

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS



August 2015 Issue 70



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**Woodland Show
preview p14**



**Grants: fit for
purpose? p7**



**Pests and
diseases p22**



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Time for the private sector to step up

The process of devolving power away from the Forestry Commission creates opportunities – not least for Confor, says **Stuart Goodall**

In 2019, the Forestry Commission will (would?) be 100. One hundred years is a long time, even in forestry, and it is not surprising that much has changed since 1919. But rather than reflect, now is an important time to look forward.

Ministers in London and Edinburgh have agreed that it is time to 'complete the devolution' process.

Currently, while forestry policy is determined separately in each country of the UK, the management of the public forest estate in England and Scotland, and other forestry functions, are still provided by the cross-border Forestry Commission. The powers and duties in relation to those functions rest with the Forestry Commissioners. Soon that won't be the case.

It is expected that any complete process of devolving responsibilities and resources will require legislation, and with parliamentary time at a premium early in a new government's tenure, there is no certainty that the FC will be fully broken up by 2019.

Confor has made clear that key services such as Forest Research, national inventory and statistics, and plant health should continue at the UK/GB level, and that resource focused on change does not detract from country-level delivery of key services, such as approval of licences and plans, and commitments on new planting and monitoring and tackling pests and diseases.

The relationship between the private sector and the FC has changed significantly in the last few decades and in recent years the private sector has matured and become more self-confident.

Change always provides opportunity, and this situation is no different. I believe the private sector can and should do more to show leadership across the forestry and wood sector. Of course that is harder to achieve when it is still divided.

Confor has continued to grow its membership throughout 2015 and has engaged lobbying firms north and south of the border, following the strengthening of its team in Wales and Northern Ireland.

There is a positive cycle of growth and increasing influence, and an opportunity to take greater responsibility. That cycle, and adoption of responsibility, would be accelerated if the sector truly spoke as one. Unashamedly, I will repeat earlier leader articles, please encourage others to join – a stronger Confor means a stronger sector.

IMPORTANT NOTICE! Entry to the Confor Woodland Show (see preview, p14) is by catalogue only. All Confor members will receive a copy of the catalogue with this magazine – please make sure to bring it to the show with you as it is your free entry pass.

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We want to hear from you
Forestry and Timber News is your magazine, please contact Stefanie with your views and comments

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Confor takes prominent role at Royal Welsh Show

The Royal Welsh Show is a highlight every summer for the 240,000 people who visit the enormous showground, in mid-Wales. In addition to being the largest agricultural show in Europe, the forestry section has grown with 50 exhibitors, including major forestry machine exhibitors like Ponsse and John Deere, as well as UPM Tilhill and Maelor Nurseries. The Confor stand was the focal point of the forestry area, and hosted a range of events during the show.

Timber Tuesday saw Confor host a series of seminars, including presentations from the Welsh Government and Natural Resource Wales. Over hundred people packed the tent, for the unique opportunity of questioning senior government officials about their forestry policies and strategies. Several Confor members including Mike Tustin of John Clegg and Co, and David Edwards of UPM Tilhill, presented the growing concern from within the sector that

NRW did not fully understand the contribution of the Welsh forest Industry.

Wednesday events were aimed squarely at farmers and investors, with a range of speakers including Bill MacDonald of NRW, and Forest Management Consultant Andrew Bronwin, explaining to a full audience the range of government support, and practical considerations for

anyone considering establishing new woodland.

Over the four days of the show, forestry in Wales was able to demonstrate that it is a valuable, profitable and sustainable part of the rural Welsh economy. The Confor seminar tent allowed for the industry to meet up, to question politicians, regulators and demonstrate what the sector delivers to a wide range of people.

Top: the Confor tent
Right (l to r): Ruth Jenkins (NRW), Shireen Chambers, and Christine Cahallan (Bangor University Forestry Department)



RDP and its impact on Welsh forestry

A well-attended seminar at the Royal Welsh Show kicked off with updates from Martin Bishop (Confor), Andrew Bronwin (Wales Forest Business Partnership), and Dougal Driver (Grown in Britain) on recent forest and timber initiatives in Wales. The message was to “stop the decline in productive forestry area, plant many more of the right trees for industry, and start now”.

Next up, Chris Lea (Deputy Director Land, Nature and Forestry, WG) and Emyr Roberts (CEO, NRW) spoke well for what some clearly view as the opposition. Despite rumours to the contrary, the WG, and its NRW delivery arm, fully grasped the above message. The Woodlands for Wales strategy will deliver expanded forest cover, increased plant health resilience and will encourage more existing woodland

into management. Questions were posed on shortage of skilled operators, poor effectiveness in Glastir delivery, balance of productive/unproductive area in Afan forest, and whether there are enough staff to administer the delivery schemes.

Bill MacDonald (Land Use and Sustainable Forest Management Policy Advisor, WG) took us for a quick spin through the RDP and Glastir woodland scheme.

David Edwards (UPM Tilhill) put out an impassioned plea for NRW to demonstrate that the forest industry is open for business. Whatever your views on native species, diversity, and resilience, we must accept that Sitka is the engine driving the industry. Any current Sitka area removed from production must be replaced somewhere else, and the obvious sites are in the marginal uplands, he argued.

Martin Bishop took us through compelling figures for Welsh sawn timber market potential, ending with a simple message: The mar-

ket is huge but response is limited by timber supply.

John E Clegg and Mike C Tustin (John Clegg & Co) pleaded eloquently for more certainty and less bureaucracy for woodland investors. They struggle to prevent potential investors, in both existing woodland and new planting, from losing the will to live when unable to get answers to questions like: Why does an EIA take two years? For what grants will I qualify? Will there be a market for my timber?, Can I fell my timber when I want/need to? Can I replant with productive species? Finally, to encourage investment in new planting, we must plant “good-sized areas with commercial species”. Plain enough for you?

In the very short Q & A for the last five speakers which followed, we didn’t get much further than echoing concerns. The seminar was held in good spirit, and it’s probably fair to say that most left thinking about puddings needing to be proven by later consumption.

Reports flag up benefits of forestry to farmers

Confor has renewed its calls for farmers to consider diversifying their operations by planting more trees after two reports it commissioned reaffirmed that forestry delivers significantly greater economic benefits than hill farming.

A new study by SAC Consulting, covering 4000ha of woodland and 4000 hectares of farmland in the Welsh Uplands, indicated that once established, productive conifer forestry delivers around five times the economic output of farming before subsidy. The annual economic output of forestry in the study area was £5.83m, compared to £1.2m for farming. Spending in the local economy in the forestry study area was twice that of farming, while forestry employment was 60 per cent higher than farming.

The report was presented to Carl Sargeant, the Welsh Government's Minister for Natural Resources, at the Royal Welsh Show. Mr Sargeant had expressed an interest in a study by SAC Consulting carried out in Eskdalemuir in Scotland, which also showed significantly greater benefits for forestry - and asked for a similar study in Wales.

The Eskdalemuir report (also by SAC Consulting) was updated recently, and demonstrated a significant increase in the relative benefits of forestry to farming in the southern uplands of Scotland.

The report, covering 20,000ha of Dumfries & Galloway, indicated that once established, productive conifer forestry is delivering an annual surplus of more than £4m – up from just under £3m from the original study.

The new figures indicate that if hill farming continued on the same area of land, a loss of £930,000 would be expected before subsidy, more than double the deficit of £438,000 recorded in the earlier report.

The Eskdalemuir report received good coverage in the farming media, with Scottish Farmer suggesting that the sums for hill sheep farming were increasingly failing to add up.

Promoting the reports, Confor CEO Stuart Goodall highlighted that the two studies reinforced the fact that productive forestry is a very significant economic activity in rural Scotland and Wales – and a real economic opportunity for hill farmers.

“Planting trees provides an opportunity for farmers to successfully diversify their businesses, deliver more for the environment, create shelter belts for livestock and reduce their reliance on public subsidy in the longer term,” he said.

Focusing on the opportunity and sensitive to some farmers' fears about the widespread loss of farmland to forestry, Confor stressed that the reports were not a call to blanket the hills with



The Minister for Natural Resources of Wales, Carl Sargeant, receiving the report at the Royal Welsh Show.

trees. However, they do show the economic opportunity presented by forestry and therefore hill farmers across the UK should consider the economic opportunity of diversifying their operations by planting trees on marginal land.

More on this topic on p13.

MPs join forces to protect future of forests and industry

Officially launched on 23 June at the House of Commons, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry (APPG Forestry) calls for more planting in the UK and urges a better public understanding of the role of managed forests.

The future of the forestry sector is under threat unless urgent action is taken. We need a secure supply of timber and woodlands must be managed responsibly. The Group will help tackle both of these issues.

At the launch event, Chris Davies, Conservative MP for Brecon and Radnorshire (in picture, second from left), was elected Chair of the APPG. In addition, MPs elected three vice chairs: Labour peer, Lord Clark of Windermere, Conservative Lord Boswell of Aynho (third from left) and Anne-Marie Trevelyan (left), Conservative MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Stuart Goodall from Confor welcomed the formation of the Group and set out uncertainty about how the £1m committed to the sector by the government in the last budget will be spent. The Group agreed Chris Davies should write to the Minister to clarify what the proposed £1m outlined in the spring budget will be spent on.

Confor also pointed out the need to plant 5000 hectares a year, rather than the 2000 proposed by the government.



Mrs Trevelyan initiated a discussion on the role of public perception of forestry, and how it may be limiting the potential of the forestry sector. The Group agreed that more public education was needed on the real role of productive forests and the wider forestry and wood processing sector. The APPG Forestry can help build a network of people who diffuse messages, endorsed by an official APPG Forestry statement.

Several attending MPs confirmed that constituents were still very sensitive to potential changes to publicly owned woods and forests

and that this interest was a good basis for engagement on other issues. Dougal Driver, giving a Grown in Britain perspective, agreed and commented that the general political debate on privatization is providing us with an opportunity to talk to the wider public – forestry put in the public way. Therefore, such controversies such as the sale of public forest can catalyze interesting and necessary debates.

It was proposed that the group meet ahead of the Confor-organised Westminster Conference in November.



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Do we need grants for UK forestry?

Ever since the infamous 1988 Lawson budget, which radically altered the tax status of woodland management in the UK, we have depended to one extent or another on public sector grants to support woodland investment. But why? And is it healthy for an industry to depend on public handouts?

The other primary land use – farming – has direct subsidy for its operations, which forestry doesn't of course have. So whilst that artificiality exists, it will remain necessary to provide some form of semi-comparable grant for new woodland creation, to assist the change of land use that every administration is committed to – enlarging our forest

and woodland resource. This is one of Confor's strong tenets, and will remain a prime lobbying point for us. It is vital that governments do not take their eye off the need to deliver significant levels of new planting.

But for sustainable forest management, where we are expected to comply with UKFS, giving up valuable productive land to satisfy other agendas, should we also be able to claim from the public purse to pay for the delivery of such public benefits, or should we do this as par for the course?

Whilst we remain part of the EU, with that august body providing 50% or more of the funding for rural development programmes, it will of

course be easier for our political masters to find the necessary co-funding. Will that change if we opt out of Europe?

For over a decade since forestry matters were devolved to the individual national administrations, some interesting differences have developed in the type and quantum of financial support in each country.

On the following pages, Confor members **Tim Liddon**, **Justin Mumford** and **Dai Jones** comment on the grants available today – detailed on p9 – in their respective countries of professional work, and give their opinion on whether government support is appropriate, adequately financed and best targeted.



Eskdalemuir showing current best practice of age species diversity, deadwood, habitat networks, and riparian protection. Benefits to society that do not qualify for direct support, but are provided by the forest owner. Photo: Tim Liddon, UPM Tilhill

SCOTLAND

Comment by **Tim Liddon**,
UPM Tilhill

Grant support from FC Scotland provides fundamental support for Scottish Forestry – and it is great to see it being delivered in Scotland by the Forestry Commission, who in this current Rural Development Programme are more influential than they were at the start of the last SRDP. However, there is still a big ‘niggle’ of Scottish Government Rural Payment and Inspection Department (SGRPID) who continue to singularly fail to understand the fundamental difference between Farming and Forestry. One has to look no further than the ‘registration process’ which was launched with panache as a ‘simpler process’. So if it was simpler why was the Single application Form (SAF) deadline extended by a month?

New planting budget

Scotland has an ambitious annual target of 10,000ha of new planting. So, relative to England’s budget of £31m it perhaps looks a bit light. If we look at the budget for new planting at £30m then for 10,000ha it is light, but Scotland (PS and FCS) planted 8.3kha of new planting in 2014 (Forestry Facts and Figures 2014), of which only a mere 2.0kha was classed as productive. The industry and FCS need to work even closer together to ensure this part of the budget is spent to show we (PS and FCS) can deliver. I believe that the grants rates will continue to attract private sector investment in new productive planting – the obstacles are still land availability and the application process (that subject is for another day). The million dollar question is whether existing landowners and tenants will plant more under this scheme. The ability to claim Basic Payment Scheme on newly planted ground in addition to capital and maintenance grants should be an attraction – but the changes to agricultural direct support are the big white elephant in the room. The future for native planting is gloomier as rates are less generous, and are now focused onto better land than the last SDRP, which is probably no bad thing.

