Biosecurity Procurement Requirement for applicants to the government’s tree planting funds, we will bolster our biosecurity standards and improve the resilience of our trees against harmful pests and diseases.”

Applicants to these funds, such as local authorities, must commit to sourcing their trees from suppliers who are either accredited under the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme or who have passed a Ready to Plant assessment, as provided by Fera Science Ltd for their order, to ensure they are disease and pest free to minimise future threats of invasive species and tree loss.

The Forestry Commission has produced a new Forestry Nursery Directory to help connect people who buy trees with people who grow trees.

Tubex launches major expansion of recycling scheme

Customers will now be able to drop off used tree shelters at recycling hubs around the UK

Tree shelter specialist Tubex has announced a new improvement to its Tree Shelter Collection and Recycling Programme, offering hubs around the UK where tree shelters can be dropped off to be recycled, completely free of charge.

The scheme is a joint initiative with charity Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT), which opened several hubs of its own in 2021. Tillhill is also supporting the scheme by offering two locations for shelter collection.

Tubex is aiming to increase accessibility and proximity whilst limiting any unnecessary costs for end users, so that people are not discouraged to recycle shelters at end-of-life by having to fund and organise their disposal process.

All costs after the bags of used tree shelters are dropped at the hubs will be covered, including bailing, washing, recycling and re-pelletizing the material so that it can be used to create more shelters.

Additionally, any Polypropylene (PP)

shelters manufactured by other brands will also be accepted.

Tubex’s Marketing & Product Development Director, James Taylor explained: “This new hub scheme is a significant investment from Tubex into the industry to ensure responsible solutions for the tree shelters at their end of life.

“Our hubs now provide a convenient way for our customers to ensure that their shelters will be handled responsibly at end-of-life, completely free of cost.”



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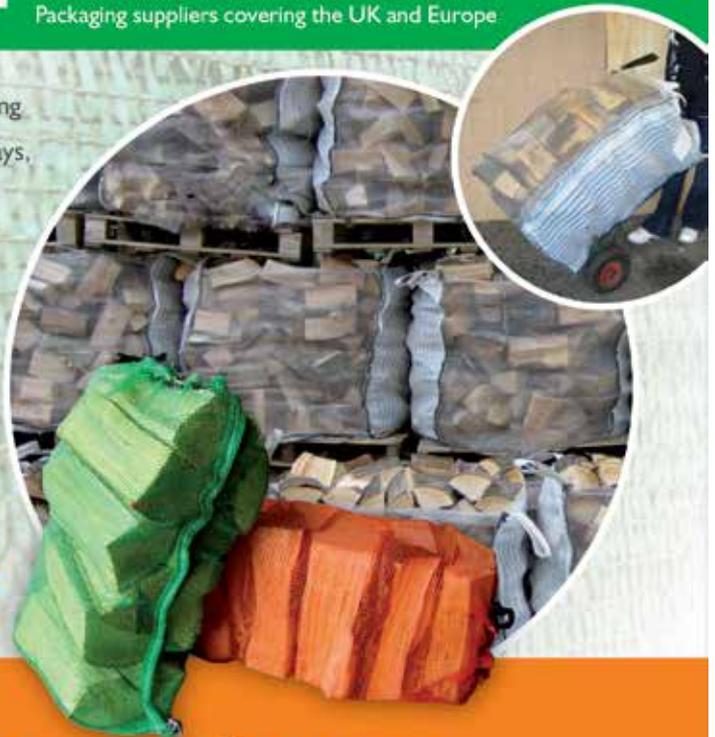
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Using conifer bark to combat parasites



Dr Spiridoula Athanasiadou, a specialist in Animal and Veterinary Sciences at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), is seeking collaborators in the forestry industry to further her current research.

How did you get involved in this research?

A few years ago, I was part of an international project, funded by the Norwegian Research Council, investigating the antiparasitic properties of bark extracts from conifers in Norway.

We were looking at how extracts from tree species like Scots Pine, Spruce and Birch were affecting parasites and how the different ages of the trees impacted that. The age of a tree is one of the determinants of the concentration of secondary metabolites, which are molecules a plant produces that do not really influence the plant itself, but on other living organisms.

We found that some bark extracts killed a lot of parasites when tested in the lab and when given to animals in that first stage of research, which was encouraging.

Recently, we have received funding from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, to investigate if we could identify similar properties in bark originating from the UK.

What does the testing look like?

We have different ways of making the bark extracts, using different solvents to make sure a variety of compounds were extracted and with those variations we can test various stages of parasites: from egg to larvae and adult parasites.

Basically, we put them in petri dishes and incubated them with different extracts for different amounts of time. The large variety of samples we had in the lab were tested against parasites from sheep and we started to see some good activity in vitro and in vivo.

Why is conifer bark effective?

There are some factors that we know make a difference, like condensed tannins because they've been shown to have antiparasitic properties.

But one of the things we want to do in this project is to identify many different compounds so we can characterise bark for antiparasitic activity potential. So, for example, we'd be able to say if a bark sample has X and Y, then it's likely to be active.

Professor Nicholas Westwood from St Andrews University is going to help us identify the active compounds because we're still speculating about that.

What's the end goal of the project?

The end goal would be to incorporate bark extracts in animal feeds for parasite control. We've had interest from animal feed companies and in particular one that has investigated this area before. But we are looking at least five years down the line for incorporating these extracts into animal feeds.

For this to be a viable product, we must find ways of making more concentrated and cheaply made extracts.

How could our Members get involved?

At this stage, we need to identify a company that can supply us with bark. We do not necessarily need huge amounts, but we want to capture as much variation as possible. It would be good to get bark representative to various times of the year.

If you have access to a variety of conifer bark samples and are interested in contributing to this research, please contact spiridoula.athanasiadou@sruc.ac.uk.

Seeds scattered on Scottish hills by forestry drones

Drones have been used to scatter an estimated 20 million birch seeds on Scottish hills by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

The drone seeding is the latest phase in efforts by FLS, working with Transport Scotland, to reduce the likelihood of landslips on a section of the A83. The technique – new to FLS – is being tested and evaluated by FLS partners, Forest Research and Auto Spray Systems.

Planting native tree species on these slopes will ensure that over time an extensive root system will develop through the soils, improving soil structure as well as to reduce the effects of surface erosion on much of the exposed mineral soils.

The seeds were dispersed in a matter of hours over areas of the landslip, which were able to access, which would have taken weeks to cover by hand planting. The drones covered a 12-hectare area in a very short time.

James Hand, Operations Forester, said: "This is a major innovation that we expect will soon be adopted across the country as we work to adapt our forests and the wider landscape such that they can better withstand the impact of a changing climate."



TAKING STOCK

How Evolving Forests are making use of citizen science and technology as common as smartphones to measure complex forest inventories.

What does your woodland consist of? How much timber can sustainably be taken out? Are there too few or too many trees impacting ecological health?

These crucial questions have, in the past, been answered by long-winded analogue techniques for inventory, namely battered DBH callipers and a 20m tape measure that's been dragged through brambles so many times it now measures 21m.

We've been interested in digital inven-



against diameter classes.

- In the unique estuarine oak woodlands of Devon the need for inventory isn't about volumes but rather stem, canopy and understory condition. Here, tree-based inventory needs to mesh with ecological condition assessment where boundaries are blurred for instance between stem form for timber use and stem condition for trees approaching veteran status.
- Up on Dartmoor, our data gathering needs shift again. In an environment where you can walk half a day and only stumble upon one twisted hawthorn, geolocation for return surveying is vital, as is reliance on citizen science to cover large areas assessing individual tree health.

These are the modern worlds of inventory for us. Once unusual silvicultural systems that are rapidly becoming part of everyday forestry.

How do we measure?

We first generate a sampling plan that is woodland rather than process focussed. We lay out an adaptable digital grid. If a stand is completely uniform, we can save time and money by sampling less intensively. If it is a complex riparian zone or CCF stand, we can choose to sample more intensely.

Using digital tools, we can easily alter sampling intervals or plot sizes as appropriate. With digital geolocation, we can return to plots, ensuring increased replicability and accurate monitoring of change over time and even increase frequency of plots if needed.

Our main tool for "normal" forest inventory is currently the Arboreal Forest app. Working best on iPhones and iPads with lidar capability, the app allows us to get everything needed for timber and stem assessment.

At each sample point Arboreal Forest allows us to set a centre point, and a radius for the sample plot. At each tree in the plot, we determine species, and the phone takes an accurate diameter. Venturing outside the plot radius, you are swiftly notified - no hung-up tapes in brambles. The app records height measurements and area results are given instantly as volume, stems/ha, basal area, and carbon stocks. The data can then all be downloaded back at the office.

It has transformed how we undertake inventory operations. It isn't perfect, but then using a DBH tape is prone to mistakes and shortcuts too. It is many times cheaper than dedicated forest survey equipment and much faster than analogue inventory. Our feeling is that we get increased accuracy because of the number of plots and the larger areas we are now able to survey in the same amount of time.

Outside of the traditional forest we are surveying tree health in remote parts of Dartmoor with volunteers of mixed tech-

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- At the Architectural Association's forest campus Hooke Park, we are working on a long-term strategic plan. The forester there has a unique and exceptional knowledge of the forest from decades of management; however, there is no full inventory, no place to start to look at future silviculture for timber and ecology.
- In Lesnes Abbey Woods, a suburban woodland in London the management intention is very different. With a rich history of management, high visitor pressure, and poor access there is a need to be highly focussed on which trees can come out and how best to maximise the value of them. It's not necessarily knowing about total volumes, but about knowing species

tory for a few years now and have watched as it has become increasingly led by remote sensing and modelling. However, we find ourselves needing data from complex systems such as continuous cover (CCF), agroforestry and urban forestry systems that can only be derived accurately from within the forest itself.

When it comes to looking at quality rather than volume or uses for individual stems, we need to measure actual trees and if we are interested in changes to forest ecological conditions, having replicable geolocated plots for regular detailed assessments has huge advantages over whole-forest assessments.

We are also a small business, so spending thousands on specialist technology and data isn't realistic, especially as we are all already carrying advanced sensing equipment in our pockets every day with in our smartphones.

What do we want to measure?

Our needs are as variable as the types of systems we get called in to investigate:





ELECTRIC TIMBER TRUCKS TO BE TRIALLED IN SCOTLAND

Scottish Forestry has committed £452,000 towards testing the use of state-of-the-art electric timber wagons to transport timber.

The forestry sector, whilst inherently green, is keen to use modern technology to tackle timber transport issues as part of its overall efforts to decarbonise and reach Net Zero.

Running for three years, a first of its kind project in the UK will bring together two Scottish timber companies, James Jones & Sons Ltd and Scotlog Haulage, to trial electric timber lorries as part of their operations.