Woodland improvement grants

The next largest budget (£3.0-3.5m) is for Woodland Improvement Grants which cover Forest Planning, Habitats and Species, LISS, Woodlands in and around Towns, and Restructuring Regeneration (restocking in old money). The Forest Plan (FP) is a pre-requisite for grant aid, which is right in principle but in actuality takes too long and does not in my view, take owners objectives into account enough. But we will wait until the new guidance on FPs is launched and tested. Given that the level of felling expected in Scotland is rising to 10,000ha – the current market conditions mean it might take a wee bit longer to reach that height – this budget seems inadequate. This means that we are likely to see an empty WIG pot in fairly early

course – a position that England has already experienced in the recent past.

Sustainable Management budget

Sustainable Management of Forests has a £1.5 – 2.0m budget covering native woodland, public access and species conservation. Part of the species conservation is deer impact reduction which was a late addition, but very welcome. It is an important measure to help protect young crops particularly where the industry is restructuring the more even age forests – the habitat is being changed and deer are reacting to that change and consequently need management.

Then there are a number of areas with smaller budgets covering tree health, agroforestry, harvesting and processing grant, forest infrastructure, and co-operation. More specialist areas and their value to Scottish Forestry will be determined on their uptake.

So the scheme is now live and accepting application for the main elements. Contracts are expected to be produced in September, and there is money in the pot for 2015 and 2016. Any grant scheme has to be targeted to provide value to the payee. Scottish Government have clearly stated their priority of new planting, and the grant is simple and adequate. The bigger question is whether there is enough focus on existing forests – which given the GVA the forests and woodland generate for the Scottish economy should also be a key priority for Scottish Government. Time will tell whether the grants will deliver good management of our existing forests. I think that resources to help facilitate better resilience and diversity in our forests and woodland may be light. But then so is our understanding of those two words, which must be developed on not just environmental but also social and economic criteria.

The bigger question is whether there is enough focus on existing forests



ENGLAND

Comment by **Justin Mumford**,
Lockhart Garrett Ltd

Woodland owners and managers have been waiting in anticipation on the proposed Countryside Stewardship grant, however, to date there seem to be more questions than answers on how it’s all going to work.

Woodland Creation Scheme

The first round of grants was launched in February/March 2015 and included an attractive Woodland Creation Scheme, offering up to £6800 per hectare to cover the cost of buying trees, getting them protected and planting them. A further £200 per hectare for the first 10 years was also offered for maintenance (this was different to the old, Farm Woodland Premium Scheme and Farm Woodland Scheme as it was not an ‘income foregone’ payment but a grant). The tight application deadline of end April 2015 meant that many potential woodland creation projects missed out for this year, however the FC still received 163 applications across England totaling just over 1000 hectares of new planting. I can see this grant becoming more popular, particularly if agricultural land values begin to level off.

Help for restocking after disease

Other grants also launched in early Spring 2015 included the Woodland Tree Health scheme which provided grant support for removal/restocking of areas affected by Chalara or P ramorum. Following the end of the regeneration grant under the demise of EWGS, this is now the only way that landowners may receive some sort of funding to help restock areas.

Woodland management plans

The FC has maintained its support for woodland management plans through the provision of a capital grant similar to that of the old scheme at £20 per hectare for the first 100 hectares and £10 per hectare thereafter, with a minimum grant payable of £1000. The approved FC management plan is becoming a vital component of any managed woodland; not only is it required as a pre-requisite to other woodland management subsidies but is also required as documented proof of tree felling legality and sustainability under the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). The management plan is extensive and requires considerable input, not only from the author and owner but also from the FC in order to review and approve its contents. Time is something that FC Woodland Officers don’t have due to continuing squeezing of resources and as a result, most management plans will sit with the FC for over six months before they are finally approved. At the time of writing, the North West/ West Midlands region alone had 44 plans awaiting review, there is a similar situation elsewhere.

The difficulty that landowners face is that, without the approved management plan, they

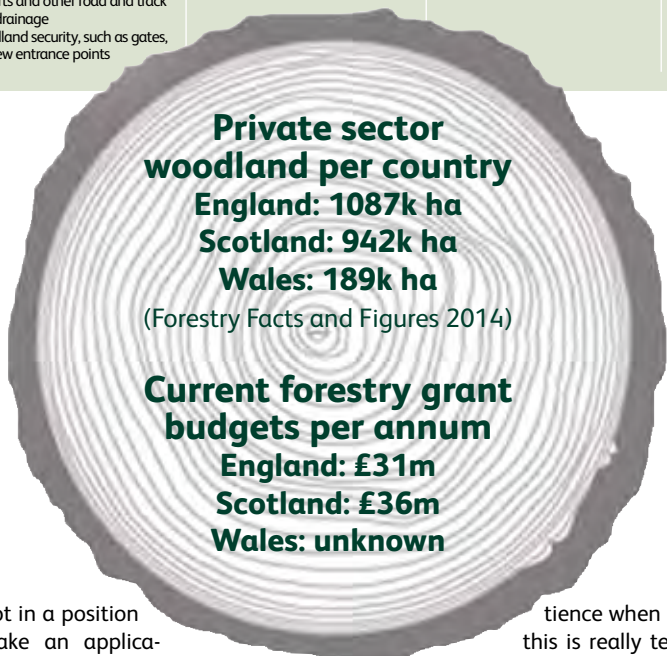
England, Scotland and Wales: the schemes in detail

Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 Forestry Grant Scheme options							
Forest Infrastructure	Woodland Creation	Agro-forestry (New)	Tree Health Grant (New) ¹	Woodland Improvement Grant	Harvesting and Processing Grant (New)	Sustainable Management of Forests	Co-operation (New)
Budget £300k/yr*	Budget £30m/yr	Budget £200k/yr*	Budget £400k/yr*	Budget £3-3.5m/yr²	Budget £200k/yr*	Budget £1.5-£2m/yr²	Budget £150k/yr*
Main areas of support 1 Option • Capital costs for Forest Roads - Lay bys - Bell mouths - Security barriers - Low water (piped) crossings	Main areas of support 9 Options • Conifer • Diverse Conifer • Broadleaves • Native Scots pine • Native Upland Birch • Native broadleaves • Native low density • Small or farm woodland • Northern & Western Isles Other Support • CSGN Contribution • Tree shelters (new) and fencing • Bracken Control for productive options (new) • Veg prop SS • Community Woodland Support via WIG WIAT	Main areas of support 2 Options • 400 stems/ha • 200 stems/ha	Main areas of support 3 Options • Agent services • Sanitation felling/tree removal • Replanting	Main areas of support 5 Options • Forest Planning (inc LTFP, LTFP renewal, WIAT, Woodland Grazing & Deer) • Habitats and Species • Restructuring regeneration • LISS (new) • Woodlands in and around towns (new)	Main areas of support 3 Options • Development of the small scale premium softwood and hardwood processing sector. • Equipment to increase harvesting in small undermanaged wood • Enabling localised value-added timber processing operations at a non-industrial scale	Main areas of support 9 SMF Options • Native woodlands • Livestock removal • Woodland grazing • LISS • Public Access – Rural • Public Access – WIAT (new) • Species Conservation - Grey squirrel control (new) - Predator control for Capercaillie and Black grouse (new) - Deer Impact Reduction	Main areas of support 1 Option • Feasibility studies and Project consolidation (details to be finalised)

*available from 2016.
 1 Separate State Aids Scheme for tree health being considered.
 2 In addition there is £8m from the AEC budget for forestry from 2016-2020 - £3.25m under WIG for rhodo control and £4.75m under SMF for Grey squirrel & Predator Control

Rural Development Programme for England 2014-2020 Forestry Grants options						Budget £31m/yr ¹
Woodland Improvement - Infrastructure	Woodland Creation	Tree Health Grant	Woodland Improvement Capital	Countryside Productivity - forestry	Woodland Improvement Multi-year	
Budget £1m/yr	Budget £18m/yr²	Budget £1.4/yr*	Budget £3-3.5m/yr³	Budget £4m overall⁴	Budget Rising from £1.6m to £9m/yr	
Main areas of support The work could include the construction of: • extraction tracks • haulage roads and turning points • haulage road entrances or lay bys • profiling and paving timber transfer points and stacking areas • culverts and other road and track side drainage • woodland security, such as gates, for new entrance points	Main areas of support • Establishment of woodland and maintenance for 10 years. • Includes costs of planting material and protection (fences or tubes)	Main areas of support • Felling of diseased young larch and removal of rhododendron. • Restocking following felling due to a tree health issue	Main areas of support • Range of capital items	Main areas of support • A range of harvesting, extraction and small-scale primary processing equipment	Main areas of support Three options: • PAWS restoration • Improvement of priority habitats • Improvement for priority species • Change in silvicultural system to address water quality issues.	

1 This excludes support under Measure 8.6
 2 Note that 60% is for existing commitments
 3 Note that there are existing commitments of £27m
 4 Note support may also be available through LEADER



Glastir woodland schemes 2014-2020 options		
Woodland Creation	Restoration (Tree Health Grant)	Woodland Management
	Budget £1m 2015-16	
Expressions of Interest window opened for 5 weeks in June 2015, but closes on 17 July. No dates published for future windows	Expressions of interest window opened for 4 weeks in May. No further dates published for future windows, rumoured September	Launch date unknown
Main areas of support • Enhanced Mixed Woodland £3600/ha • Native Woodland – Carbon £4500/ha • Native Woodland – Biodiversity £3000/ha • Agroforestry – scattered trees £1600/ha • Fencing £3.40/m	Main areas of support • Basic Restocking - above 350 metre, £1900/ha • Basic Restocking - between 250 – 350 metres £1900/ha • Basic Restocking - below 250 Metres £2300/ha • Native broadleaved Trees £2770/ha • Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site £2770/ha • Non Plantation on Ancient Woodland £2770/ha	

are not in a position to make an application for the recently launched multi-annual grants of £100 per hectare per year or indeed other capital items that could be available to them. With narrow annual application windows and annual start dates all ties in to the 1st of January each year, this will mean that many woodland owners who started the management planning process through the FC plan template in the summer of 2014 will not receive a grant contract to implement the recommended works before January 2017! All woodland owners appreciate the need for pa-

atience when it comes to forestry but this is really testing their resolve and many are already starting to walk away from any meaningful dialogue with the FC.

Budget for ongoing woodland management

Over £6 million is being made available each year for ongoing woodland management through the Countryside Stewardship's 'higher tier' arm of the scheme. Through agreeing to undertake a suite of operations, including the removal of conifers on PAWS, vermin control and continuous cover management, woodland own-

ers can claim a grant of £100 per hectare per year for five years in return. Basic mathematics show that there won't be enough funds to go round everyone and as a result eligible woodland is being heavily targeted to key designated woodland. This is understandable but what is more surprising is the heavy weighting that has been given to unmanaged woodland, which is defined as anything that has had a stand-alone felling licence within the past 10 years. Until a better understanding as to how the scoring system and thresholds are going to work, it is unclear as to how many woodland owners who have just started the journey of bringing their

Grants are still considered to be a vital part of the lowland woodland budget, despite improved returns against timber in recent years, they are still very much needed.

woodland back into management under the old EWGS are going to then lose out this time round.

It is thought that the select few who may get grant funding will benefit greatly but there will be many woodland owners currently engaged in active management who won't receive anything. What will also need to be considered is how the woodland grants are going to sit alongside the neighbouring agri-environmental applications as they all form one scheme. Time will only tell on this one. Grants are still considered to be a vital part of the lowland woodland budget, despite improved returns against timber in recent years, they are still very much needed. As has been shown with the more successful elements of the old grant scheme (in particular the support for woodland birds under the old Woodland Improvement Grant), it is evident that grant funding can make a real difference to both environmental and silvicultural management.



Upland transformation in Sitka spruce in Wales (picture Phil Morgan)

WALES

Comment by Dai Jones, Hugh Wheeldon & Co

Beth sy'n digwydd yng Nghymru?

In 2014 the Welsh Government closed their existing Glastir woodland management and woodland creation schemes. Subsequently there has been little information on what would replace these schemes in the coming 2015-20 RDP round. The outcome has been almost no new planting in Wales in 2015 and agents across Wales struggling to provide meaningful advice to owners on what the future may hold. (Hurray at least for the Woodland Trust in Wales, whose modest More Woods scheme has carried the new planting torch alone this season!)

The Glastir Scheme will contain three woodland elements during the next RDP round:

- **Glastir Woodland Management:** capital grants scheme for woodland owners which is a targeted scheme (no guarantee of entry)
- **Glastir Restoration:** support for owners of larch stands affected by *P ramorum*
- **Woodland Creation:** support for new planting.

Glastir Restoration

A welcome development in May was the opening of the first round of expressions of interest for Glastir Restoration. Contracts will be for a 12-month period and the proposal is to have a rolling round of expressions of interest through-

out the RDP period. Restocking grants offered are between £1900/ha and £2700/ha depending on the type of restocking. Grants for invasive species control and fencing are also available. An interesting development is a more flexible approach to the restocking of plantations on Ancient Woodlands sites, which will be well received by many owners.

Glastir Woodland Creation

June has seen the opening of the first round of expressions of interest for Glastir woodland creation which offers grants for new planting of £1600-4500/ha depending on the type of planting chosen, and annual maintenance grants of £60-350/ha/year depending on whether the applicant is involved in farming. So, with some determined effort from agents, obliging statutory consultees and a little luck, we may see the return of new planting to Wales in 2016. Interest in new planting is strong so this scheme may well be oversubscribed in this and subsequent rounds.

Glastir Woodland Management

At the time of writing there is no confirmed date for the opening of Glastir Woodland Management, with Rural Payment Wales staff advising that it will be "late this year or early next" but after the Royal Welsh Show we may have some news from our Minister? Publication of scheme rules and of selection criteria would also be a welcome sight for agents and owners across Wales. A real concern is the ability of the Welsh Government to deliver the scheme, given that the cadre of experienced woodland officers, who supported the delivery of the earlier Glastir schemes, have now returned to NRW and assumed new roles. It seems unlikely that any woodland owner in Wales will have a new Glastir Woodland Management contract in their hand, subject to them qualifying, before early 2017.

The next 12 months will be a crucial period in Wales; it still feels that the WG is ill-prepared to take on the responsibility of administering and delivering the woodland elements of Glastir. The provision of clear information on their schemes and the return of suitably competent staff, in the right number, are essential if the RDP woodland package is to be a success.

In the meantime agents dust off the felling licence application forms and owners continue to look to better timber prices, their own resources and their own ingenuity to take the management of their woodlands forward.

With some determined effort from agents, obliging statutory consultees and a little luck, we may see the return of new planting to Wales in 2016.



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New video highlights forestry opportunity for Welsh farmers

A new video produced by Confor has highlighted the opportunities presented to Welsh farmers by woodland creation on marginal land.

Integrated Forestry and Farming in Wales demonstrates the benefits of diversification for farmers, using a real-life example.

John Warburton Lee, who farms at Gilar just outside Snowdonia National Park, has planted woodland on marginal land on his 500-hectare farm - with very positive results.

He said: "It made good sense to take some of the less productive agricultural areas and put them into coniferous woodland. It has dramatically benefited the farm, and made it more interesting, more bio-diverse and more productive."

The video is introduced by Rebecca Evans AM, Deputy Minister for Food and Farming, who says: "By planting areas of unproductive, marginal land with trees, owners can have a win-win scenario of shelter for livestock, an increase in biodiversity, better management of water and a highly valuable commercial crop of timber in future years."

The video was the brainchild of Confor's Welsh chairman, Mike Harvey, who said: "There are real op-

portunities for the successful integration of forestry and farming in Wales. This film illustrates the kind of benefits that can be delivered when that integration works.

"We are not calling for trees to be planted on high-quality agricultural land. We just want farmers to consider planting on marginal land which is not delivering as much as it should be."

Martin Bishop, Wales Manager for Confor, said: "Planting more trees can deliver for the Welsh environment, society and economy, and we are very encouraged that Rebecca Evans and her colleagues in the Welsh Government are really starting to see this."

See also p5.

Right: Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, Rebecca Evans, is being filmed at the Senned in Cardiff.

Below: An operator of Visual Impact Productions filming an interview at a forest location.



Chance to see forest operations at Dalkeith wood

In early July, Forestry Commission Scotland offered local residents the rare opportunity of visiting an active work site at Lord Ancrum's Wood near Dalkeith.

Commission staff led a two-hour session of the active work site for 20 local people interested in finding out what the team of foresters were doing on site and the forestry equipment used.

The main work undertaken at Lord Ancrum's Wood was tree thinning to remove a selection of trees throughout the wood, a vital part of ongoing woodland management.

At each stage of the tour, Commission staff explained the rationale and had an open discussion for example, on the importance of tree thinning for creating more space and light in the woods, benefiting the flora on the ground, enabling young trees to grow and improving the timber quality of the remaining trees.

Standing at a safe distance, visitors had the chance to see a chainsaw, felling and timber extraction with a low-impact forwarder in action. The group also saw the timber collection point outside Lord Ancrum's Wood where the wood is then transported to be sold.

Learning about the kind of timber at Lord Ancrum's Wood, the group was very interested in the range of wood harvested, both hardwoods and softwoods, and the Commission's role in ensuring the best value and route to market for the timber.

Foresters also demonstrated how they undertake forest operations to minimise the impact on remaining trees and the ground in the woodland and took a wide range of questions on the planning procedure of such works, including site surveys.

Forestry Commission Scotland forester, John Ogilvie, said: "We don't normally allow people to visit an active site due to safety issues. But, after receiving interest from local residents, we thought we would set up this event and open it up to the wider community."



Show heads back to Longleat – building on success of 2013

by **Nick Hoare**,
show chairman



Preparations for the Confor Woodland Show are ramping up, with less than two months to go as I write. The great success of the two day show in 2013 meant that we knew we had to plan for growth, and the field site was expanded considerably to allow for more exhibitors. However the demand for demonstration pitches has been so great that the plan has been redrawn many times. Careful juggling is required to squeeze in more stands without affecting those exhibitors who have already booked.

A welcome result of the success of last Confor Woodland Show is that we are not quite as strapped for cash as in the past. This allows us to spend a bit more on facilities (such as trailer toilets) and paid car park stewards to take some pressure off the volunteers. However, this does not mean that we do not desperately need volunteers to man the entrance for a couple of hours! The entrance steward is determined that this year he will actually see some of the show. The show is run by a volunteer committee, with contractors working at cut price to do the site preparation and health & safety work. It is a very small committee, who all have to really muck in. At this show the team will range in age from 18 to 84!

Arranging the woodland site to fit all the different activities in a manner that combines safety with good access and visibility for the visitors is always a challenge. The axe throwers (new this year) probably should not be too close to the archers... but leave space for the horse loggers... and what about the harvester? Euroforest are

bringing the spectacular Konrad Highlander timber harvester, but where to find enough trees to really put it through its paces? The woods around the woodland site have got rather thin as a result of previous shows and windblow last winter. As Longleat practices Continuous Cover Forestry we cannot just fell the lot, so we have found a new site a short walk off the main circuit.

Many exhibitors have particular needs: brush to chip, logs to cut, carry, peel, chip. Fortunately, Longleat has the timber to hand, and more often

than not has an outlet for the finished product. The events in the arena can be even more demanding: it takes most of a day to put up the artificial 'trees' that have to be felled in less than three minutes. Of course our work is dwarfed by the effort that our exhibitors put into their stands.

It is all worth it if you find the product you want, meet the contacts you want to see, garner the information you need and, most importantly, enjoy yourself.

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Thursday 10 September: show opens at 9.00 and closes at 17.00

Time	Item	Subject	Location
9.45-11.00	Confor breakfast: Q & A Panel	Future Planting and Wood Supply	Confor marquee
11.00-11.30	FC seminar	Woodland Carbon Code	Confor marquee
12.00-13.00	Confor lunch and drinks	Q & A to Confor	Confor marquee
13.00-14.00	Confor SW region AGM	Q & A to Confor	Confor marquee
14.00-14.15	Confor Alan Mitchell Award	Award for best article in FTN	Confor marquee
15.00-16.00	FC seminar	Tree health & resilience	Confor marquee
Three/day	Forestry worker seminars	H&S, ergonomic felling, business advice	TBC
TBC	FC demonstration	Small-scale harvesting machinery	TBC (off-site)
Twice/day	Demonstration	Spike Milton Lumberjack Show	Arena
Twice/day	Demonstration	UK Loggers	Arena

Friday 11 September: show opens at 9.00 and closes at 16.00

Time	Item	Subject	Location
9.45-11.00	Confor breakfast: Q & A Panel	Species introduction: Pine marten & beaver	Confor marquee
12.00-13.00	Industry launch	Online careers portal	Confor marquee
13.00-14.00	Confor lunch and drinks	Education & training	Confor marquee
All day	Drop-in clinic	Wildlife	FC Marquee
Three/day	Forestry workers seminars	H&S, ergonomic felling, business advice	TBC
TBC	FC demonstration	Small-scale harvesting machinery	TBC (off-site)
Twice/day	Demonstration	Spike Milton Lumberjack Show	Arena
Twice/day	Demonstration	UK Loggers	Arena

See p16 for more information.

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A programme packed with events, talks and seminars

Whether you are a forestry business or an interested individual there will be something for you in the packed programme of events, talks and topical seminars that Confor and the Forestry Commission are hosting throughout the two-days of the show. The overall theme for Confor at the show this year is certification. Come and talk to Confor, Grown in Britain and PEFC.

9.45 – 11.00 - 10 September 2015

Confor marquee

Q & A: Panel

Future Planting and Wood Supply

Panel: Ian Tubby (Forestry Commission); Jez Ralph (Timber Strategies); Craig Leitch (Charles Ransford & Sons Ltd) TBC; and, Crispin Golding (Golding Forestry) TBC

Join Confor for a bacon butty and put your questions to the panel. For many years a clear message has been broadcast from the UK forestry and timber sector to politicians and to the wider public that production from Britain's forests is increasing, but then set to fall sharply. Production forecasts show that coniferous roundwood production in Britain is expected to increase until about 2020, with peak production of about 11.45 million tonnes per annum; thereafter production declines. With near-zero levels of new productive planting to replenish usage and rapidly changing dynamics in the demand for timber products and the finite resource available, "Where's the Wood?" is an all too familiar question.

11.00 - 11.30 - 10 September 2015

Confor marquee

FC Seminar: Woodland Carbon Code - Launch of Small Woods Pilot

In this session, Sir Harry Studholme will introduce proposals for a new streamlined process to enable small woodlands to more cost-effectively manage Woodland Carbon projects. The Woodland Carbon Code team will provide further information for both

landowners and project developers on the benefits of certifying new woodlands to the Woodland Carbon Code, and specifically how the new streamlined process will operate for small projects. The session will be of interest to anyone involved in planting or managing new woodlands.

15.00 – 16.00 – 10 September 2015

Confor marquee

FC seminar: Tree health and resilience

Our woodlands have been managed successfully during the last century under the assumption that the environment they are growing in will be relatively stable. This key assumption is now proven to be flawed. Over the last ten years there has been a significant increase in the number of pests and diseases attacking our trees, and this is compounding the challenges of adapting to a changing climate. Managing Risk is now a critical part of managing our woodlands, we must open our eyes and make significant changes to widely accepted and practiced forest management in England. John Weir, Adviser for Woodland Resilience and Mick Biddle Tree Health Officer will present the challenges we face and offer options to keep our woodlands healthy and resilient to environmental change.

9.45 – 11.00 - 11 September 2015

Confor marquee

Q&A Panel: Species introduction

Chair: Dougal Driver

Introduction: Ian Gambles, Forestry Commission England

Panel: Jonathan Spencer (Forestry Commission); Emma Sheehy (Aberdeen University); Vincent Wildlife Trust; Derek Gow; and, BASC.

Join Confor for a bacon butty and put your questions to the panel. The subject of species re-introduction is one that arouses polarised opinions. The moral argument is put forward

Continued on p19



Have a go – at axe throwing

Bringing a taste of the Dark Ages to Confor Woodland Show this year is Avalon Axes, new to the South West and based in Glastonbury.

Inspired by history, Dan and Simon are artisan craftsmen, Dan working in leather bone and stone, and Simon as a bowyer and wood smith.

Working together as a guild of craftsmen, they have come together once again to share some of their past time distraction, with a Viking age inspired "Have a Go" axe throwing stall. Having had success at various medieval and living history events they contributed to the Royal Bath and West show and were a hit.

"We will be coaching people in how to throw single head axes into wooden targets for a small charge. Our Viking themed axe throwing is fun for all ages."

Fully insured instructors Dan and Simon will be at the Confor Woodland show 2015 at pitch number W50. The stall dressed in painted banners and Dan and Simon sporting Viking inspired costume, it will be fun for all with an air of the theatrical.

Alongside their axe throwing they will be proffering their respective wares in the Ancestors Artisans Shop.

STAND NUMBER W50



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Funded by the EU's Life programme, Observatree is a partnership project. Led by Forest Research, the research agency of the Forestry Commission, partners are Fera, the National Trust and the Woodland Trust. Supporting the project are APHA, Defra and Natural Resources Wales.