Two new Volvo electric vehicles are currently being manufactured in Sweden for specific use in this trial, made possible by a partnership with the Volvo Group and Cleaner EV. They are expected to be ready for use later this summer.

James Jones & Sons Ltd, one of the largest sawmill groups in the UK, will trial a 40-tonne articulated lorry from their sawmill in Lockerbie to transport timber to their Hangingshaws national distribution centre. Scotlog Haulage will be using a 44-tonne truck in the Highlands, moving roundwood timber from Inverness Harbour to West Fraser and other local mills.

Over the course of the trial, the vehicles will be evaluated for their achievable mileage vs battery consumption, durability, viability and total cost of ownership.

Around 7 million tonnes of wood are harvested from Scotland's forests each year and transported to sawmills, board manufacturers and other processors, mostly on 44-tonne diesel lorries.

Announcing the £452,000 funding for the project, Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon said: "Forestry is vital to helping Scotland achieve its net zero target by 2045. Around 7.6 million tonnes of harmful

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nological ability. In this setting we are using the GIS Cloud app and have been able to collect data in dispersed wood-pasture at pace.

We build the survey questions into the free app and volunteers download it onto their smartphone. Arriving at a tree a rapid health assessment is undertaken, a photograph snapped, and the app captures the location. This is repeated for each tree found and data, including images, are securely stored until the device is connected to the internet again.

Our next step with GIS Cloud is to use it in urban forestry. It has the ability to engage and involve people outside of forestry in tree health, simultaneously educate, and collect accurate geotagged data quickly.

Where does this all go next?

We are hoping to start work to integrate more apps and platforms into our work. Ideally, we foresee woodland management platforms linked by APIs (the bits that different bits of software use talk to each other in a vaguely intelligible way) within the next few years. The hope is that these that allow data collection from forest monitoring to be combined with digital mapping such as myForest

in the creation of comprehensive management plans.

Does it detract from the skills of being a professional forester or timber merchant?

We don't think so. For us it has meant that our ecologist can now undertake timber inventory whilst carrying out ecological assessments and build on her knowledge of forest condition. For those of us with a timber background, it will start to allow us to integrate ecological condition into our timber knowledge. It allows us to start undertaking inventory work in woodlands traditionally missed.

We could, for instance, go into a wood-pasture or urban street-tree realm, select a 100m sample radius, and undertake a volume and carbon assessment with ease. We can work in CCF systems with confidence, and it opens up good quality inventory to small-scale woodlands because of its speed and affordability. It means that we can create replicable base-line data for a woodland from which condition improvements can be measured over long timescales, and repeated by a range of individuals, ensuring accurate assessment of long-term impacts of forest management.

We are excited about where this goes next...



CO₂ is taken out of the atmosphere from Scotland's trees each year and the timber used in houses and other wooden products lock away carbon for its lifetime.

"The forestry sector is innovative and always using new technology to increase its business efficiencies. I welcome this

new trial and look forward to hearing more about the findings as we drive closer to Net Zero."

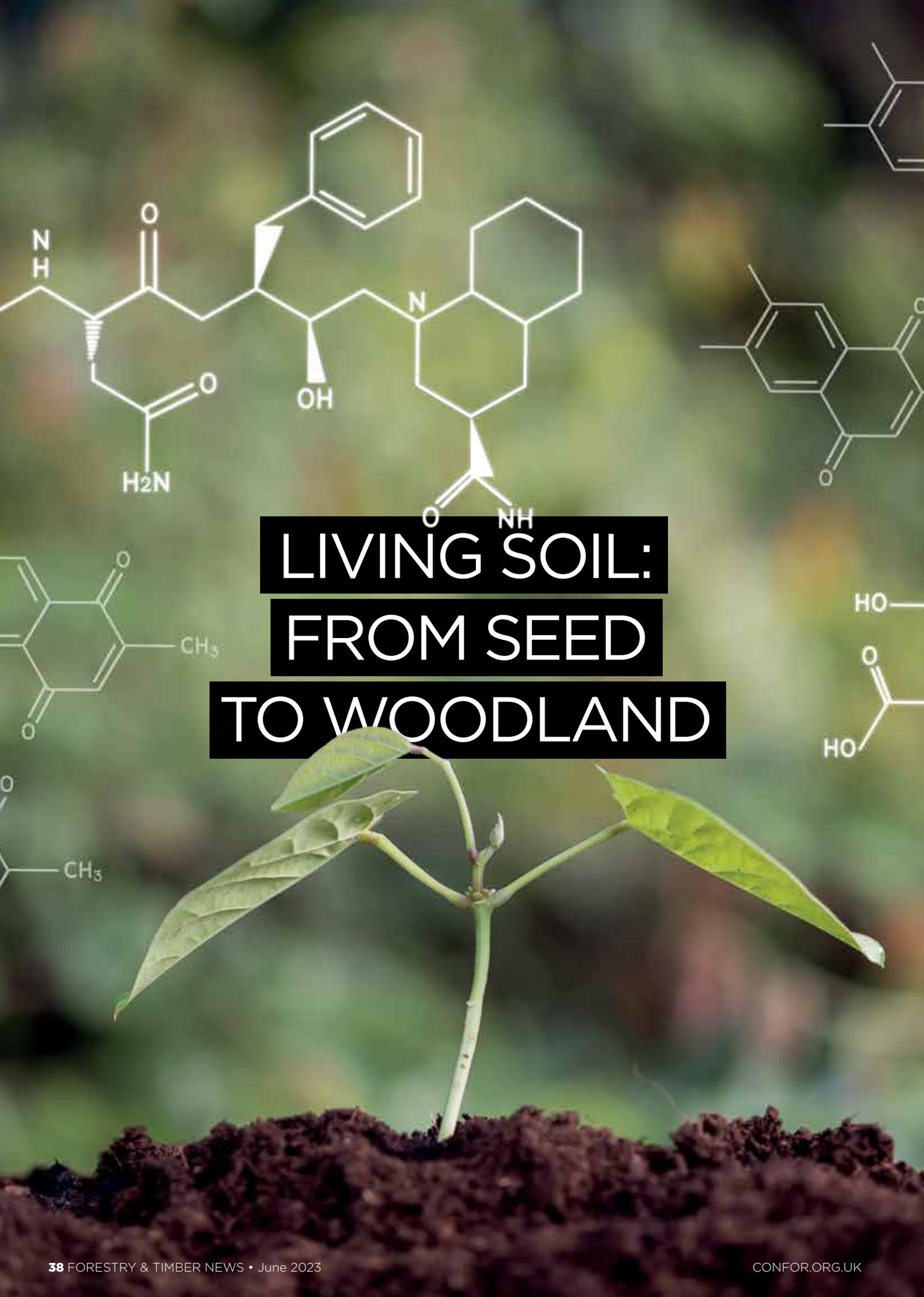
A key element of the three-year trial is that all the partners involved are committed to sharing their experiences of running the electric lorries with others in the timber and rural haulage sectors.

Creel Maritime consultants will monitor the use of the lorries and arrange knowledge exchange opportunities over the course of the following three years.

"In terms of road haulage, the timber industry is pretty advanced in looking for

solutions to decarbonise," commented Neil Stoddart, Director of Creel Maritime. "For example, we are reducing diesel lorry miles on many projects and opting for transport by sea. Additionally, we are reviewing using an alternative fuelled barge to transport logs across a remote Loch in the Highlands.

"This is a very exciting project but there are big challenges in running articulated lorries on electric power, mainly on cost grounds and infrastructure. This three-year trial will look into all these aspects and I'm keen to share as much detail on this with the industry."



**LIVING SOIL:
FROM SEED
TO WOODLAND**

The SAF Woodland Management Living Soil project under the Tree Production Innovation Fund is developing a natural alternative to man-made fertiliser. **Danial Iddon** explains how this step forward will close the cycle between nurseries, woodlands, and sawmills.

Woodland Grow, an innovative peat-free woodland-based compost made from UK-sourced materials that mimic woodland soils, has been designed to increase tree production, plant health, growth rates and reduce our carbon footprint.

The project team has developed a compost packed with a carefully balanced blend of beneficial and native microbes, bacteria, and fungi to meet the nutritional needs of trees. This new-generation compost is free of peat and synthetic fertilisers and is suitable for both professional growers and amateurs alike. With an increase in water retention compared to peat free, the benefits are tangible – there is less impact to the environment.

The Tree Production Innovation fund has facilitated this collaboration across the UK, bringing together industrial partners, specialists and forestry professionals to close a vital gap in the UK forestry carbon cycle. The project brings together SAF Woodland Management and A.W. Jenkinson Forest Products, with collaboration from Euroforest, Pryor & Rickett Silviculture and FERA Science.

“In addition to bringing a sustainable alternative to peat to market, this innovative project aims to develop a growing media tailored to tree production that will improve germination and establishment rates,” said Jack Clough, Grant Manager at Nature for Climate Fund.

The use of Woodland Grow in seed storage and germination trials with Forestart has shown an increase in germination of Hazel seeds compared to peat. The trials are now expanding to include more species and it is hoped that a peat-free alternative can be offered for professional seed storage to offer a 100% peat free



supply chain in tree production.

The ambitions of the Tree Production Innovation Fund project ‘Living Soil: Seed to Woodland’ are numerous and some may be sceptical about the project’s scope. However, after two years of research and development, through Phase 1 and Year 1 of 3 within Phase 2, the project is starting to take shape and become a tangible reality with benefits for increased tree production and woodland management opportunities.

This collaboration brings the cycle of timber and woodland environment full circle, where timber harvested goes into nurturing new trees within nurseries and removes the reliance on the nitrogen cycle

of NPK fertiliser.

In Year 1 of Phase 2, we have scaled up the production techniques and sources of materials to produce fungally-dominant compost ‘Mothers’ that will be used to inoculate our bulk material and produce approximately 1,500m³ of substrate for the 2024 growing season. A.W. Jenkinson Forest Products are supporting all phases of the project, including the blending of the substrate, innovating compost production and management support.

The growing trials at the SAF Woodland Management tree nursery have now expanded to involve Alba Trees and Forestry England nurseries, all using the living soil and biodegradable paper pots. In Year 2 we are planning to grow a combined 23,000 cells with Alba Trees and Forestry England, and in the SAF Woodland Management Pembrokeshire woodland nursery grow a further 30,000 cells with a mix of Conifer (Sitka Spruce and Douglas Fir) and Broadleaves (Oak and Cherry).

The trees we are growing as part of the trial have been chosen due to the fungi type favoured by their various species. The design of the growing trials looks to establish if we can create a substrate specific to not only trees in general, but to particular species. The project is working with FERA Science to apply the latest testing techniques through DNA and provide insight into the observations seen in plant health within the nursery.