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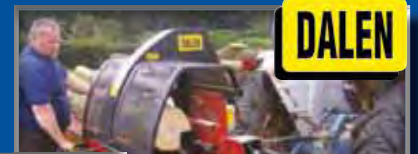


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Continued from p16

that we exterminated these species so we should bring them back. Others note that they were exterminated for a reason, and that the factors that made them extinct in the first place e.g. habitat loss and hunting, need to have been dealt with before a re-introduction can take place. There is a legal side to it involving UN conservation body the IUCN, which requires member states to consider re-introducing species that have become extinct for, say, conservation management. This debate will focus on beavers for watercourse management and Pine martens for grey squirrel control.

12.00 – 13.00 – 11 September

Confor marquee

Launch of the online careers portal

In this session, Steve Fowkes (Forestry Commission) and Phil Tanner (Royal Forestry Society) will introduce the work of the Forestry Learning and Development Working Group, and will be highlighting one of the group's achievements. Key group members the RFS have produced and are hosting a careers portal – an online resource for those wishing to start or improve an education or career in forestry. Packed with up-to-the minute information, it will provide a one-stop-shop for those new entrants the industry so badly needs.

10 and 11 September 2015

TBC

Forestry workers events: Improving efficiency, safety and profit

These sessions will be aimed at improving the skills of those working on the ground in the industry as well as providing a place to network and share tips with independent advice. Proposed workshop themes are health and safety, sports therapy, ergonomic felling, negotiating contracts and finance and business advice. More details will follow.

10 and 11 September 2015

Forestry Commission marquee

Drop-in clinic: Wildlife Management

The Forestry Commission is committed to working with the sector to manage the impacts of some deer and grey squirrels, as well as delivering the Government's 2020 Biodiversity strategy. Woodlands and forests face daily challenges, including the negative impacts brought about by some wildlife species. Unsustainable populations of some deer species and grey squirrels have a significant impact on the successful establishment and regeneration of new woodland, woodland management, the quality of timber and the quality of woodland habitats. If you would like to come and talk about how you might support sustained, collaborative action, our experts will be available to answer your questions and provide advice.

PLAGUE WARNING

We know that it can feel we are fighting a losing battle, but please ensure that your footwear has been cleaned since you were last in a wood. We cannot stop the plagues of *Phytophthora* and *Chalara*, but we can slow them down.

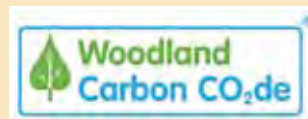
New deal for small carbon projects

Interested in generating income from the carbon being absorbed by your or your clients' growing trees, and doing your bit to tackle climate change into the bargain? Then a session at the Confor Woodland Show on Thursday 10th September will interest you.

It will set out the latest developments in the UK woodland carbon market, and explain proposals for a new, streamlined and more cost-effective process for certifying and managing small woods to the standards of the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC).

The income potential arises from the opportunity for woodland owners and developers to "sell" the carbon absorbed by the woodlands to parties who want to compensate for their emissions to the atmosphere. This can effectively mean that the carbon buyer pays part or all of the cost of establishing and managing the woodland, while the woodland owner continues to enjoy the other benefits, which can still include income from timber production.

WCC certification provides an assurance to woodland carbon buyers that the woodlands really do achieve the carbon savings claimed, in addition to being well managed to the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard. This assurance of credibility makes the purchase of woodland carbon units more attractive to responsible buyers, among whom can be



large, well known companies as well as small local businesses, organisations and individuals.

The code is administered by the Forestry Commission, and Dr Vicky West, climate change analyst at the Commission, said,

"This session will be particularly useful to landowners, agents and project developers interested in undertaking smaller projects, but who might previously have found the carbon code process and costs a barrier to participation.

"However, anyone who is new to the carbon code and the concept of woodland carbon projects of any size should also find it equally informative, and our staff will be available during and after the session to answer questions and discuss it in depth."

The session will be held in the Confor marquee on Thursday 10th September from 11:00 to 11:30am, and will be introduced by Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of the Forestry Commission.

In the meantime, bone up on the code at www.forestry.gov.uk/carboncode or by contacting climatechange@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

10 and 11 September 2015

off-site

Small-scale harvesting machinery demonstration

Throughout Britain, small woodlands with difficult access and terrain are frequently undermanaged. Bringing these individually small but numerous woodlands into management would provide a host of economic, environmental and social benefits. So, on behalf of Forestry Commission England, Technical Development Branch is providing targeted technical support to help forestry contractors choose machinery for safe, efficient, cost-effective and environmentally appropriate harvesting. Small and medium harvesting and extraction equipment will be demonstrated on a live harvesting site near the showground throughout the show. These demonstrations will illustrate how to tackle some of the common challenging site conditions and plan operations to get

the most from your machinery and equipment. Further details on the events page of the Forest Research website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/events>

10 and 11 September 2015

Arena

Spike Milton Lumberjack Show

Spike Milton is former British

Champion of the STIHL TIMBERSPORTS® Series and long-standing Captain of Britain's Nation's Cup Team, Spike Milton is Britain's most experienced TIMBERSPORTS® competitor. He represented Great Britain in the STIHL TIMBERSPORTS® Series individual World Championship for eight consecutive years. Spike has been an Official Trainer for STIHL TIMBERSPORTS® for seven years and has been in charge of the STIHL GB training programme for the past three years, developing a growing pool of TIMBERSPORTS® athletes from experienced lumbersports competitors to newcomers in the sport. In his show Spike will demonstrate three chopping events – the Standing Block, Underhand and Springboard plus three sawing events – the Single Buck, Stocksaw and modified Hotsaw.

10 and 11 September 2015

Arena

UK Loggers

The UK Loggers are the precision chainsaw competition team. The team organises the UK Loggers competition and compete in the World Logging Championships every two-years. The team is made up of dedicated volunteers who demonstrate their skills across the UK to help build the sport and grow the UK Loggers competition. The team will demonstrate a range of disciplines that includes combination crosscut, precision crosscut, felling and limbing. <http://ukloggers.co.uk/>

PEFC to present new online certification tool

PEFC UK will be participating in the Confor Woodland Show for the first time to promote a new certification tool designed to enable small and medium-sized woodland owners to participate in forest certification. The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) is an international non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management (SFM) through independent third-party certification. An umbrella organisation, it works by endorsing national forest certification systems developed collaboratively by all interested stakeholders and tailored to local priorities and conditions. In the UK context the endorsed scheme is UKWAS. This new online forest certification system aims to provide a simple and cost-effective solution to help the UK's small and medium-sized private forest owners to gain PEFC certification.

The new tool is designed to help increase the UK's certified forest area and boost the supply of certified material to the UK primary processing sector and its customers. While PEFC forest certification has been established in the UK for five years, it has long been recognised that a cost-effective certification solution was required to enable smaller woodland owners to participate in certification. It aims to reduce the amount of paperwork generated by the sustainable forest management certification process and is designed to be user-friendly and provide an easy path for those seeking to become PEFC-certified.

Certified materials are now increasingly requested by a growing number of forest product users including retailers, the construction sector, energy suppliers and a growing number of consumers. More than one million hectares of UK forests have been certified to PEFC's sustainable forest management standard since 2010. This covers all the Forestry Commission forests in England, Scotland and Wales and 500 privately owned forest estates, including a number in Northern Ireland, managed through the Scottish Woodlands and UPM Tilhill forest Group Certification schemes.



Developed in conjunction with Dutch consultant Evan Buytendijk BV, PEFC UK are confident that the online forest certification system will act as an aid particularly to Group Certification managers, to enable these schemes to function more efficiently, reduce costs and become a user-friendly means of assessing the compatibility of existing forest management plans with those required by UKWAS, and provide more consistent audits via a series of easy to follow online checklists.

Alun Watkins who heads up PEFC in the UK commented: "Forestry in the UK is entering an interesting phase. There is a growing focus on home-grown material and we expect to see much more of this entering the supply chain for products such as engineered timber products and wood fuel. It is really important that forest owners of all sizes can reap the benefits of certification as the market is now demanding responsible sourcing as the norm. We are very much looking forward to demonstrating the tool and discussing PEFC certification at the Confor show".

This project was part funded by the PEFC Collaboration Fund. This Fund seeks to support efforts to advance sustainable forest management and forest certification around the world by members and partner organisations. Through its competitive small grants programme, PEFC encourages locally relevant advancements in the sustainable management of forests. PEFC has awarded approximately 450,000 Swiss Francs to twenty projects through the Collaboration Fund since 2011.

STAND
NUMBER
H4

New woodland workers area

This year's show will have an exciting new area for contractors, woodland workers and those involved in the 'wood face' of the industry, writes Toby Allen (*Say it with wood*).

As well as having an area to sit, relax and network, there will be a series of workshops and talks on the practical steps we can take to improve efficiency, safety and profitability in our day to day jobs. These will be run in a fun and informal way with the emphasis on constructive advice and learning from each other.

The programme will include:

- Chris Hughs from MWMAC will be giving talks and demonstrations
- Dave Rosseny (Esus forestry): felling efficiency
- Peter Harmer: using mixed harvesting and extraction systems (harvester to horse)
- Grown in Britain: obtaining GIB licencing
- Toby Allen: applying Japanese manufacturing principles to a woodland business
- Steve Faulks: the new apprentice scheme and how to hook into it
- Ncfed: restoring hazel coppice and adding value
- As well as informal talks by the FC, Sylvanus Trust, plus more to be confirmed.

We'll be holding some fun and challenging competitions with shiny prizes donated by Chainsawbars.co.uk and others. There will be a classifieds board for posting items to sell or buy, jobs wanted, vacancies or anything else you'd like to swap, sell or buy.

Come along to one of the talks, enter the competition, sell and buy kit, look for new workers, or just spend some time to relax and swap stories and skills with others in the same industry. It will be fun.



Grown in Britain backing British forests and wood



Grown in Britain will be present throughout the show and will be based in the Confor marquee and also on the Woodsure stand. There will be opportunities to discuss how simple it is to obtain a Grown in Britain licence. There will also be information on how to get top up cash for your planting through the Grown in Britain Forest Carbon Scheme, how to become a Grown in Britain assurance auditor and other ways that you can back British forests and wood. Look out for free goodies from Grown in Britain sponsor STIHL and a chance to win a STIHL pro chainsaw.

STAND
NUMBER
C2

There are still available slots for talks and workshops, if you would like to come and get involved please contact toby@sayitwithwood.co.uk or come along on the day and we'll see you there.

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The Chemical Company

A watershed year for oak processionary moth

Dr Terry Mabbett on the rise and rise of oak processionary moth



2014 was the watershed year for oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*). An explosion in pest numbers encouraged by favourable weather conditions pushed what has essentially been an urban London problem precariously closer to affecting the rural Home Counties on a wider scale. OPM can be found already in at least two districts of Surrey, the most heavily wooded county in England. October 2014 saw EU legislation giving 'Protected Zone Status' to those parts of the UK unaffected by OPM.

There was a significant fall in OPM nests in 2013 but the pest surged in 2014 to record 12,513 nests, the highest number yet. 54,904 trees were surveyed, 4043 trees (7.4%) had OPM nests and 46,500 trees were subsequently sprayed with insecticide across 322 sites.

Winter 2013/14 was exceptionally mild, southern England essentially frost-free and April 2014 the fifth consecutive month with a higher than average temperature. Milder winters increase insect egg survival rates, earlier springs accelerate egg hatch and warmer temperatures foster faster larval growth and development.

According to the London Tree Officers Association (LTOA), L1 larvae appeared 3-5 weeks earlier than in 2013, reached L3 by end April 2014 when insecticide spraying started and L4 by mid-May. Control with *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp *kurstaki* (Btk), the most widely used insecticide, was almost certainly compromised. Following ingestion, the bacterium 'punches' through the larval gut but cannot deliver the fatal blow in OPM larvae much beyond the L2 stage because the gut wall is increasingly resilient.

Who sprays and who pays

UK government's new statutory obligation to prevent OPM infestation of the Protected Zone Management is based on OPM containment within a '2015 Core Zone' surrounded by a redrawn and much larger 'buffer area' called the 'Control Zone'. Action required by the landowner and who pays for the treatment depends on affected trees being in the Core Zone or the Control Zone.

Within the Core Zone it is the tree owner's responsibility to check for OPM and to take any action. Forestry Commission (FC) says landowners in the Core Zone will not be legally required to do

any work although it reserves the right to issue Statutory Plant Health Notices requiring removal of OPM infestations in the Core Zone which could spread into and become established within the Control Zone.

FC says that in general terms it will take charge of all aspects of treatment of infested trees on privately owned land in the Control Zone at no cost to the owner. For other trees in the Control Zone, such as those in public parks and streets, OPM management remains mandatory but any work will have to be done at the expense of the local authority owner.

Core and Control Zones

The '2015 Core Zone' comprises two west London Boroughs (Richmond and Hammersmith & Fulham) and adjoining parts of five others. The surrounding Control Zone covers the remaining parts of these five London Boroughs, the total areas of 17 more, four districts in Surrey and Slough in Buckinghamshire.

Situation at Pangbourne in West Berkshire is completely different because FC believes it can still eradicate what is now a very small pest population. Despite two consecutive years of aerial spraying a small number of male moths were still being secured in pheromone traps but the exact location of the residual population is unknown. As such there is no Core Zone in West Berkshire but a comparatively big Control Zone covering the whole of West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and Reading.

The rest of the UK outside of the Core Zone and the two Control Zones is the 'Protected Zone'.

Insecticide options

Land owners in the Control Zone served with Statutory Control Orders with FC taking charge of

control operations should enquire as to whether they have any choice over which insecticide is used.

Three insecticides are approved for ground-based spray application. They are deltamethrin, diflubenzuron and the bacterial insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki*. There are significant differences between the three insecticides in potency and persistency as well as potential for collateral damage to non-target organisms.

Deltamethrin is a highly potent and persistent synthetic pyrethroid insecticide which acts on the insect's nervous system via contact and ingestion. A single application is sufficient to kill OPM larvae including larger and more resilient L3 to L6 larvae. Downside is a broad spectrum action that encompasses a wide range of arthropods, including most other insect classes, arachnids (spiders and mites) and terrestrial crustaceans (woodlice). Deltamethrin is highly toxic to a wide range of aquatic organisms.

Diflubenzuron is an insect growth regulator acting via contact and ingestion. It interrupts chitin synthesis at moulting thereby killing immature (larval) stages of the target insect pest. Diflubenzuron has specificity towards Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) but is widely used around the world in agriculture and public health to control, among other insect pests, cotton boll weevils (*Coleoptera*), houseflies (*Diptera*), grasshoppers (*Orthoptera*) and mites (arachnids). Thus insects belonging to groups other than the Lepidoptera and other arthropods in the oak tree environment could be affected. Diflubenzuron shows activity against some aquatic wildlife with freshwater crustaceans considered among the most susceptible. Diflubenzuron is not persistent in the environment and requires a follow-up second spray for effective OPM control.



Control measures

Left: Pheromone traps (the bucket-shaped funnel trap is shown here) are suspended in oak trees during the late summer flight period for OPM adult moths. The trap contains a female pheromone lure used to attract male OPM moths which are subsequently caught in the trap. The number and distribution of moths caught will give a good indication of how successful insecticide spraying has been and the amount and spread of insect infestation to be expected the following year.

Right: Aerial spraying at Pangbourne in Berkshire in May 2013 (Picture Forestry Commission)

OPM has spread across London at an average rate of 0.7km per year which is testimony to the 'strength' of these night-flying moths (picture Forestry Commission)

There are two distinct dimensions to this insect pest – oak tree defoliation (inset top right) and a risk to public health from the urticating (stinging) hairs borne by larvae from the L3 stage onwards (picture Bartlett Tree Experts)

The early forming OPM nests of L3 larvae (inset bottom right) at Richmond in May 2015 are essentially at a too late stage in OPM larval development for BTK insecticide to be effective.



Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. *kurstaki* (Btk) is a bio-insecticide based on a common soil bacterium. This entomopathogenic bacterium acts through ingestion and is highly specific against Lepidoptera. However, it is easily washed off of leaves by rainfall and is not photo-stable leading to poor persistence in the environment thus demanding a follow up spray around two weeks later. OPM larvae much beyond the L2 stage are increasingly unaffected by Btk because the stomach wall of these older and more developed larvae is too resilient for the bacterial toxin to 'punch' through. Spray timing is therefore critical and both sprays are essentially required while OPM larvae are still at the L1 or L2 stages.

Deltamethrin is clearly first choice insecticide

for a quick and effective kill within the widest spray window. Btk is preferred when least possible effect on the environmental and ecological integrity has a higher priority than rapid kill and eradication of OPM. Diflubenzuron would appear to offer a 'middle way'.

Pest behaviour, insecticide activity and spray timing

Current failure to eradicate or even contain OPM appears to be down to a series of interacting factors around insect pest behaviour, spray timing and limitations of the main insecticide used.

Conventional wisdom on OPM egg hatch is largely based on 'temporal synchrony' whereby an early, warm spring simultaneously hastens larval hatch and oak tree re-foliation so that L1 larvae have an available food source. But field observations in Germany suggest neonate (new born) larvae of *T processionea* are generally well-adapted to variable between-tree and within-tree budburst phenology. They can withstand starvation periods of up to three weeks while searching extensively for suitable buds to feed on (Wagenhoff, 2013).

There is a lot of genetic variation within the English oak tree population (*Quercus robur* and *Quercus petraea*) with regard to budburst, and increasingly so following ongoing importation of European provenances.

In a normal south of England spring, oak bud burst on some trees will begin around the middle of April and measurably earlier in London due to the conurbation's 'heat island' effect. Reports of L3 larvae seen before the end of April in 2014

and again in 2015 suggests egg hatch is occurring in the first few days of April and perhaps even March. Insecticide application traditionally begins in last week of April.

Btk targets Lepidoptera and is therefore the most environmentally benign and, as such, would be the preferred choice. Btk acts purely through ingestion and stomach action which means oak foliage is the spray target. Recommendations made in the Netherlands say oak trees need to be at the 60% re-foliation stage to achieve the required level of spray coverage. Btk lacks the potency and persistency to be top choice insecticide for OPM eradication.

Aerial spray application in Italy has shown the benefits of Btk as a pest management tool but also its limitations in OPM eradication. The trial conducted on Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) woods in Tuscany in early spring 2007 showed it was possible to control OPM using Btk at a rate of 31.75 BIU ha⁻¹ at the time of bud opening when non-urticating (L1 and L2 larvae) were present. Thirteen days after treatment larval mortality recorded across all the treated plots varied from 75.05% to 96.24%, having clearly provided good control but not eradication (Roversi, 2008).

Roversi, P.F (2008) Aerial spraying of *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* for the control of *Thaumetopoea processionea* in Turkey Oak Woods. *Phytoparasitica* 36(2):175-186

Wagenhoff, E., Blum, R., Engel, K., Veit, H., Delb, H. (2013) Temporal synchrony of *Thaumetopoea processionea* egg hatch and *Quercus robur* budburst. *Journal of Pest Science* 86:193-202.



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Risk register and pest risk analyses

The UK Plant Health Risk Register is a tool for government, industry and stakeholders to prioritise action against pests and diseases which threaten our trees and countryside. The Register is publicly available. The UK has published a number of rapid Pest Risk Analyses (PRAs) recently, and updated the Risk Register entries based on the conclusion of these documents:

- *Xylosandrus crassiusculus* (Asian ambrosia beetle or granulate ambrosia beetle): this beetle attacks a significant number of broad-leaved tree hosts (over 100 species) and has large impacts in its current area of distribution.

Statutory action will be taken on findings.

- *Platynota stultana* – the omnivorous leafroller: This tortricid moth is native to North America and has been introduced to Spain. It has the potential to enter and become established in protected cultivation in the UK. Statutory action will be taken on findings.
- *Oligonychus perditus*: the hosts of this spider mite include juniper (*Juniperus*) and cypress (*Chamaecyparis*). It is regulated by the EU on juniper plants, and statutory action will be taken on findings.

Any comments on these PRAs can be sent to plantpestrisks@defra.gsi.gov.uk

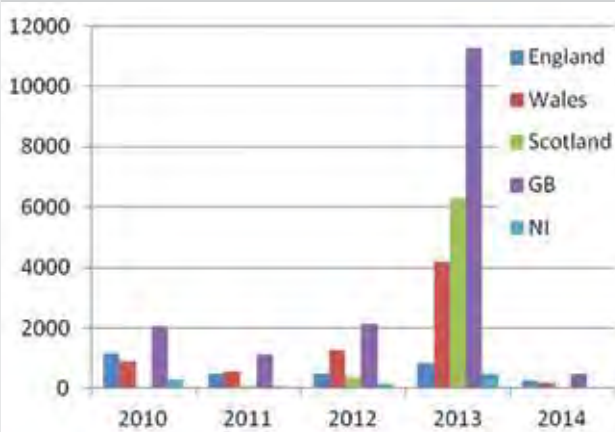
P ramorum, *lateralis* and *austrocedri*

Aerial surveillance flights for *P ramorum* have taken place over southwest England, south Wales and the south of Scotland. No new significant or extensive symptomatic areas were observed during the course of these flights reflecting the unfavorable climatic conditions for sporulation that occurred in late summer 2014.

The volume of timber felled for plant health reasons in 2014 amounted to 0.8 million green tonnes, more than twice the 2013 figure. 0.64 m tonnes were produced from public sector plantations with 0.2 m tonnes produced from privately owned land.

There have been no new

Area of larch (has) confirmed as infected by year



P lateralis or *P austrocedri* outbreaks confirmed since 2014 although an extension to the

surveillance plan in Scotland is expected to reveal more infected juniper sites in 2015.

Changes to legislation

The Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005 was last amended in 2014 only in respect to England and Scotland to bring in changes to Directive which included:

- The establishment of the UK as a protected zone for certain pests of sweet chestnut, plane and oak
- The addition of Bronze birch borer (*Agilus anxius*) as a new pest
- The introduction of new strengthened measures in respect of the Emerald ash borer (*Agilus planipennis*) and the pinewood nematode (*Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*).
- The introduction of measures to prevent the introduction and spread within the Union of *Xylella fastidiosa*.
- The introduction of a pre-notification scheme for the imports of solid fuel wood into England and Scotland.

Consultation on a proposal to amend the Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005 to introduce a Statutory Notification Scheme for importing solid fuel wood into England and Scotland

A consultation has been undertaken on pre-notification scheme for the imports of solid fuel wood into England and Scotland. A good range of responses were received from firewood businesses and woodland and timber organizations within GB and parts of the European Union (EU). Most agreed to the proposal to introduce a statutory pre-notification scheme for all imported consignments of solid fuel wood.

Oak processionary moth

The spraying programme in the London Control Zone is now complete, with nearly all sites receiving two treatments. The summer survey for nests in the control zone has begun. Any nests must be reported to the Forestry Commission via the Tree Alert on-line form. See also p22.

Chalara dieback

The findings of *Chalara* dieback of ash have continued to increase in the wider environment as a consequence of further surveillance activity. There is no longer a case to seek Protected Zone status for parts of Great Britain (other than the Isles of Scilly) and national control measures will be reviewed when the Commission brings in Protected Zone status for the Channel Islands and the Isle Of Man.

Tree safety

In response to the increasing number of pests and diseases, especially *Chalara fraxinea*, the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) considered whether any changes were required to the "Common sense risk management of trees" guidance published in 2012. Additional guidance is being prepared.



Aerial survey of woodland to check for the presence of *P ramorum*
(credit: Forestry Commission)



How much carbon is in forest soils and why is it important?

Most readers will be aware that trees are good at absorbing or 'sequestering' carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turning it into organic matter in the form of leaves, branches and wood. This helps to limit the rise in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that is driving climate change, especially where the harvested wood is used as a substitute for fossil fuels. However, less well known is that the soil beneath the trees contains much more carbon than in the trees themselves. As part of this International Year of the Soil, efforts are being made to raise awareness of the vital role that the soil plays in underpinning life, including its contribution to the global carbon cycle. Depending on soil type, there is up to seven times more carbon held in soil organic matter than present aboveground (Figure 1). Another way of looking at this is that of the nearly 1000 million tonnes¹ of carbon estimated to be stored in UK forests and woodland, approximately three quarters resides in the soil. The size and significance of the soil carbon stock means that forest owners and managers have an important duty of care to protect this key resource.

1. 1000 Mt C equates 6 times the UK annual GHG emissions (www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-uk-emissions-estimates)

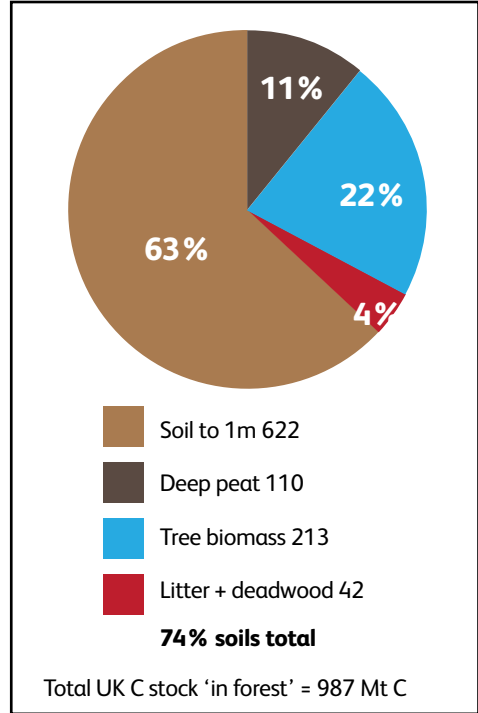


Figure 1. UK total carbon stocks in tree biomass, litter and deadwood and soils (Morison et al., 2012, Vanguelova et al., 2013, NFI report, 2014). Deep peat soils are defined as those >50 cm deep; but only the carbon in the first 1m is included here.