Current substrate blends typically use material sourced from overseas, which

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adds carbon from transport into the equation. However, we intend to challenge that and use a living compost derived from UK material sources to further improve the benefits.

The knowledge to develop a fungally-dominant growing media using forestry materials is drawing attention from other industries and plant propagators who are looking for an alternative to peat. SAF Woodland Management are conducting trials with salad growers, including a nursery that produces 22 million salad plants a year.

That said, the vital part of peat replacement from UK sources will hopefully come from the woodland industry, providing more opportunities for those in the industry to change how we work with nature and provide food in a more sustainable way.

Year 3 of Phase 2 will see a series of planting trials where the project is working with Pryor & Rickett to identify suitable land and owners to collaborate on the trial. If you are interested to find out more, please contact your local Pryor & Rickett office for more details (www.silviculture.co.uk).

Through the use of a living substrate, it is conceivable we can develop living fertilisers, mulch matts and soil conditioners to improve plant establishment rates on agricultural land or highway planting where



soils are either nitrogen-rich or poor from earthworks. Forest Research are lending their input and looking at potential synergies to bring the project to life beyond Phase 2.

What we have achieved to date has offered invaluable insight into the opportunities for tree production and beyond – this work could result in a peat-free supply chain from seed to woodland, as well

as the removal of synthetic fertilisers and improved water retention. This would not have been possible without the support of the Forestry Commission.

Being able to influence other industries using similar technology will put woodland management at the right part of our society; we all know nature is there to help us on the basis we continue to support it in a sustainable way.

Premier Forest Products reach deal on Crumlin mill

Premier Forest Products has completed an agreement to sell the assets of their sawmill at Croespenmaen near Crumlin, South Wales to SDL Sawmills Ltd.

As part of the mutually beneficial deal, SDL Sawmills will take on the site and existing staff and continue with full scale milling activities. With an offtake agreement, Premier Forest will continue to supply the finished sawn products from the mill to their existing, diverse customer base.

Premier Forest has had a long relationship with another business in the SDL Group, which has the capability to manufacture the residues from the mill into wood pellets for the biomass industry; SDL are able to utilise the entire log, maximizing value through both the factory and produced goods, and the waste.

Premier Forest will buy all of SDL's sawn products, fencing materials, fence panels, sleepers, pallet wood and sawn timber to secure consistent, continual supply for their customer base and to fulfil market demand.

Terry Edgell, Co-founder & CEO of Premier Forest Products said: "This deal



is perfect for SDL, Premier Forest and our customers, who will continue to receive uninterrupted supply of our respective products.

"We are building on a strong partnership while making the most of the core capabilities and supply chain of each business; SDL's in sawmilling and fulfilment of increasing demand for biomass

products, and Premier Forest's in supplying value-add, sawn timber products to the construction and merchanting sectors."

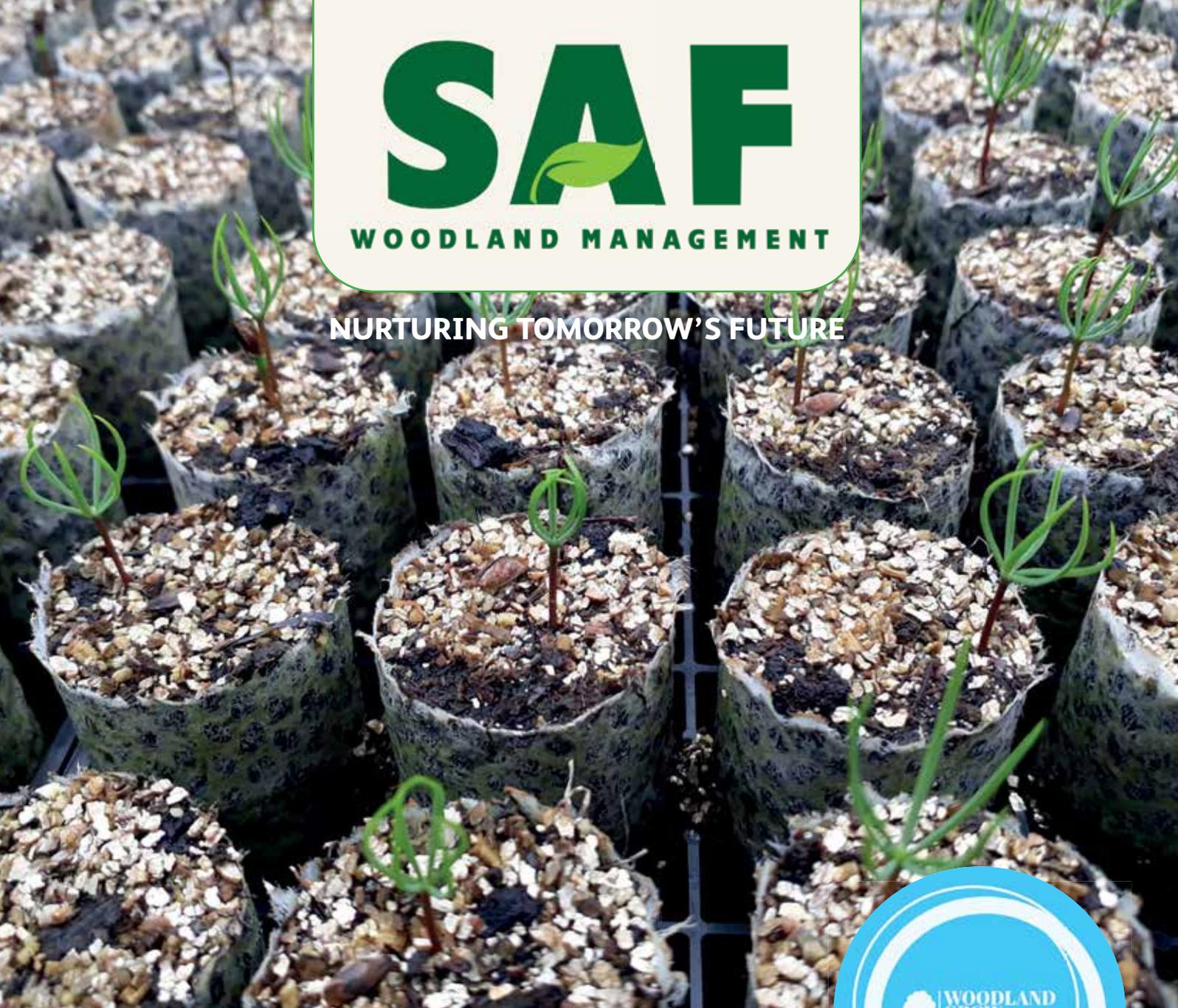
Sam Launchbury, Founder and CEO of SDL, added: "This is a perfect deal for the development of the SDL business and for strengthening our partnership with Premier Forest. By purchasing the sawmill, and recently building an in-house harvesting team, we are now able to complete the circle from purchasing standing trees and milling to generating heat and power which is then used to convert sawmill byproduct into a renewable energy fuel.

"The offtake agreement with Premier Forest for all the sawmill's finished products means that we are now in the position to utilise 100% of the standing tree, creating a sustainable product for the building, landscaping and heating sectors across the UK."

SDL is planning further investment in the sawmill to develop the facility and increase production, creating additional employment opportunities both directly and indirectly at the site.



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Keeping track of trees from orbit

Digital developments unfold at a fast pace, and for forestry this means opportunities for new, smarter ways of working. Satellite advancements have made it possible for Komatsu Forest to upgrade their fleet management system and offer 'Precision' like never before.

Thanks to developments in satellite positioning technology, Komatsu Forest's fleet management system can now show the machine's position within just a few centimetres, providing the foundation for a new and exciting function: Precision.

GPS positioning has long been used in forestry and has helped in the development of work methods, facilitated collaboration, and increased productivity. However, an error margin of 0-10 meters has meant fairly

inaccurate positioning. Until now.

Today's new real-time kinematic (RTK) technology enables positioning with an error margin of just a few centimetres, paving the way for countless possibilities and even heralding a paradigm shift to a smarter forestry.

"The new technology is a prerequisite for future solutions, but already today we can offer the exciting new MaxiFleet function Precision, which delivers valuable information and active operator support,"

said Jörgen Nilsson, Product Manager for Connected Products.

Mark exact boundaries

One new feature is that the operator can use geofencing – a digital fence that is added when planning an area. This could be around a harvesting area or to mark protected areas such as ancient monuments or charcoal pile remains.

This feature means greater peace of mind for forest owners and operators alike as it indicates more clearly where the operator should harvest and the areas they should avoid. Geofences can also be linked to alarms to warn the operator when the machine or the crane tip is approaching such a boundary.

"This means that the machine operator can safely harvest close to an area boundary without the risk of harvesting the neighbor's trees," explained Jörgen.

View the machine on a map

Since the machine's position can be determined with great precision, the user can also see the machine in the map program – including the direction of the crane and the location of the crane tip. This extreme precision enhances the practical usability of the map layer data for the operator.



All change at the top of PEFC UK

After 13 years heading up PEFC in the UK, Executive Director Alun Watkins will be retiring at the end of June 2023.

Since joining PEFC UK in January 2010, Alun has worked tirelessly with stakeholders from all sectors of the forest products supply chain – from the construction and forestry sectors to furniture and latterly, even fashion, to promote the benefits of PEFC certification and the role of certified material in helping to meet global low carbon targets.

At the same time, he has always been keen to add value to the hundreds of UK companies who have invested in PEFC certification, by offering support, training, and promotional tools to help certified companies make the most of their PEFC credentials.

“I am obviously sad to be leaving the team in Sheffield and saying goodbye to some fantastic colleagues in the forest products world,” Alun commented. “Not just in the UK but across PEFC’s global alliance. It has been a fabulous 13 years, and it has been very satisfying to see interest in reducing carbon and protecting the environment gather pace in recent years. It mustn’t stop.”



“But retirement beckons, and it is time for a fresh face at the helm to drive the organisation forward. John has a great deal of knowledge and experience to draw on, so I know that I am leaving PEFC UK in very capable hands.”

Alun will be succeeded by John Kirkby, most recently Principal Technical Consultant at 2C Consultancy Limited and well-versed in the world of certification and the demands of forestry. John has had several roles in the timber products industry and for the last 10 years he has specialised in helping companies across the UK gain chain of custody certification.

His clients have included sawmills, printers, joinery companies and builders’ merchants – both large and small. This means John will bring his knowledge of working with the key business sectors that make up PEFC UK’s membership to the organisation.

John said: “I am delighted to be joining PEFC as Executive Director.

Demand for sustainably sourced products, such as PEFC’s, continues to grow in the UK market.

My aim is to increase this even further and build on the fantastic work that Alun and the PEFC UK team have undertaken

over the last decade to maximise the benefits of certification to all our stakeholders.”