Taking stock of forest soil carbon

by Elena Vanguelova, James Morison, Tom Nisbet and Suzanne Martin, Forest Research

How vulnerable are forest soil carbon stocks?

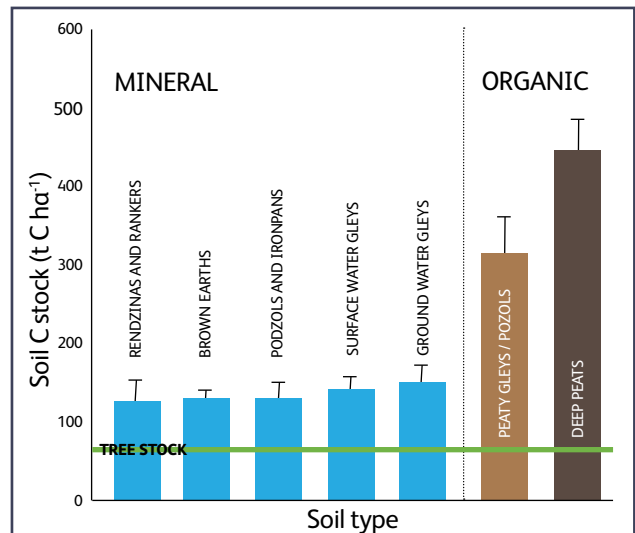
The stock of carbon in forest soils represents a balance between additions in the form of plant material and losses by decomposition and erosion over time. These processes are strongly affected by climate, especially temperature and moisture, as well as by the nature of the soil, geology and landform.

Climate warming is likely to accelerate the decomposition of soil organic matter but this could be countered by increased vegetation growth and inputs of foliage and woody material to the soil.

The carbon stocks of some soil types are more

vulnerable than others, with deep peat most at risk due to both the nature and quantity of carbon. Deep peat contains 3-4 times more carbon than in mineral soils and represents 11% of the total UK forest soil carbon stock (Figure 2). The type of soil organic matter is another important factor, with the stability of different compounds varying from days (eg microbial material) to hundreds or even thousands of years (eg charcoal). Forest design and tree species also have a role to play, eg recent research suggests that soil organic matter under conifers may be less stable than that under broadleaves.

Figure 2. Averaged soil carbon stocks for each main forest soil type in GB (Vanguelova et al., 2013). Vertical line separates mineral from organic soil types and horizontal green line represents the average above-ground carbon stock in GB forests (NFI report, 2014). The soil carbon content is the amount of organic carbon down to one metre depth, but peat soils can be considerably deeper, and contain much more organic carbon.



How can forest management affect soil carbon?

Forest management can potentially benefit soil carbon but can also result in carbon losses. The most obvious impact is through the harvesting of wood products. The more intensive the harvesting system (eg whole tree and stump harvesting), the more likely it is that losses of carbon from the soil will exceed inputs/gains and result in an overall decrease in the stock over time. Harvesting also affects the supply of deadwood, which is an important source of soil carbon. The burning of brush and stumps has a detrimental effect, as does forest fire in general.

Another major factor is the extent and degree of soil disturbance. Operations such as cultivation and drainage that mix, aerate and help dry the soil (often to promote rapid tree establishment) all act to promote the decomposition of soil organic matter and the release of carbon to the atmosphere or to water. The intensity of management has an important controlling effect. For example, 2-14% of the soil is disturbed by hand planting compared to 18-28% by shallow ploughing, 35-50% by deep ploughing, and almost 75% by a combination of trench mounding, draining and de-stumping. Soil type is also key, with the impact of soil disturbance greatest on peaty soils. Measurements indicate that intensive ground preparation on deep peat could result in a 25-30% loss of stored soil carbon. Choice of site preparation needs to balance short-term gains in establishment efficiency with long-term risks to carbon stocks.

Forest operations that compact or damage the soil can further increase the risk of carbon loss by soil erosion and the runoff of sediment into watercourses. This includes losses in solution as dissolved organic carbon, which manifests itself as coloured water and potentially water pollution. Timber extraction poses a particular risk of soil damage, especially on soft ground.

How can tree planting affect soil carbon?

Woodland creation increases the soil carbon stock and is recognised as a cost-effective way of reducing UK net carbon emissions. For example, research shows that woodland planting on mineral soils can increase carbon storage by 0.1 to 0.35 t ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹, depending on woodland type and age. Arable soils generally have the lowest carbon contents and benefit most from planting. Deep peat soils are different, where tree planting may reduce, rather than increase, carbon stocks.

The UK Woodland Carbon Code (www.forestry.gov.uk/carboncode) has been developed to advise individuals and businesses of the benefits of tree planting for carbon reduction and to provide a consistent approach for estimating carbon savings. Presently, the Code includes mineral soil types and changes to their soil carbon stocks, and work is ongoing to address the organo-mineral soils (soils with organic topsoil and mineral subsoil).

How can we protect forest soil carbon?

The United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS) and the supporting guidelines on soil and water highlight the importance of sustainable forest management. They include a number of specific guidelines on protecting soil carbon, especially from the threats posed by soil damage/sediment loss and the harvesting of forest products. As has already been noted, the risk of damage depends on soil type and the nature of forestry practice. On most sites, forest soil carbon stocks can be protected and indeed enhanced by good forest planning and management. Key needs include minimising the soil disturbance necessary to achieve management objectives for cultivation, drainage, harvesting and road construction operations, and ensuring that the removal of forest products from a site does not deplete soil carbon over the long term. Opportunities should also be taken to target new planting to protect erosion-prone soils and intercept sediment-laden runoff from the adjacent ground, e.g. in the form of shelterbelts or riparian buffers.

Additional guidance is available to deal with intensive practices that pose the greatest risk of soil carbon loss. This includes guidance by Forest Research on the establishment and management

of short rotation coppice, and on the harvesting of whole trees, forest residues and tree stumps. More recently, Forestry Commission Scotland has produced a Practice Guide (PG) on the management of afforested peat, which is the most sensitive of soil types to disturbance. Reflecting site sensitivity, the UKFS Forests and Soil Guidelines already recommend against establishing new forests on peat exceeding 50 cm depth. However, the PG addresses the more difficult issue of whether to restock established forests on deep peat. Decisions are based on whether restocking is likely to generate an overall positive or negative greenhouse gas balance. Some reduction in soil carbon stock is considered acceptable providing that this is more than compensated by carbon sequestration from good tree growth.

It is important that forest owners and managers keep abreast of developments in guidance to help ensure the sustainable management of soil carbon stocks. This includes getting to know the soil types that support your forest and the relative quantities of carbon present, their vulnerability to change, and how best to protect and enhance these for the good of society.

Ongoing challenges for research

The available guidance on managing soil carbon stocks is largely based on expert judgement informed by practical experience. More research is needed to test and demonstrate the applicability and effectiveness of this advice. For example, much uncertainty remains about the impacts of tree planting and management practices on soil carbon stocks, especially on organo-mineral soils. Assessments are complicated by soil variability, the relatively slow rate of change and the multiple factors contributing to it, including climate change.

A number of repeat soil surveys are underway, drawing on historic data, which will help to quantify the impact of tree planting on different soil types. Recent research assessed the effects of land use change to bioenergy crops on soil organic carbon and greenhouse gas

emissions (ETI- ELUM project www.ceh.ac.uk/sci_programmes/elum-project.html). Baseline surveys have also been undertaken of trial sites planted for Short Rotation Forestry (SRF) to determine future change in soil carbon stock. There is a particular need for such data to support a comparison of energy forestry with alternative systems. Other studies are assessing the effects of forestry practices and investigating the stability of different forms of soil carbon. Modelling is an important area of research to better understand the processes involved and to predict the impact of a range of forestry management and climate change scenarios. The results of this research will inform future revisions and developments in guidance to help ensure protection of UK forest soil carbon stocks.

For information on soil research at Forest Research see www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/soilsustainability or contact Dr. Elena Vanguelova- elena.vanguelova@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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07500 927482
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Countryside Stewardship application window now open

The Countryside Stewardship application window opened on 1 July 2015 and guidance is now available on GOV.UK.

Guidance is now available online and provides the information that applicants need to know about the scheme, including:

- How it works
- How to apply
- How to build a successful application
- Agreement management.

A woodland management plan is a pre-requisite for landowners, farmers and foresters wishing to apply. Woodland tree health and management plan grants are open for applications all year round. From 1 July 2015, woodland tree health and management plan grants should be applied for via Countryside Stewardship.

The application window for woodland creation is closed and will open again in 2016.

The information in the Guidance is likely to be subject to updates, so if you print any of the information please ensure you have the latest version.

Download the manual here: www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-stewardship-manual

Climate Change Accord

Confor is a partner in a national survey that will be launched this summer to help understand progress in awareness and actions in adapting to environmental change in the forestry sector. The results will inform the government's National Adaptation Programme. The survey is part of a wider suite of activities related to resilience including the drafting of an Accord, which is a call from across the sector for action to be taken to ensure our trees, woods and forests are more resilient. The survey is at: www.sylva.org.uk/bws.

South West

South West Grey Squirrel Initiative

At a recent Confor Devon and Cornwall regional committee meeting, it was agreed that Confor, Trees and Land CIC and Pryor and Rickett Silviculture organise and run a practical grey squirrel management day at Pryston Farm and Clinton Devon Estates. The day was hugely successful with demonstrations of traps and trapping techniques followed by visits to a ten year old planting of broadleaves and your nurse crop of oak in Norway Spruce. Discussions ranged from economic and environmental damage, biodiversity loss, silvicultural management, broadleaf planting policy, alternative control methods and research.

Marches

All change in the Marches region

After a good few years as Confor's Marches Regional Chair, Graham Taylor has stood down and relinquished the post to Phil Argyle (pictured). Graham will continue to provide support to Confor in the region, in particular he will continue with the Marches Woodland Enterprise Zone work. Phil has over 20 years of experience in the woodland industry, covering all aspects of operational and commercial management. He joined Pryor & Rickett Silviculture in 2005, and is responsible for client properties in Mid and North Wales, north Herefordshire and the Marches.

Confor would like to express thanks to Graham for leading the Marches region so ably and providing considered and informed opinion on a wide range of areas that impact upon members.



It was proposed that a South West regional group to focus on the reduction of economic and environmental damage to trees and woodlands by grey squirrels be formed. This idea was enthusiastically received by the sector and furthermore was endorsed by the UK Squirrel Accord. Confor will set up a small, flexible, decision making steering group supported by a wider partnership. Further field visits will be held throughout the South West.

Dendroctonus micans

The aerial surveillance flights for *P ramorum* are picking up not insignificant levels of *Dendroctonus micans* in the South West. The SW Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee has written to Forestry Commission highlighting the need for a robust breeding programme of Rhizophagus to establish landscape scale inoculation and to disseminate information for future resilience. FC have asked the private sector to contribute to any breeding programme. Confor has asked for a costed programme to justify this legitimate request for private sector input.

North

The Hon Charles Beaumont steps down as Chair for North England

In 2011, Charles kindly agreed to take over chairmanship of Confor's North England committee from Athole McKillop who had been acting chairman for some years. As a nurseryman and farmer (with woodland), Charles was well known across the Northeast and beyond, with many useful connections. We were most grateful to him for finding time to take on this role among so many business and voluntary interests. During his stint, he suffered the sad loss of his wife, as well as, a knee operation. Nevertheless, he led the region, with great good humour, initiating and encouraging liaison with other membership organisations and regional bodies.

Oliver Combe was voted in at the AGM in April as the new Chair. Oliver will be well

known to many in his role within Timber Auctions and previously BSW Timber Ltd. Oliver represents Confor on the Roots to Prosperity initiative.

Barriers to new planting

Confor has been participating in a pilot project, in Durham, that:

- Identifies appropriate areas for woodland creation where there would be a presumption in favour of planting;
- Clarifies where a full Environmental Statement is unlikely to be required; and,
- Considers whether there are other aspects of the current regulatory framework and consultation processes that are not needed to ensure environmental and social benefits, but do deter landowners from creating new woodland.

The pilot project has helped to identify a number of wider issues associated with new woodland creation schemes and has scoped products to help resolve these issues.

Regional events

South West AGM

10 September 2015 at Confor Woodland Show, Longleat Estate

East England AGM

10 September, visit to Sandringham, AGM and meal

South West autumn meeting

07 October 2015, Fingle Woods

Woodland Communications Day

13 October 2015, Horringer

Marches autumn meeting

"Grey Squirrel Management".