Another advantage of the new technology is that the machine’s route is plotted with significantly better accuracy, making the planning more effective.

Jörgen continued: “Today, most forest companies have to physically walk around the forest to mark trees – and in winter this can mean skiing on deep snow. Thanks to this new technology, boundaries and specific trees can be marked digitally, based on map data from, say, drones or LiDAR scanning.”

Keep track of the logs

In MaxiFleet, the operators have since long been able to see where a tree was felled, but with the greater precision now available, the exact position of each felled log can be shown.

This lets the operator know exactly where the timber is located, even in the dark or when covered with snow, and will make it easier to see the assortment found in each log pile or at the roadside.

“This also offers future development potential,” said Jörgen. “For instance, one plausible function would be to let the machine keep track of the timber volume until the operator believes it’s time to turn around and start loading so that the logs fit the load space.”

Free woodland advice for crofters and smallholders

Free advisory visits offering help to access grants for tree planting and woodland management are being offered to crofters and smallholders.

The Scottish Government’s Farm Advisory Service, delivered by SAC Consulting – part of Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), is working in partnership with Woodland Trust Scotland to provide advice on agroforestry and help crofting communities establish new woodland.

The Woodland Trust Scotland’s

Croft Woodland Project also provides support to establish hedges and shelterbelts and manage existing woodlands.

There is little tradition of woodland management in crofting as, until 1991, these rights were reserved for landowners, not their crofting tenants.

However, there are many benefits to planting trees on crofts, from improving productivity and offering opportunities for diversification, to increasing carbon capture and providing habitats for wildlife.

Timber prices improve with the weather



Mike Tustin MRICS MICFor and **John Clegg** FRICS share an optimistic outlook for the forestry property market from Tustins

As with many other sectors, the forestry property market has been affected by the increase in the cost of borrowing and the generally fragile wider economy, together with lower timber prices.

However, and in contrast to this not so happy message, in the last few weeks we have seen a very marked increase in calls and emails as investors and potential purchasers feel the return of the sun on their faces and want to look at and consider the available properties we are offering for investment.

In our long careers as forestry agents, we have seen downturns in the market before. Happily, the recent modest quieting has been fairly minor in comparison to events like Shotton going 100% recycled in the early noughties. As a result, we are able to report the hesitation in the market mentioned in the last issue appears to have begun to pass. This assumes the price of timber continues to improve following the past year of over supply as a result of Storm Arwen.

Conversations with more commercial investors during the first quarter have certainly been challenging and mainly focused on timber prices with concerns expressed on many of the sales we have agreed. Whilst timber prices have been lower than in previous years, the pertinent feature of the forestry market people often forget is that though timber might be selling for 20-30% less than it had been, you can shut the forest gate, stand down the harvesters, and wait for the market to improve. In the interim the trees grow even more

This is a feature of forestry ownership

that the private sector has the freedom to take advantage of. Our feeling is that this is clearly reflected by parcels of timber having been less speedy coming to the market in recent months.

More particularly in England and Wales, where there is massive variation in the stocking and quality of forest properties, each sector of this market is seeing something very different in its trading conditions. In this issue of the FTN Forestry Market Report we are more focused on Tustins' core area within the southern half of the UK.

Larger Commercial Woods regularly come to the market in all regions of the country, and we have seen some of the best in the last three years. However, the recent heavy competitiveness in the sec-

tor has seen high prices being paid by larger corporate organisations. Private individuals have not been quite so keen especially now we have lower timber prices.

Agents are having to very carefully consider guide prices to reflect the commercial realities of the properties and create the competition which is so important to vendors. People are looking more carefully at the numbers, and sales are being slow to come to that moment when everyone wants to bid. This caution also results in people looking harder than previously at issues on the property which might lower returns or create problems for future ownership.

Of note has been the sale of Coed Glyn-clygyrogwen which, after a few months of marketing, has recently been agreed favourably from a guide price of £1,800,000 for 273 acres. In contrast, a more commercial block of 95 acres called Cwm Pydew on the edge of The Berwyn Mountains, closer to markets, sold almost immediately at a price nicely in excess of guide of £900,000, reminiscent of 2021.

We gather from other agents a similar situation was faced with the sale of the other two large properties sold in south Wales and Yorkshire. We have also seen the re-emergence of the keen small commercial private investor with two other woods recently agreed at significantly better than guide prices for two relatively small woodlands: Gwernilla in Herefordshire, which was agreed at a figure significantly better than the guide of £70K for a very commercial 12 acres; and Perthby in Mid Wales, agreed at a much better than guide price of £375,000 on 73 acres of semi commercial replanted conifers.

continued on p46





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In contrast the less commercial sector is proving to be slower to recover. Timber prices are less important but the cost of borrowing and the fairly negative economic outlook are more significant. That said, sales of a number of less commercial blocks of woodland, where the amenity and non-timber benefits of owning a woodland appear to be important, have been agreed.

Examples of this would be Scratch-

hmill Scar that was agreed in early May at more than the guide of £1.25m for 222 acres of principally Pine forest, along with a conservation woodland known as Allt Y Waun, which has been agreed just above a guide of £295,000 for 71 acres of naturally regenerated native woodland. Both very different woods but properties where timber prices are a little less significant than their pleasure of ownership.

In most years the appearance of bluebells and spring flowers, which have been

plentiful this year, heralds the start of the selling season for broadleaved woods. The appearance of leaf, drier conditions in the woods, together with longer and warmer hours of daylight for viewing, contribute strongly to this. So far, by mid-May, there looks to be a good selection of woods coming to the market.

Tustins, one of the UKs leading and fully qualified woodland sales specialists are experts on the sale, valuation and acquisition of all types and sizes of woodland.

Next stage of timber engineering CPD course launched at NMITE

New students are set to learn about design and construction on course that champions the use of sustainable timber.

NMITE (New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering) is set to welcome a new cohort onto its new Timber Technology Engineering Design 2 (TED 2) CPD course, following the success of its TED 1 courses. Starting from 5 June 2023, the new course is once again delivered in partnership with Timber Development UK and Edinburgh Napier University.

The TED 1 courses ran from September 2022 and January 2023 and were effective in raising awareness around the need for more use of timber, over less sustainable, non-timber products. There was a cohort of eight on the September course and due to peer-to-peer recommendation and word of mouth, this doubled to 16 for January.

The broad appeal of the TED course is due to it having been designed to meet learners where they are in their knowledge base, as it is not a requirement that they have a detailed understanding of how timber works. In addition, the course appeals to a diverse audience due to its mix of learning styles across visual, auditory, practical hands-on and portfolio content curation.

Professor Robert Hairstans, Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT) Director, commented: "The launch of our TED 2 course builds on our successful TED 1 course, both of which are designed to help solve the climate crisis problem by championing the use of the natural, renewable capital of timber that

we have. TED 1 was a huge success with learners coming away feeling equipped to champion the use of timber in their workplace.

"Fundamental to all NMITE courses is to provide a student-centric approach with a curriculum fuelled by real-world challenges working with external stakeholders, industry practitioners and academic collaborators. I believe this approach is fundamental to our cohorts' enjoyment and engagement with the course and I suspect is also why we are so successful at attracting diversity on our courses."

TED 2 includes two design briefs for which students have a chance to construct during the on-campus residencies. The process progresses the TED 1 challenges which went from simple connections, to basic supported structures, to integrated design with additional layers within the final structure, for which students exhibit to an invited audience.

Architectural Assistant at dRMM, Olivia Chan, completed the NMITE TED 1 course earlier this year. She said: "Within the course, I have been encouraged to develop a detailed material understanding which incorporates the lifecycle of timber. This has included a theoretical and practical understanding of how to sustainably grow, procure, apply, and upcycle timber as well as how to maintain the timber supply chain in a way that ensures our sustainable future.

"The opportunity to connect a theoretical understanding and speak to people in forestry, milling and design has fostered a collaborative learning environment. Practical, material-based lab work has allowed me to learn how to research and detail small-scale timber projects. Hands-on experience like being able to test our own theories within a specialist timber laboratory has helped me build my experience and has improved my confidence in advocating for timber."





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New Forestry Programme 2023-2027 delayed in Ireland

Despite being announced to great fanfare last November, and with great expectation that it would be cleared for launch early in the New Year, the new Forestry Programme 2023 - 2027 still hasn't been given the green light as of mid-May.

The government are awaiting EU approval and the sense of sheer frustration and disappointment is palpable within the industry. Coming on top of five years of afforestation levels tanking, felling licence delays, and constant anti-commercial forestry publicity in mainstream and social media, the industry could have done without a six-month delay in the official launch of the new programme.

The Forest Service did introduce an Interim programme in February for those with existing licences under the previous programme, but there was limited interest - possibly because of confusion over the rules of the Interim scheme and concern that the rates might be higher whenever the new programme is officially launched.

According to the Social Environmental Economic Forestry Association (SEEFA), no forestry licences are being approved and no new applications are even being accepted by the Department. This is set to continue until the new programme is in place.

It is no great surprise, then, that just 255 hectares have been afforested in Q1 based on official figures from the Department. The target for 2023 is 8,000, but it is looking extremely unlikely that even last year's disastrous outturn of 2,273 ha can be achieved.

The numbers also show that there has been a 90% decline in the number of licences issued in Q1 in comparison with Q1 in 2022.

Government inaction

It is the view of the writer that the political will or commitment is not there at the highest level to seriously address the issues facing Irish forestry. If the tillage, beef or dairy sector had experienced a 200% drop in production levels over the last 10 years, a crisis would have been declared and an urgent set of measures introduced to correct the situation.

A political storm would have no doubt ensued, which would have seen the government parties forced to take action from the Taoiseach down, or risk major losses at the polls at the next General Election. Certainly, having the Green Party power



sharing does not help commercial forestry, and the fact that the Junior Minister with responsibility for Forestry is also from the Green Party adds to the problem.

And yet, it has to be said that the Government at the highest level have shown a marked reluctance (even cowardice) to come out and publicly support the commercial forestry industry which employs 10,000 people directly and indirectly. The risk of being slated on Twitter and other social media platforms by those from an environmental and anti-commercial forestry background appears to have silenced our political leaders.

Even the official name of the Department (the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) does not include Forestry, which demonstrates albeit symbolically the lack of importance with which our industry is regarded. In addition, the name of the forestry division within the Department (the Forest Service) has also been eliminated so that officially there no longer is a Forest Service, and all correspondence and communications on forestry now show DAFM only.

Jim MacKinnon is his highly lauded report on Irish Forestry published in 2019 also noted that forestry did not appear in the title of the Department, and that a Minister for State does not have the influence or leverage of more senior Ministers. In Scotland, which has experienced a spectacular surge in afforestation levels in

the past five years, a senior Minister has responsibility for forestry.

The contrast with the UK and especially England is depressing. Trudy Harrison's statement in December 2022 at the Confor Policy Conference that she wanted more timber for domestic construction, and therefore more conifers were needed was extremely positive and uplifting to say the least. She then doubled down on this position by stating that she had no issue with conifer woodlands and enjoyed walking through conifer woods just as much as broadleaf woods.

She followed this by backing and pledging support to the Timber Sector Deal in March 2023 where once again she made a big commitment to productive forestry.

Irish foresters and the industry in general would be shocked to their core if Pippa Hackett, the Junior Minister with responsibility for Forestry, issued a similar statement regarding coniferous forestry. In fact, in 40 odd tweets about trees and forestry since January 2023, the majority have dealt with agroforestry, native tree planting, and a couple on CCF.

None referred to commercial coniferous forestry or the fantastic processing and nursery industry that has been built up in Ireland over the last 50 years. None referred to the 10,000 jobs; the majority of which have been created by commercial forestry enterprise in the same period.

www.kestrelforestry.ie

Teaching in a time of war: Ukraine National Forestry University

The Scottish School of Forestry has partnered with their equivalent institution in Ukraine to support the continued education of students in the midst of conflict. **Euan Bowditch**, Researcher and Lecturer in Forestry and Social-Ecology, shares the action being taken and the help needed from the sector.

As the war in the Ukraine continues a year on from when it began, it seems inconceivable that life could go on as normal. However, for many Ukrainians that is the case, and this includes those teaching and studying at the Ukraine National Forestry University (UNFU) in Lviv.

The Scottish School of Forestry (SSF) (UHI Inverness) is partnering with UNFU to help fundraise and enable continued teaching and delivery of forestry education. Students continue to make progress towards their qualifications (except those that are fighting and supporting the defence forces), as there will be life and careers in the future.

SSF and UNFU are co-developing an online summer school for 2023 and aim to collaborate on longer-term education delivery and research. Although we are currently focussing on immediate needs, this partnership will pursue long-term aims of annual summer school for students alternating between the UK and Ukraine, development of shared educational resources, and working together to bring more skilled foresters into the two sectors.

In the coming months, the two-day on-

line summer school with the UNFU/SSF students and staff alongside industry representatives will come together and learn about the two countries' forestry sectors and the unique/common challenges for the future of the industry. This might also be made an open event, so anyone interested to hear about Ukrainian forestry and refresh their own knowledge about Scottish forestry will be welcome (watch this space).

How can we help?

The Scottish School of Forestry is currently working in partnership with the UNFU to raise funds to support their technical needs:

- Keeping everyone warm (heating systems)
- Keeping the power (solar-powered mobile generators)

Our target for supporting their needs to maintain education requirements and an appropriate learning environment for the students is €90,000 – primarily to replace the current heating system, a few heat pumps, and eight solar-powered mobile generators.

I realise this seems a large sum, but if

we were to spread this across the sector through smaller contributions, we might be able to meet the target easily and help the staff and students adapt to current conditions.

The staff and students live in a state of impending disruption whereby classes or meetings may suddenly stop abruptly due to missile strikes, power outages or shortages that are quite regular occurrences. They have to make their way to shelters or, classically pragmatic, they often say they will stay on as long as they can and, if they disappear, then just carry on without them and hopefully they will be able to re-join at some point.

The UNFU is very large and is home to thousands of students studying forestry and wood related professions. As the only forestry educators in Ukraine, this puts the institution and sector in a particularly vulnerable position if they cannot train new forestry professionals to keep the sector buoyant during and beyond the conflict.

More information For inquiries about this issue and/or donations please contact Euan Bowditch at UHI Inverness (ewan.bowditch.ic@uhi.ac.uk).

The Ukraine city of Lviv



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Ensuring safe storage of wood pellets



Clare Bone, Partner and health and safety law expert at Brodies LLP, comments on the dangers of transporting and storing wood pellets

The popularity of wood pellets as a form of heating has continued to rise over the last few years, as many of us turn away from fossil fuels and look for more sustainable and renewable ways to heat our business or home. The UK remains one of the world's largest consumers of imported as well as domestically produced product.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has sparked a shortage of wood pellets here in the UK and abroad, Russia having been a major exporter of wood pellets to the West. As UK manufacturers of wood pellets look to increase production it is worth reminding the industry of the significant health and safety risks that exist in the storage and transportation of this product.

The composition of wood pellets is such that in normal, everyday conditions they will produce carbon monoxide, generating higher levels in the first few weeks after production. An odourless, tasteless gas, carbon monoxide will deplete the air of oxygen, posing the risk of serious injury or death to anyone exposed to it.

If wood pellets are stored for any length of time, this can lead to a build up to dangerous levels, increasing the risk of harm. There have been a number of fatalities both at home and abroad where individuals have accessed areas where wood pellets are stored and have succumbed to the carbon monoxide fumes produced.

As carbon monoxide will be present wherever you are storing or transporting wood pellets it is important to ensure appropriate controls are in place. Such controls include adequate ventilation and restriction of access to unauthorised persons.

Any storage area should be assessed to determine if it should be classed as a confined space. Under the Confined Space Regulations 1997, a 'confined space' in this context has two defining features.

Firstly, it is a place which is enclosed and, secondly, there will be a reasonably foreseeable risk of serious injury from hazardous substances or conditions within the space or nearby.

There should be suitable ventilation in place. Warning signs should be displayed to warn of the confined space, risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and preventing unauthorised access. For employees required to access such areas there should be suitable and sufficient training, with safe working procedures in place, based on a site-specific risk assessment, to ensure a safe place and system of work.

For more information, the HSE's Approved Code of Practice 'Safe Work in Confined Spaces' (L101) provides useful guidance for employers and employees.

Manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of wood pellets should also ensure that they provide adequate health and safety information to the end user in their materials safety data sheet. A material safety data sheet will include information

on health effects of exposure to the product it relates to as well as hazard evaluation related to its handling, storage, or use.

As such it should include information on the potential for the build-up of carbon monoxide in enclosed areas, its effects, and other such relevant information to alert the end user to the risks arising from storage of the product and to inform them on what measures they ought to take to minimise the risks of exposure to carbon monoxide.

By taking these steps, those involved in the manufacture and supply of wood pellets will be doing what they can to comply with their own health and safety duties to their employees and those who use their products and will minimise the risk of someone succumbing to ill health or death through exposure to carbon monoxide.

As the demands for a greener, more sustainable energy supply continue to increase, taking such steps ensure that wood pellets are not only an appealing alternative to fossil fuels, but a safe form of energy too.



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A TURN IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT



ATVs have become as much a part of forestry machinery as harvesters, forwarders and tractors. **Andrew Smith** looks at the sit-in ATVs available on the market.

Honda, Argo-Cat and Garrons are all names that will be synonymous with forest machinery for many. Looking back, there have been some interesting variants including the Honda ATC three-wheeler and the Eco-rider two wheeled machine, both are famous (or should that be infamous) for all the wrong reasons. The three-wheelers in particular were unfortunately responsible for a high number of serious accidents.

The tried and tested design for sit- astride ATVs has become the four-wheeled machine, with occasional six-wheelers cropping up. These machines have found popularity for tasks including leading out plants on restock sites, vegetation control on footpaths, and getting people out to remote areas of an estate or land holding. They require what is often referred to as an "active rider" to maintain the vehicle's stability and grip.

However, in recent years there has been a surge in popularity for sit-in style ATVs. These are often referred to by the name of the John Deere sit-in ATV, the Gator, in much the same way as we call any make of vacuum cleaner a Hoover!

What is behind this shift to sit-in ATVs? There are number of benefits, so it is difficult to identify any one reason. However, motives include increased load carrying capacity; increased towing capacity; wider and longer wheelbase aiding stability; die-



HONDA PIONEER 520

sel variants; ability to transport more than one person; and for some it is having a cab with a heater!

Dare I say it, but they are also easier to drive, especially for less confident or inexperienced riders.

Sounds great, but what about the downsides? Sit-in machines are heavier than the sit- astride ATVs, so if you do get stuck it may well be a more onerous task to extract the machine; transporting them from site to site will require a larger trailer and you'll probably not be able to utilise the trailer behind the ATV; and price is a factor with many costing a similar figure to a car, and probably twice that of a sit- astride ATV. They are serious investments!

All models featured in this article are four-wheel drive machines. Most manufacturers offer a crew cab style machine too, where moving people about is as important as cargo or towing.

On the subject of safety, anyone who looks at the HSE fatalities statistics annually will be aware that, sadly, ATVs – specifically sit- astride ATVs - feature prominently in these figures. For many employers, providing a similar vehicle but one which features a ROPS structure and seatbelts is a proactive decision to improve their em-



ployee's safety.

There are many companies offering attachments for ATVs and many have now increased their product offering to ensure that there are attachments for sit-in machines now too. As always though, please ensure compatibility with your machine and any attachments.

In terms of the all-important operator certification, both NPTC City and Guilds and Lantra offer operator certificates of competence. Both recognise the difference between a sit- astride and a sit-in ATV, but Lantra also differentiate between sit-in machines that are conventionally steered, and skid steered. All the models covered in this review are conventionally steered machines.

HONDA

Probably the manufacturer that most of us would look to if we were after a sit- astride ATV, or certainly well up the list. Honda was a relative latecomer to the sit-in ATV market. Why, I'm not sure – perhaps they didn't see the need, or perhaps they were worried it would dilute their sales of sit- astride machines, but they have joined the party at long last with the Pioneer 520.

Whilst the machine does take the form



KUBOTA RTV-X1110



JOHN DEERE X865M

of a sit-in ATV, it is almost a halfway house between a sit- astride and sit-in. Yes, it can seat two people and has a rear load bed, but it is smaller than most and certainly narrower.

Power comes from a 518cc petrol engine, on-brand for a maker like Honda. Transmission is a five-speed variant (unlike many others who offer a CVT transmission), which can be operated manually or automatically.

The Pioneer 520 comes with selectable 2/4wd, a 204kg bed capacity and a 454kg towing capacity. Options include fabric doors; a solid roof; windscreen and rear of cab panel; guarding etc.

KAWASAKI

Kawasaki by comparison were fairly early converts to the sit-in ATV market and their model range name - the Mule - is another often used as a generic reference to sit-in

ATVs. The current offering comprises four models, two petrol and two diesels.

The entry level SX 4x4 features a 400cc petrol engine and is a two-seater model. Equipped with drum brakes all round, selectable 2/4wd and rear diff lock. Load capacity of 181kg and towing capacity of 500kg.

The Pro-MX is a 700cc petrol machine, and like its smaller sibling features a CVT transmission. Improvements to this model include disc brakes all round and a 36-litre fuel capacity.