09 October, location tbd

North autumn meeting

"Forest Management planning and silviculture resilience"

16 October 2015, Dalby, jointly with the ICF

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COUNTRY NEWS

SCOTLAND

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Elm survey

UHI Inverness College is undertaking a survey on awareness of elm in Scotland and the Highlands in particular. To take part go to <https://surveyplanet.com/559cfeb8a5dd10d153252335>

Understanding predation

The Moorland Forum is conducting a major project on the various issues surrounding predation, and members are encouraged to give their views:

Understanding Predation Information at a glance

Project webpage	http://goo.gl/Z5LOHw
Project Blog	http://goo.gl/tgUPtP
Questionnaire – Online	https://goo.gl/Kv6Cor
Questionnaire – pdf	http://goo.gl/a30c0x
Workshop completion	31 July 2015
Project Review Seminars	27 October - Perth 03 November - Inverness 12 November - Edinburgh

New forest manager for Dumfries & Borders

Forestry Commission Scotland has appointed Dr Sallie Bailey as the new Forest District Manager for the Dumfries & Borders region. In her new role she will be in charge of the area's National Forest Estate, ensuring that the forests and woodlands contribute towards the local and national economy.



Dr Bailey has been working within the Forestry Commission since 2002, previously providing policy advice and as a Conservator covering the south of Scotland. Before joining the Forestry Commission, Dr Bailey worked in Northern California researching tropical rainforests and integration of agriculture and forests and other environments in North America. She has a PhD in Ancient Woodlands and land use change from Nottingham University (1998) and is a Professional Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

- Congratulations to James Nott, appointed as Conservator for Grampian.

Regional meetings

North-east Scotland 20 October, Huntly
South Scotland 22 October, Lockerbie
Mid Scotland 28 October, Stirling



Environment Minister announces woodland winners 2015

Environment Minister, Dr Aileen McLeod, presented this year's Scotland's Finest Woods Awards today (Friday 19 June) during a visit to the Royal Highland Show, Ingleton. Four award categories that cover a wide range of woodland options are open for businesses, schools, organisations or individuals to enter.

This year's winners include woodland projects from Knoydart, Glasgow, Milnathort and Dingwall.

This year's award winners were:

Community Woodlands Awards

- Knoydart Forest Trust - 'Promoting Viable Livelihoods' and overall community woodlands' category winner, awarded The Tim Stead Trophy and £1000 prize money.
- Glasgow City Council for Castlemilk Park (Promoting Healthy Lifestyles category, awarded £1000 prize money)

New Native Woods Award

- The John Muir Trust for Li and Coire Dhorrcail Woodlands, Knoydart - Awarded

The Woodland Trust Scotland Trophy and £1000 prize money

Schools Award

- Dingwall Academy and Evanton Community Woods, Ross-shire - awarded the Crown Estate trophy and £500 prize money together with a special tree pack for planting or tree growing kits and a magnifying post, a 'Mag Post', for exploring the natural world.

Quality Timber Award

- The Church Commissioners for England for Warroch Hill, Near Milnathort – New Commercial Woodlands awarded the James Jones Trophy and £1,000.

Pictured above: Winners of Quality Timber category receive their award. Left to right: Environment Minister Dr Aileen McLeod, Chris West and daughter Sophie West, Graham Carter and Bruce Spalding. Chris was there to represent the owners - The Church Commissioners for England, Graham for the agents Aitchesse Ltd and Bruce was the forest manager with UPM Tilhill.



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NEW MEMBERS

Devonoak Ltd, Devon
Drax Group Plc, North Yorkshire
Forest Sawmills Ltd, Lockerbie
Fountain Timber Products Ltd, Bristol
Midlands Woodchip Ltd, Shrewsbury
Tom Haynes, Cumbria
Silva Woodland Management Ltd, Tonbridge
Strutt & Parker, Banchory
Mrs D Tucker, Balfron

EVENTS

More info on www.confor.org
Confor Woodland Show 2015
10-11 September 2015, Longleat Estate
Woodland Communications Day
13 October 2015, Horringer
Westminster Conference
10 November 2015, London
APF 2016
15 September 2016, Ragley Estate

COUNTRY NEWS

WALES

Martin Bishop, Confor national manager for Wales
tel 07876 029482
martin.bishop@confor.org.uk



Ministry contacts

Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology Julie James, met with Martin Bishop in June to explore ways the forest industry can access some of the help available for businesses in Wales. Her department has kindly provided details of contacts that may provide assistance to business, please take advantage.

South East Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership (LSkIP)

Karen Higgins
Skills and Capacity Adviser
Welsh Local Government Association
Tel: 029 2046 8623 / 07766 334655
E-mail: karen.higgins@wlga.gov.uk
www.wlga.gov.uk

Regional Learning Partnership for South West and Central Wales (RLP)

Elid Morris
Manager/Rheolwr
Regional Learning Partnership - South West & Central Wales /
Tel: 01554 742431 / 07789 371211
E-Mail: emorris@cardiffshire.gov.uk
www.rlp.org.uk

North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB)

Iwan Thomas
Regional Skills & Employment Coordinator
Phone: 029 2090 9506 07974 120974
E-mail: Iwan.Thomas@dataunitwales.gov.uk

Public attitude on forestry

The Forestry Commission has conducted biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995. These

surveys are used to inform and monitor policy development. This publication presents results for Wales from the Welsh Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015 on:

- Benefits and disadvantages of woodlands;
- Benefits and disadvantages of street trees;
- Woodland recreation;
- Community engagement;
- Awareness of logos;
- Tree health;
- Wood as a fuel; and
- Disabilities/ health problems.

Survey results at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/pof2015wales.pdf/\\$FILE/pof2015wales.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/pof2015wales.pdf/$FILE/pof2015wales.pdf)

The Royal Welsh Show Tree Felling Competition

2015 was held on the weekend of 13-14 June 2015 at Coed Sarnau Forest, near Abbeycwmhir, Llandrindod Wells

Class 1 - Previous Competitors >24

1 - Peter Fox; 2 - Phil Dunford

Class 2 - Previous Competitors <24

1 - Gethin Hughes; 2 - Rhys Thomas

Class 3 - New Competitors

1 - Nathan Dove; 2 - Ifan Rhys Richards

Class 4 - Veteran Chainsaw

1 - Richard Elliott; 2 - Phil Dunford

The competition was sponsored by: Husqvarna, Confor, BSW Timber, MWMAC Ltd., Smallwood Services Ltd, Forestry Contractors Association, Caerfagu Products Ltd and The Oregon Shop.



Some of the winners of the tree felling competition proudly posing with their awards.

LOGGING



Sustainable route to tackling illegal logging

Chatham House has published a report on illegal timber production: *Tackling illegal logging and the related trade. What progress and where next?* The publication assesses global progress on tackling illegal logging since 2000. The findings are mixed – essentially while some of the EU – and US-led reforms have been effective, overall things have not improved because of the rise of China, which is now the world's biggest importer and consumer of timber. There have also been delays in implementing and difficulties in enforcing the EU legislation, which have impeded its effectiveness.

The massive increase in demand from China and other developing countries is cancelling out the progressive policies of more sensitive markets, and means that at the macro level progress has effectively stalled (levels of illegal trade have not fallen since 2000). More than 80m m³ of timber was illegally produced in 2013 in the nine producer countries assessed. This will have released at least 190m tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Chris Davies, Conservative MP for Brecon and Radnorshire and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Forestry, reacted to the Chatham House report: "Planting more trees to create a sustainable domestic forestry sector is crucial in tackling the scourge of illegal logging in the long term." Although EU imports of illegal timber have halved since a previous Chatham House report on the subject in 2010, Mr Davies said more could be done.

He said: "While it is encouraging that illegal timber imports to the UK have halved, it is vital that we remove the market for illegally logged timber in the UK altogether. One way is to ensure we have a sustainable forestry and wood-processing sector that can supply more of our timber needs. Government can aid this by enabling the sector to plant more trees now and in the future."

Stuart Goodall, chief executive of Confor, added: "The need for increased levels of sustainable forestry and support for the wider forestry and wood processing sector has never been more important. The sector needs a secure long-term supply of timber, and woodlands need to be managed responsibly to protect them from climate change and pests/diseases."

The full report is at www.chathamhouse.org/publications

APF rebooking offer still open this month

If you do still wish to take advantage of the offer of rebooking your previous stand for our 2016 exhibition this will need to be booked and paid for by the 31st August 2015. Alternatively, if you are keen to exhibit, but at a different stand location, there will be the opportunity to choose an alternative site between 01 and 30 September 2015. After this date all remaining sites will be available to all new and previous exhibitors so please do not miss your chance to secure the ideal stand for you.

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Devon timber specialists in the frame

Tom Vanstone, of timber frame specialists Devonoak, on growing a timber business

Running a small business means you never know what you'll be doing from one day to the next.

Last week, for example, my tasks ranged from numerous tedious paperwork tasks, through milling one-off Douglas and Cedar orders, delivering and erecting the final stages of some green-oak frame extension/improvement installation on the North Coast, clearing out sawdust from the workshop and mill for a farmer to use for bedding, and getting my spanners out, repairing, maintaining, and improving our gear.

The whole thing started when, as a young bloke looking to get out of hand-to-mouth work repairing elderly vehicles and doing site carpentry when available, I started helping a friend converting the last of his oak and ash butts using his well-used Trekka saw. After a few weeks of this I bought it from him, and along with an old Unimog, decided I was ready to cut a bit of timber.

Shortly after this I was lucky enough to find myself on a week-long traditional timber framing course with the well known and incredibly enthusiastic Henry Russell. During the weeks that fol-



lowed, I found myself on a roof working closely with a guy, Ben Gillespie, who I'd never met before. Due to a twist of fate I've been working with him on traditional and modern timber buildings ever since.

As the years have passed, my business has grown slowly, as inevitably happens if one constantly re-invests. I've always been interested in keeping things moving and the RDPE grants in 2009/10 helped me build a new shed and buy a Mahoe twin blade sawmill. This enables me to cut accurately dimensioned softwood very easily and we feed this (predominantly Douglas, WRC and Larch) into our buildings. The horizontal bandsaw is probably a better machine for beam-grade oak as the local supply tends to be of poor quality and often far from straight!

It would seem that the government is committing itself to subsidising the use of wood as a heating fuel for the next 20 years. Why, then, is the same government not encouraging the planting of fast-growing softwood timbers?

Looking to the future of the timber trade one tends to ask oneself where we are heading; at my end of the industry I am getting more and more demand for one-off timber buildings made directly from local timber. We use most of our wood 'off the saw' and are evolving a system of processing the waste into one kind of fuelwood or another. Retail orders of sawn durable softwood are also 'on the up'.

However, that to me brings a whole other element of the industry into play, and I would like here to ask a few questions which I'd love to hear the answers to. I speak on a regular basis to timber suppliers, forestry contractors, timber hauliers, etc, but no-one 'on the ground' has managed



to answer these questions for me. Please humour me – it appears to me that these are questions which affect us all in any part of the timber trade; if anyone can shed any light on them, I'd be very grateful to hear it.

It would seem that the government is committing itself to subsidising the use of wood as a heating fuel (by which I refer to the RHI) for the next twenty years. Many thousands of applicants have had their systems approved now. Why, then, is the same government not encouraging the planting of fast-growing softwood timbers?

I want to see stands of Western Red Cedar and Douglas two, five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years old. Where are they?

FISA update



It has been a busy time for FISA recently now that it is show season – some of you may have seen Chief Executive Gillian Clark (below) out and about at some of the recent shows. Gillian will be at the upcoming Confor Woodland Show so don't forget to stop for a chat if you do see her – she always welcomes hearing from people in the industry.

As well as the Chief Executive getting out and about to spread the word about FISA, the Working Groups have also been busy working away behind the scenes.

The FISA Worksite Management Working Group have produced the Landowner, Forestry Works Manager and Contractor checklists for a worksite, these checklists will help you to prepare for and manage a forestry worksite. To download this document, please visit the FISA website <http://www.ukfisa.com> and go to the Safety Library/Site Safety.

The Safety Documentation Working Group has begun updating the FISA Safety Guides and the Timber Haulage Working Group will add a new Forest Haulage Safety Guide; this accompanies the new Driver Safety Booklet.

The new FISA Strategic Plan will shortly be available for public viewing, where you will be able to see our planned actions for the future.



Training solutions

Another big focus for FISA continues to be assisting with training in the industry and we have recently helped to clarify training queries, such as the following:

“There has been some recent debate as to what is classed as ‘independent assessment’ of Lantra chainsaw courses.

The official line is that the Ofqual definition of ‘independent assessment’ is assessment separated from the training, rather than the assessor being a different person to the trainer. Operators who have certificates signed by the same trainer as the person presenting the training are classed as fully compliant with FISA requirements”.

Lots more useful information like this can be found on the FISA website at www.ukfisa.com/training and you can see what we are up to on the News and Events page www.ukfisa.com/news-events

If you would like to get in touch with FISA, please email info@ukfisa.com



Clockwise far left: Milling oversize Radiata from the village; house frame erected at Posbury; cider shed; Martin Diemert delivering a load of Douglas.