There are two machines in the diesel range, the Pro-DX and the Pro-DXT. Both share a 1-litre diesel engine, but the big difference is that the DXT is capable of carrying up to six passengers including the driver. Great for going on safari!

As a result of this increased passenger capacity, the load space is reduced considerably.



POLARIS KINETIC

Across the range, accessories include a "hard" cabin (i.e. solid doors); mounting kits for winches; load space accessories and updated suspension components.

KUBOTA

Kubota are well known for their ground care machines, their excavators, and in recent years have added numerous models to their agricultural tractor range. They also offer two models of sit-in ATV.

The RTV-X1110 and RTV-X1140, both diesel machines equipped with 3-cylinder engines providing around 24 horsepower. The main difference in these models is that the X1140 is a crew cab style machine, equipped for four passengers (including the driver) and features a longer wheel-base to accommodate this.

Unlike some of the other manufacturers mentioned here, the Kubota RTV range features a rear mounted hydrostatic transmission which is claimed to be less susceptible to slippage than a belt driven CVT machine. Load capacities of 500kg in the load bed and up to 590 towing capacity. The load bed is hydraulically tipped as standard.

Numerous options including a fully enclosed cab; tyre options and colour - Kubota orange or Realtree Camo can be chosen for the RTV-X1110 and 1140.

continued on p56



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MACHINERY

continued from p55

POLARIS

The Polaris Ranger range of machines has attracted quite a following in recent years. With numerous models available including two-seaters, three-seaters and crew cab versions, and petrol and diesel variants, there is something for everyone here. Interestingly, Polaris also offer an electric version, the XP Kinetic.

Here are some of the highlights from the range of three-seat machines, likely to be the most popular version.

The Ranger 1000EPS, a 1,000cc petrol machine featuring a high/low/reverse CVT transmission. The load space is rated for 454kg and the tow hitch for 1134kg. The Ranger Diesel features a 900cc Kubota diesel engine and shares a similar transmission to the petrol variant. Load and towing capacities are similar to the petrol version too. Options include wheel and tyre choices; various cabin versions; winches etc.

The XP Kinetic features a 14.9kWh battery which can provide a range of up to 70km depending on loading and driving conditions. The XP kinetic is fitted with a similar transmission to its conventional siblings and features the same style of drive choice - all-wheel drive, two-wheel drive, or two-wheel drive turf mode (rear differ-



JOHN DEERE X865M

ential not locked).

Given the moves to reducing fuel usage, this surely has to be considered nowadays in certain applications.

JOHN DEERE

The John Deere Gator range originally started as a golf course maintenance machine, featuring a wide and low structure and turf tyres. This range of machines is still available, but the Gator range has moved into the utility/industrial sector with a range of four machines: three diesels and one petrol version.

As with many other manufacturers, a crew cab style is available with capacity for four people.

The petrol version is powered by an

800cc and is capable of 454kg in the cargo area and a towing capacity of up to 907kg. It complies with Road Homologation (as do all Gators) so getting it road registered would be fairly simple.

The diesel versions, the X865M and X865R, are essentially the same vehicle, featuring an 854cc diesel engine with similar carrying and towing capacities as the petrol version. The main difference is the X865R is more refined inside the cab, with features such as cloth seats and air conditioning.

As with other manufacturers, a range of options exist for the Gator, including bull bars; light guards; winches etc. The option of an open or enclosed cab also exists on most models.

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National Trust and Future Trees Trust launch research woodland



The National Trust and Future Trees Trust, the only UK charity dedicated to improving broadleaved trees, have announced a plan to plant a new research woodland to secure a future for some of the UK's most important broadleaved tree species.

Through the partnership, oak, sycamore, silver birch, hornbeam, beech and blackthorn will be planted in research trials and seed orchards on the National Trust's 21-hectare site near Uffington, South Oxfordshire. Tree breeding programmes will allow healthy individuals with better form and growth rates to be selected across the country and assessed over many years in research trials.

The superior trees are used to establish seed orchards which produce improved seed, also known as Qualified and Tested Forest Reproductive Material (FRM). Trees grown from improved seed which have faster growth and an increased rate of sequestering carbon.

Their improved form also means they can be used in productive forestry to grow future home-grown wood products that act as long-term carbon stores: an essential part of a multi-faceted approach to climate change.

The tree breeding research programmes will give The National Trust direct access to broadleaved trees fit for the future to use across their estates and as part of their ambitions to establish 20 million trees by 2030. This will ensure the trees planted will likely be adapted to a changing climate and remain healthier for longer.

John Deakin, Head of Trees and Woodlands at National Trust said: "The National Trust cares for tens of thousands of hectares of trees. This exciting partnership will not only help to directly contribute to the achievement of [our 2023] target but will also allow us to contribute more widely by supporting the Future Trees Trust to make available the highest quality trees to the wider tree and woodland sector."

The arrangement also necessitates the relocation of the Future Trees Trust Head Office to the Buscot and Coleshill Estate, committing both organisations to a long-term partnership which will supply seed of many broadleaved species for woodland resilience in the future.

Speaking about the opportunity, Future Trees Trust CEO John McLaughlin commented: "This is an exciting opportunity for Future Trees Trust, for the first time in our history we will be taking direct control of land, which will really help deliver our 10-year strategy."

"Working with such a renowned organisation as the National Trust will increase awareness of our work to ensure improved trees will be the natural choice for anyone planting trees. We also look forward to helping the National Trust to deliver on their ambitious tree planting targets and welcome the opportunity to co-locate our headquarters with the team at the Buscot and Coleshill Estate."

Projects sought to create and restore woodland along HS2

The HS2 Woodland Fund has reopened for applications, supporting projects that create and restore woodland along the High Speed Two (HS2) Phase One route

The HS2 Woodland Fund has reopened to new applications, with £3.25m available to support woodland creation and the restoration of plantations of ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

First launched in November 2017 and managed by the Forestry Commission on behalf of HS2 Ltd, the fund is available for landowners located up to 25 miles from phase one of the route from London to the West Midlands.

The Woodland Creation aspect of the fund will now be available under the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO). Funding for the restoration of PAWS will remain as a standalone offer and will be open to applications over the next two years. Applications will be assessed four times per year, with the first deadline on 30 June 2023.

Sir William Worsley, Forestry Commission Chair, said: "We must ensure that woodlands and habitats impacted by HS2 are effectively restored and protected.

"By facilitating the creation of new woodland, and bringing new life to ancient woodlands, the HS2 Woodland Fund will continue to be instrumental in ensuring that any loss from the project is sufficiently compensated for."

"The HS2 Woodland Fund, a component of our extensive Green Corridor environmental programme, is designed to help



landowners near to the HS2 route create new native, broadleaved woodlands and restore existing ancient woodland sites," added HS2's Biodiversity Lead David Prys-Jones.

"This forms part of HS2's wider strategy to create a network of bigger, better-connected, climate resilient habitats and new green spaces for people and wildlife to enjoy."

Eligible landowners considering applying to this round of the HS2 Woodland Fund are encouraged to discuss their plans with the Forestry Commission.

HS2 WOODLAND FUND

- The HS2 Woodland Fund reopened in May 2023 and has been extended for two years, up until March 2025.
- Applications must be submitted by 30 June 2023, to plant trees in the 2023/24 planting season.
- Decisions will be communicated by end of October 2023, giving proposals the best chance to be implemented during winter 23/24.
- PAWS been extended for two years, up until March 2025.

Caution advised as temperatures rise

Several devastating wildfires have already hit rural and wooded areas as summer gets underway in the UK.

In the past, the peak season for wildfires in the UK was March to May. However, due to climate change resulting in dead and dry vegetation, the wildfire season has become longer and can now last from February to July.

Vigilance for potential risk and signs of fire is strongly recommended for anyone working, living, or enjoying recreation in the countryside.

Speaking on the recent wildfire in the Cannich area, Ross Ewing, Director of Moorland at Scottish Land & Estates, said: "Our thoughts are with the firefighters who have been injured tackling the wildfire in the area around Cannich.

"Nearly 3,000 hectares of land have already been burned in this fire and it follows on from the huge wildfire near Glenuig in April, which was estimated to be the second largest ever recorded in the UK.

"Wildfires have a devastating impact on wildlife and habitats, generating catastrophic carbon emissions. They are becoming increasingly frequent in Scotland, partly due to climate change and partly

due to a lack of fuel load management in some areas.

"We urging anyone going out into the countryside to take care and follow guidance in relation to campfire cooking and when the ground is so dry it's recommended not to use either a campfire or a camping stove."

For information to help you assess the fire risk in your area, the Met Office's Fire Severity Index (FSI), provides an assessment of how severe a fire could become if one were to start. It is hosted on the Met Office website on behalf of Natural England and Natural Resources Wales for the purpose of informing fire prevention restrictions on open access land.

Timber transport boost for Scotland

Scotland's Rural Affairs Secretary has pledged £4m for timber transport infrastructure improvements across the country



A number of new projects intended to help improve Scotland's timber transport infrastructure, decarbonise the forestry sector and take pressure off rural roads used by communities, have been given a funding boost by Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon.

The projects in Argyllshire, Perthshire, Dumfries & Galloway, the Scottish Borders, Ayrshire and the Highlands will create new haulage routes away from busy villages, build passing places on narrow roads, upgrade existing fragile roads and promote the shipping of timber by sea.

Announcing the £4 million investment, Ms Gougeon said: "Our forestry sector has an important part to play in reaching Net Zero. I am pleased that the Scottish Government and local authorities are continuing to provide support to help the industry decarbonise, whilst also improving local transport networks. That is good for our forestry industry, strengthening its ability to get timber to market.

"But it is also good news for rural communities which are regularly affected by timber wagons using their same routes that local people use too. With road wid-

ening works, diversionary roads and more passing places, communities will be less affected."

Scotland's forestry sector is a major driver in economic terms, supporting around 25,000 jobs and generating over £1 billion to the economy each year.

Around 7 million tonnes of timber are transported from Scotland's forests to sawmills and processing plants annually. This funding support will assist the industry in finding ways to manage this effectively, whilst minimising the effects on communities.

Some of the projects which feature in this year's funding round include:

- £945,000 in support for the Timber-LINK service which is enabling around 70,000 tonnes of timber each year to be moved by sea on the West Coast of Scotland;
- £284,500 to Perth & Kinross Council to improve parts of the A93 to move 280,000 tonnes of timber, including in areas toppled by Storm Arwen. The road is currently well used by local communities and tourists;
- £222,000 for Dumfries & Galloway

Council to improve a stretch of the A711 through Dalbeattie which needs strengthened to carry an estimated 1.8 million tonnes of timber over next 10 years;

- £245,000 allocated to the Highland Council to widen the approach to the Howford Bridge across the River Nairn on a route well-used by timber lorries bringing logs to the Gordon Timber sawmill in Nairn;
- £111,000 to Argyll & Bute Council for the continuation of improvement works on the road between Ballochandrain and Tighnabruich through resurfacing and widening. This road serves a busy community and is forecast to carry 253,940 tonnes of timber over the next decade typically going onwards by boat from Sandbank.

More information The Strategic Timber Transport Fund (STTF), which is part funded by Transport Scotland, is managed by Scottish Forestry. Over the last 23 years, the STTF has contributed over £82 million towards improving Scotland's timber transport infrastructure through 398 separate projects.

Investment to boost community tree cover across parts of England

£2m in government funding has been announced to investigate increasing tree cover in English communities.

Projects that seek to enhance biosecurity and increase tree cover in communities across England are set to receive a share of over £2 million in government funding.

Non-woodland treescapes have been badly affected by tree pests and diseases and other issues, so finding ways to boost their numbers effectively will help to meet the aims of the England Trees Action Plan and Government ambitions to treble tree planting rates by the end of this Parliament.

This investment forms the second phase of the Trees Outside Woodland Research and Development programme. It will fund projects testing the effectiveness of tree planting methods and approaches in non-woodland areas so that more, healthier trees can be planted in the future.

Research from the first phase is already beginning to have an impact, as successful approaches piloted will be rolled out in an England-wide grant scheme later this year.

Research projects funded by the second phase will:

- Test how to sustainably improve the capacity and biosecurity of locally grown tree planting stock, to ensure more trees can be planted closer to where people live.
- Research the most cost-effective and biosecure ways to plant, establish, and promote trees outside woods, enabling increases in non-woodland tree canopy cover.
- Focus on sharing this knowledge with Local Authorities to enable enhanced local delivery of healthy and thriving treescapes.
- In the long term, help to increase tree cover within our local communities and



deliver on commitments set out within the Environmental Improvement Plan to level up people's access to nature and improve our mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Forestry Minister Trudy Harrison said: "The Trees Outside Woodland programme has supported myriad pilot projects up and down the country that have bolstered the health and resilience of our non-woodland treescapes. From agroforestry schemes in Cornwall to experimental Miyawaki plots in Kent, the Trees Outside Woodland programme is providing a springboard for innovative research into tree planting.

"Further investment in the programme will build on previous successful work and help Government deliver on our ambitious tree planting targets."

Director of Trees, Science & Research at The Tree Council, Jon Stokes, added: "Historically undervalued, the 4.3% of England that is covered with non-woodland treescapes - such as hedges, scrub, trees on farms, parks, and in urban settings - is now recognised among our most important treescapes.

"This funding is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about growing and protecting these precious trees. These are the trees that people most often see in their daily lives, and they provide essential habitat connectivity and homes for wildlife all across the country. The Tree Council is delighted to help coordinate this amazing collaboration."

Trees outside of woodlands are worth over £3.8 billion due to their multi-faceted role across the UK's ecosystems. This includes storing carbon, regulating temperatures, strengthening flood resilience and reducing air pollution. Together, these help to mitigate against climate change, reduce impacts from floods and improve people's health and wellbeing.

The Trees Outside Woodland Research and Development programme is delivered in partnership by The Tree Council, Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and five Local Authorities - Chichester District Council, Cornwall Council, Kent County Council, Norfolk County Council and Shropshire Council.

Social media campaign promotes ATV safety

The National Association of Agricultural Contractors (NAAC) is launching a social media campaign on ATV safety to impress the importance of wearing a helmet. Farmers and contractors are being invited to share photos of themselves wearing a helmet with the hashtag #WearItandShareIt.

The aim is to make all operators ask why anyone would put themselves, or their staff,

at risk (and break the law) by not wearing a helmet on a sit-astride ATV.

Jill Hewitt, NAAC Chief Executive, commented: "Operators should take pride in wearing a helmet to protect their safety and help minimise the risk of the worst possible news being delivered to their family if an accident occurs. None of us are infallible and the NAAC wants the industry to get behind us by sharing photos of

themselves wearing a helmet under #WearItandShareIt.

"It is a legal requirement to wear a helmet at work and if you leave it behind, you are more likely to suffer a serious head injury, or worse, if you come off."

Support the #WearItandShareIt campaign on social media to help raise awareness and save lives. Be proud to wear a helmet, it could save your life.



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Scottish Forestry Trust announces student award winners

The Scottish Forestry Trust (SFT) presented two winners with the Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award for 2023 at their recent Bursary Student Seminar at the University of Stirling, supported by Scottish Forestry.

The first joint winner is Dr Heather Dun, now working in plant health with Forest Research who completed her PhD at Oxford University. Her thesis on '*Epidemiology of Phytophthora ramorum on Larix spp. And host responses to infection*' was felt to be a highly expert technical exploration of how Phytophthora infection in larch which will have significant bearing on how to manage the impact of the disease in UK forestry.

Speaking from her home in Edinburgh, Heather said: "I would like to thank the SFT for this award and the generosity they have shown in contributing funding for my PhD. The recent bursary student seminar was a great opportunity to present the results of my work to both peers and stakeholders and it was interesting to hear feedback from a broad representation of the forestry sector."

The second joint winner is Dr Flora Donald, who is currently working with the plant health team in Scottish Forestry and completed her degree at Cambridge University. Her thesis on '*Mapping impacts of Phytophthora austrocedri on Juniper*' was deemed to be an extremely readable piece of work which demonstrates the challenges of native species conservation.

Flora, currently based in Aberdeen, said: "I'm very honoured to jointly win the SFT award with Heather Dun. We started our PhDs at a similar time and weathered Covid lockdowns by meeting up (when permitted!) for socially distanced walks in Oxford. At times, conducting my PhD research was extremely challenging but



it was also a huge privilege to work with so many collaborators across the UK and contribute findings to improve outcomes for juniper conservation. I'm very grateful to the Scottish Forestry Trust for making all of that possible.

Ian Robinson, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, commented: "I am delighted that the Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award this year is being jointly awarded to two excellent researchers who will contribute significantly to plant health knowledge in the years to come. Sadly, as our climate changes our tree species face increasing threats from pests and disease, and it is important that we understand these better in order to manage the potential impacts.

"Thanks should go to the Trustees who were able to match Scottish Woodlands

contribution to enable this to be a joint award this year."

Dr Keith Kirby, Chair of the Scottish Forestry Trust's Projects and Research Committee noted "We are entering a time of great change for forestry. If we are to make the most of the opportunities for an expansion of tree cover and of the benefits that trees and woods bring, we need good research to underpin what we do.

"That is why the Scottish Forestry Trust is delighted to recognise the work of young researchers through its Student Excellence Award which is supported by Scottish Woodlands. We are also grateful to the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry and Natural Resources Wales who have co-funded our Bursary Scheme, which over a 12-year period has supported 26 research studentships."

Tilhill & Foresight broaden skills training offering



Tilhill have announced the expansion of the Foresight Sustainable Forestry Skills Training Programme with 10 training programme placements to be awarded across both Scotland and Wales.

Working in partnership with Coleg Cymru Llysofasi and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) to deliver the programme in Wales and Scotland respectively, successful applicants from communities local to Foresight Sustainable Forestry Company (FSF)'s operations will receive fully-funded training

courses which will include forestry-related activities.

Training sessions in Wales will take place in August, September, October and November, comprising of three weekly sessions. The programme in Scotland will take place throughout August. The syllabus for both programmes offers tractor driving, chainsaw skills, first aid training and much more, with the addition of harvesting simulator training, quad biking, tree planting and tree protection in Scotland.

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Creation of first new ‘Coronation Wood’ underway in East Midlands

Forestry England to undertake large-scale woodland creation in the King’s honour.

To celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, the government will leave a lasting public legacy for people and nature with the creation of new Coronation Woods, the first of which to be developed in East Midlands.

As Prince of Wales, His Majesty expressed a deep love and concern for England’s wildlife, natural and rural places, frequently reflecting on his love of walking and its role in promoting a healthy mind and body.

The plans will see Forestry England creating new woodland on land they buy and plant between April 2023 and March 2025. These will be the first official new woodlands created to recognise the Coronation of King Charles III. In addition, Defra will provide up to £2.5 million of funding for communities in England to plant trees as a permanent reminder of the Coronation in their local areas.

The funding will support Local Authorities, Parish Councils and Housing Associations to deliver local planting initiatives including community orchards, small areas of woodland and ‘tree handouts’ – whereby trees are supplied to local residents to plant in areas of their choosing. This will create a wonderful variety of local wooded spaces that communities are involved in, allowing them to connect with nature on their doorsteps.

Mike Seddon, Forestry England Chief Executive, said: “Forestry England is immensely proud to be responsible for planting Coronation Woods over the next two years to mark King Charles III’s Coronation.

“The nation’s forests have traditionally marked coronations, including tree plant-



ing for King George VI and renaming a forest for Queen Elizabeth II.

“The new Coronation Woods will be timeless reminders of the King’s Coronation and reflect his passion for the environment, encouraging access to the countryside and a thriving rural economy.”

The first Coronation Wood has been announced at Clipsham in the East Midlands. The woodland will cover 220 hectares and be planted with a mix of broadleaf and conifer tree species providing a rich habitat for wildlife, a beautiful space for people to enjoy and a sustainable source of timber.

The new woodland site, which strad-

dles the border between Rutland and Leicestershire, will link two existing woodlands, Clipsham Park and Pickworth Wood, which are both already managed by Forestry England, to create a joined-up area of woodland which together will cover 433 hectares.

Paddy Harrop, Forest Management Director, said: “We are delighted that so soon after the Coronation, we are announcing the very first ‘Coronation Wood’ as a fitting way to celebrate and mark this important part of our national history. Now Forestry England has bought the land, the new woodland will become part of the nation’s forests we care for in perpetuity, allowing people to enjoy and explore them and support their health and wellbeing.

“Planning and planting a brand-new woodland is always an exciting moment for us as we think ahead to how tree saplings we plant over the coming years will look, and the many benefits they will bring decades ahead. We are keen to involve local communities in the plans so that they feel excited and welcomed to this new woodland. We’ll be consulting people on our woodland design once that’s ready and give updates on progress as we move ahead with planting.”

As Prince of Wales, his Majesty has held number of patronages of wildlife and conservation charities including the Wildlife Trusts. He has also worked to encourage the private sector to work to respond to climate change and increase their focus on sustainability with more than 500 CEOs part of his Sustainable Markets Initiative including the heads of some of the world’s biggest financial institutions.

Devon Wildlife Trust to establish new rainforest nature reserve

Devon Wildlife Trust will begin creating Atlantic rainforest at a new nature reserve called Bowden Pillars Farm thanks to a long-term partnership with Aviva.

The 30-hectare site is located close to the market town of Totnes. The Trust has secured a 105-year lease which will allow it to plant two-thirds of the land with native species trees to create new rainforest.

The purchase of the lease has been made possible with support from Aviva, along with a generous legacy from a Devon Wildlife Trust supporter.

Rainforests of the British Isles have been largely destroyed over hundreds of years and now cover less than 1% of Britain. The restoration of this precious habitat is part of a wider programme of nature-based projects funded by Aviva to remove carbon from the atmosphere and to help nature recover.

Devon Wildlife Trust will involve communities in and around Totnes in the rainforest recovery project, who will benefit from increased access to nature, volunteering, educational and employment opportunities. Rainforest restoration will

also provide cleaner air and water and reduced risk from flooding.

The rainforest creation is part of a wider partnership centred on Bowden Pillars Farm. The reforested landscape will sit perfectly alongside these other features, creating a truly holistic community based on the principles of living in balance with the natural environment. Other partners include the Apricot Centre, Regenerative Settlement (Re-Set) and We Have The Power, as well as a host of supporters in the local community.

National quality assurance scheme for wild venison launches

The new standard, along with the existing Scottish scheme, will increase buyer confidence in British wild venison.

A new scheme to support the sustainable management of wild deer in the countryside has launched.

The UK's deer population is believed to be at its highest level for 1,000 years, with some two million deer in our countryside and semi-urban areas. A growing deer population with no natural predator puts more browsing pressure on woodland ground flora through their consumption of tree shoots, shrubs and woody vegetation that sequester carbon.

Increased wild deer management is essential to protect existing woodland and newly planted saplings, meet England's tree planting targets, protect agricultural crops and biodiversity and increase carbon stocks in woodlands.

Forestry Minister Trudy Harrison said: "We must develop ways to manage deer more sustainably if we are to meet our tree-planting targets and protect our precious woodlands and biodiversity. This announcement is an important step towards achieving that aim and creating a thriving market for British wild venison."

The British Quality Wild Venison

(BQWV) assurance scheme, which will be open to applicants in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will ensure a set of audited standards are met throughout the supply chain: from forests, to the processing chain, to supermarket shelves. Successful applicants – including venison producers and processors – will support the development of a wider, more robust marketplace for British wild venison, which is a sustainable and healthy food source.

Applicants must demonstrate they comply with the new scheme, ensuring carcasses are handled correctly, premises are registered as food businesses with the

local authority, and that standards expected for producing food are met in line with relevant regulations and best practice, ensuring that full traceability occurs.

It is hoped the first quality-assured meat badged under this scheme will go on sale next year.

"The British Quality Wild Venison standard has the capability to grow confidence in the wild venison market through opening doors and allowing wild venison to reach its full potential," commented Martin Edwards, Head of Deer & Woodland Management British Association for Shooting and Conservation. "A wild venison market working at full capacity across the supply chain will assist with the management of wild deer in England & Wales and maximise the use of a healthy source of protein."

Venison is an affordable meat option high in essential amino acids and in addition, a rich source of thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, iron, and zinc, low in cholesterol and saturated fats compared to other red meats and is a high-quality source of protein.

"WE MUST DEVELOP WAYS TO MANAGE DEER MORE SUSTAINABLY IF WE ARE TO MEET OUR TREE-PLANTING TARGETS AND PROTECT OUR PRECIOUS WOODLANDS AND BIODIVERSITY."



The scheme is a cross-sector initiative developed by the Forestry Commission, Grown in Britain, Forestry England, Natural Resources Wales, National Game Dealers Association, British Association for Shooting and Conservation, British Deer Society, and the National Gamekeepers Organisation.

Richard Stanford, Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission, said: "A healthy native wild deer population that is in balance with its ecosystem will allow woodland to flourish, and support biodiversity. However, where there are high-density populations of wild deer these can negatively impact the establishment, growth and biodiversity of woodland.

"Deer therefore must be managed as part of sustainable forestry in England which will also support the development of the wild venison market as a healthy meat.

"Boosting confidence in the British venison market encourages deer management and is a sustainable alternative to fencing and plastic tree guards in the landscape. As such, I strongly encourage producers to apply for this new scheme."

A similar standard already exists in Scotland, managed by Scottish Quality Wild Venison (SQWV) Ltd, an independent company which exists to maintain, develop and promote Quality Assurance Standards throughout the whole venison industry in Scotland.

Participation in the scheme is voluntary and membership is open to all wild venison producers in Scotland who demonstrate by independent assessment that they operate to SQWV standards.



Oak permitted to move within OPM restrictions

New legislation has been introduced to allow the movement of large oak trees and trade within the operational zones and boundaries in place to help manage Oak Processionary Moth

The Forestry Commission has in place operational zones and boundaries aimed at managing Oak Processionary Moth (OPM). From 24 May, a new demarcated area was established around the Buffer Zone and Established Area, enabling large oak trees to be moved within this boundary.

These new allowances apply to trees with girth at 1.2m above the root collar of 8cm or more only, provided that the trees are moved by professional operators and that biosecurity requirements are met along with movement restrictions.

OPM is a tree pest first identified in London in 2006 which has spread to some surrounding counties in the South-East of England. Its caterpillars feed on the leaves of several species of oak trees, causing them to lose their leaves, negatively impacting their growth, and making them more vulnerable to other stresses, such as drought.

Professor Nicola Spence, UK Chief Plant Health Officer, said: "Healthy oak trees are a vital component of a biodiverse and thriving environmental landscape. They are Great Britain's most important tree for species biodiversity, supporting over 2,000 species of bird, mammal, fungi, invertebrate, bryophyte and lichen.

"This is why it is essential that to protect the health of our oak trees, we have regulations in place for the movement of large oak trees within the zones and boundaries designed to manage Oak Processionary Moth."

Andrew Hoppit, Oak Processionary Moth Project Manager, added: "Oak Processionary Moth is a tree pest which can have a negative impact on tree health, and which can cause itchy rashes, eye, and throat irritations, when in physical contact with humans and pets.

"While we understand the importance of professional operators being able to move large oak trees, it is vital that we have in place stringent biosecurity requirements to ensure a risk-based approach for moving these trees."

In March of this year, the Established Area in which OPM is established and the Buffer Zone in which an annual pro-

gramme of OPM management takes place, was expanded in response to government surveillance.

Large oak trees will be able to be moved within the established area, or into the established area from the buffer zone, providing the following biosecurity requirements are met:

1. Biosecurity competence: Professional operators must demonstrate that they meet the Plant Health Management Standard evidenced through membership of the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme or provision of a Ready to Plant approval from Fera Science Ltd for each consignment to be moved. They must also demonstrate evidence of ongoing on-site monitoring for OPM and inspection of OPM prior to movement.

2. Official inspections: Professional operators must keep accurate records of the of the contact details of those receiving large oak trees, including the delivery address and contact details. They must store this information for a minimum of three years to ensure traceability of movements. This information can be recorded using the Post planting Inspections form.

Large oak trees will be able to be moved within the buffer zone if they meet two additional biosecurity requirements:

1. Phytosanitary treatments: Professional operators must have a robust control regime in place with appropriate phytosanitary treatments. These treatments must be applied in line with Defra Guidance on application of phytosanitary treatments for the control of OPM and records of all treatment applications must be kept for a minimum of 3 years.

2. Post-planting inspections: Professional operators must disclose the potential for post-planting inspection as part of the new legislation to buyers at the time of purchase. A proportion of high-risk large oak movements within the buffer zone will be subject to post-planting inspections by the plant health inspectors.

Professional operators who are growing or moving large oak trees, and who are impacted by the new movement restrictions, should consult with their local Plant Health Inspector or the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate for further advice.



Standing the test of time

Julian shares his thoughts on the heritage of ancient trees and the responsibility to preserve them.

In February, my wife and I attended the 'blessing' of an ancient yew tree in Faringdon, Hampshire. The bishop of Basingstoke did the honours, not as an act of veneration of the tree itself but thanksgiving for all who had worked so hard to raise funds to support – literally and figuratively – this remarkable tree.

Other work has been done and a display installed in and outside the church to tell visitors exactly what they are looking at – a tree 2,000+ years old. It is part of Hampshire's heritage and the benefice recognise their responsibility, which is all the more important since another of their yews in the churchyard of Gilbert White's Selborne, just three miles away, blew down and was lost in the great storm of 1987.

These 'keepers of time', to use the Forestry Commission's apt expression, are recognised for their cultural value and part of what today is called 'natural capital'. And all owners of woodland, large or small, will own some natural capital. But what is the priority accorded such fine monuments of nature?

We readily seek to plant more trees and expand our tree cover for reasons of carbon sequestration, growing timber that is so much needed, environmental and wildlife benefits and much more, but we mustn't neglect caring for what we already have. It bears repeating from previous Woodland Owner articles that we are blessed with having more ancient forest trees than the rest of Europe.

Consider Windsor Great Park, Blenheim, Moccas, and countless wood pastures where oaks of upwards of 500 years still survive. But their health is not too encour-



Ancient Yew

aging with oak processionary moth infestation expanding out of SW London, acute oak decline (AOD) appearing in many places, while the National Nature Reserve of Moccas Park appears to be losing trees which have lasted half a millennium.

Much research is being done to tackle the problems of our geriatric trees – of

course trees aren't immortal – but are we seeing too many suffer too quickly in these changing times of climate, pollution, pest and disease burden, soil compaction etc?

Do you own or care for a venerable tree? Cherish it, and perhaps in this coronation year for King Charles III name it to show it's valued and appreciated.

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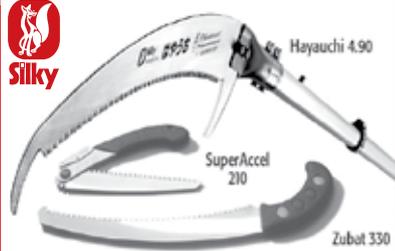
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The first 2023 Foresters Golf Day took place at Wareham Golf Club in Dorset on 20 April and was well attended by representatives of different sectors of the forestry industry. Scoring was good in the sunny but windy conditions with the individual winners Anton Baskerville of WIM and Ray Hawes, formerly of the National Trust, tied on 36 points (pictured above).

The Foresters' Golf Society is open to anyone with a forestry interest – owners, managers, agents, contractors, timber merchants, surveyors, accountants, solicitors. Interested parties are invited to contact johncllegg@tustins.co.uk for details.

Want to see your picture here?

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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 AUGUST 2023 – GET INVOLVED

In August we will be previewing the Confor Woodland 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 2023 FTN is 10 July 2023. If you would like to pitch an article idea, please do so by the end of June 2023.

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