The only thing I can extrapolate from this circular line of questioning is this: if we want to be a part of the chain involving these fast growing, durable, versatile timbers, whether it's felling them, hauling them, sawing them, or building with them, it is imperative that we get off our arses and become directly involved in planting some. Next spring, for example. Let's simply encourage planting durable softwoods wherever possible, or I fear we won't have jobs to go to within a couple of decades.

Anyway, enough of that. I still remain committed to using local timber in the South-west for as long as I possibly can. In fact, I am building a truck for hauling round timber this year,

which I hope to have on the road some time in the autumn. This will increase my commitments but hopefully also increase opportunities, and although I'm expecting a slow start to this venture, I'm hoping that I'll be able to get up to speed in time.

So if you're interested in a traditional building made from oak, chestnut, or Douglas, or a retailer who'd like to keep a stock of Douglas fir dimensioned timber with a bit more strength and character than tanalised spruce, or a stock of Western Red Cedar cladding, give us a call.

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Politics aside, woodland market still buoyant

Forest market report by **Fenning Welstead**, of John Clegg & Co



We now know the result of the General Election; and what a result. In Scotland you were either one of the 50% of voters who got 5% of the MPs, or one of the 50% of the voters who got 95% of the MPs. On a UK scale UKIP polled more votes than the whole of Scotland but were rewarded with just one MP. Some playing field!

As we wade our way through a rather grey and damp summer there is a healthy level of activity in the woods.

Scotland and north England

In our opinion the Independence Referendum had very little effect on the forestry market. The General Election may have created a more uncertain climate in the Scottish market. It remains to be seen how strong this effect becomes. The strength of the GB£ is also a factor in timber pricing.

John Clegg & Co completed the sale of Ewebank Park Forest, near Brough, Cumbria, in June. Extending to 190 hectares with good quality spruce, dating from the late 1960s and now in production, this sold at a price in the region of £11,000 per hectare. A similar level was achieved for Auchencairn, 1121 hectares in extent, and one of the largest individual woods to be marketed for some time. Auchencairn offered a full range of age classes from bare land for restocking, through to mature crops ready to harvest. The sale prices, in £ per hectare overall, were very similar. The average age of both properties was in the mid-20s, but the higher standing volumes at Ewebank Park were reflected in a higher price per stocked hectare.

At the younger end of the age spectrum, the same agents sold Craigengillan South near Carsphairn, 91 hectares of average-aged 8-year-old restock, at a price of £6875 per hectare.

Bidwells have reported that Dual Burn, 78 hectares of commercial woodland near Huntly in Aberdeenshire, is now under offer at a price in the region of £4000 per hectare. Dual Burn includes an area of recently felled land, together with semi-mature pine crops. Bidwells also have on the market Harran Forest, 280 hectares of almost mature forestry in the Angus glens. At



Stonechest Forest: 224ha of commercial spruce

a guide price of £5000 per hectare, this looks to be competitively pitched. The conifer crops date from the 1950s through to 1971. There is a relatively high percentage of larch and pine but, with strong biomass markets, this should be well underwritten by demand. The site quality is excellent and future restocking with a greater percentage of spruce should reap benefits.

Smiths Gore (now Savills Smiths Gore or SSG) has been marketing Monachyle Wood on the northern shores of Loch Voil, near Balquhidder. In total 647 hectares, this property comprises almost an entire Highland glen. Of the total area, 308 hectares was planted during the 1980s and much of this is approaching harvesting age. The extensive areas of unplanted land offer not only stunning scenery, but significant stalking potential. The price has recently been reduced to around £2300 per hectare overall. Public road access into this locality is not ideal for timber traffic, but there are extensive neighbouring plantations all reaching the productive stage. Discussions with the local authority suggest that a working solution will be developed for this traffic, and Monachyle could present a very sensible opportunity.

Other properties recently put on to the market include, from SSG, Earnieside Farm, 283 hectares of hill ground including the farmhouse and in-bye land, situated in the Ochil Hills north-west of Edinburgh. This would be ideal forestry planting ground. It will be an interesting test to see whether a forestry purchaser succeeds. We are still suffering from far too much uncertainty in the application process for planting approval. SSG also have two interesting properties for sale at different ends of the country; Drumhumphry, 85 hectares of P90 crops, situated in Dumfriesshire, at a price of £750,000. To the north of the

Great Glen, Tomchrasky, 202 hectares of mainly pine and larch, is for sale at the same price. A very dramatic illustration of the effects of species choice and location!

John Clegg & Co have just launched onto the market Stonechest Forest, near Longtown in Cumbria, 224 hectares of commercial spruce. Originally planted in the early 1970s, this forest has now been almost entirely felled and replanted since 2000. There is, therefore, a healthy spread of age class, high-yield class crops and, if the political wind is giving you a chill, it's in England!

England and Wales

As often happens, south-east England recovered quickest post-election. Strong interest resulted in a series of closing dates this month for three woods in East Sussex – 23.5 hectares, 21.0 hectares and 12.5 hectares. Guide prices of £235,000 for the two larger woods and £175,000 were all well exceeded. Also offered in East Sussex through John Clegg & Co were 69.2 hectares of mixed woods at Laughton. Competitive bidding saw a figure achieved well over the guide of £745,000.

On the South Coast at Bosham, West Sussex, Jackson Stops & Staff offered Old Park Wood; 39.9 hectares of ancient broadleaf woodland on the shores of the main channel of Chichester Harbour, guided at £1,250,000. This failed to sell at the closing date and was withdrawn.

Looking to the west of England, the market has been slower to pick up – perhaps a reflection of the upper end of the housing market in recent years where the best marketing months have been in the autumn. Two high-quality Confor woods – Upcott Wood in Devon (56.2 hectares)

Continued overleaf

Continued from previous page and High Wood in Cornwall (25.9 hectares) - are currently available at £675,000 and £290,000 respectively. Upcott Wood's management has long focused on the production of high-quality timber and long continuity of management has helped secure this. Remarkably the well-known West Country manager, Bill Blight, has looked after Upcott Wood since 1968.

In Warwickshire, Sheldon Bosley's offering of Bericote Wood, close to the site of the former Royal Show at Stoneleigh, went to a closing date with a figure achieved in excess of the guide of £290,000. Shropshire saw Churchmoor Rough, 20.6 hectares, attract very strong competition with the final price well above the guide of £280,000. This outstanding wood featured maturing Douglas fir and late rotation broadleaves. When last sold in 1995, again by John Clegg & Co, a figure just over £70,000 was achieved.

A rare woodland offering in Cheshire, 6.5 hectares of woodland and ponds, was auctioned by Wright Marshall in June. Competitive bidding in the room saw a price of £101,000 at the fall of the hammer.

In the last six months very few woodlands of any size have come on to the open market in Wales. Of note was the sale of High Meadow Wood, which is not yet concluded. This large property of just over 72.8 hectares acres was on the market for £450,000. Off market one of note was Fron Uchaf, a woodland close to Llandoverly. This was a good-sized young commercial plantation acquired by a client of John Clegg & Co at a price just below its notional guide price of £420,000 for 53.8 hectares.

In addition, in north-west Wales, Tyn y Llechwedd sold for quite well in excess of its guide price after being on the market for a reasonable length of time. This was a solid spruce investment and prospective purchasers needed to be allowed to do quite a lot of property assessment to unlock its full potential.

Other agents including Andrew Bronwin & Co have also been active with a property close to New Radnor, which had been agreed subject to contract since July 2014, being completed in April 2015 after a difficult legal process. This property sold quite well in excess of guide in 2014. It is now likely that the new owner is reassessing the value following a slight increase of timber prices since the woodland was assessed in 2014.

Republic of Ireland

John Clegg & Co has been marketing an interesting portfolio of commercial forests in the Republic of Ireland. In total 562 hectares, spread over four main lots, was presented to the market at a price in the region of £930,000, £1655 per hectare overall. Following the recent closing date it is now under offer at slightly over that level. It will be interesting to see how this market develops. There is a lot of forestry in Ireland. Many of the parcels are small-scale and scattered geographically. This can provide a useful diversity of risk, but also increases operating costs. The market will surely strengthen and this might prove to be a very timely investment.

Market turns sluggish

Timber Auctions market report by Oliver Combe



A brief improvement in the market in May and June but back to sluggish performance in July as the holiday season starts

Softwoods

As the prices of finished products have fallen through the year so the prices for all the main categories of roundwood have eased back over the course of 2015. In general terms the prices have fallen by 15 to 20% since the recent market peak in spring 2014.

Some examples of current spot market prices of UK material are shown in the box.

Stock levels of most assortments are high throughout the supply chain and there is very aggressive selling from Irish and Swedish mills which the homegrown mills have to counter if they are to maintain their market share.

Historically, the log prices follow the sawn timber prices down on a three to six month lag, so in 2015 we have seen the impact on the roundwood market of the end product price falls that begin in the second half of 2014 and have continued into 2015.

Delivered certified saw logs prices have fallen by approximately £10 per tonne from the low to mid £60s per tonne to the low to mid £50s per tonne price, these prices will vary locally according to species, specification and local availability.

Delivered certified small round wood has fall-

en from around £40 per tonne delivered at the turn of the year to around £30 per tonne and most suppliers are on quotas. Again these prices will vary locally according to species, specification and local availability.

Availability of raw material remains good through Scotland, England and Wales, weather conditions have been good, this coupled with long day light hours ensures maximum productivity from harvesting gangs. Roadside and mill stocks are good and most buyers are now well bought with material for the second half of the year.

As we go into the holiday period and demand and production slow it is likely that purchasers will be more particular in their requirements. It appears that in north England and Scotland prices have been reduced and the market is starting to bottom out. Whereas in Wales and South England the prices have been slower to fall back due to concerns over availability.

Examples of current spot market prices of UK material

- Full loads KD C16 47 X100 X 4800 eased edge whitewood in July 2015 has fallen back to around £155/m³ delivered from a high of £195/m³ in early 2014 (- 20%)
- Full loads of unseasoned untreated fencing specification material in July 2015 have fallen to around £140/m³ from a high of £175/m³ in early 2014 (- 20%)
- Full loads of 18mm pallet boards cut to length in July 2015 have fallen to around £125/m³ from £145/m³ in early 2014 (- 14%)

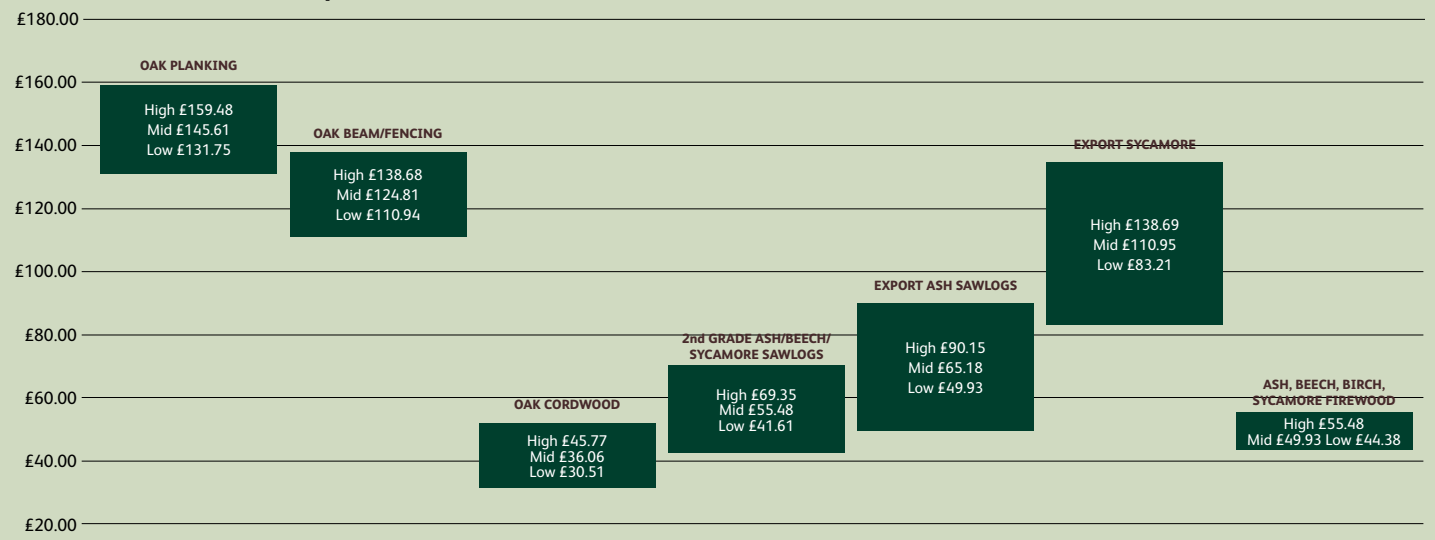
UK national roundwood prices JAS 2015 (£T delivered)



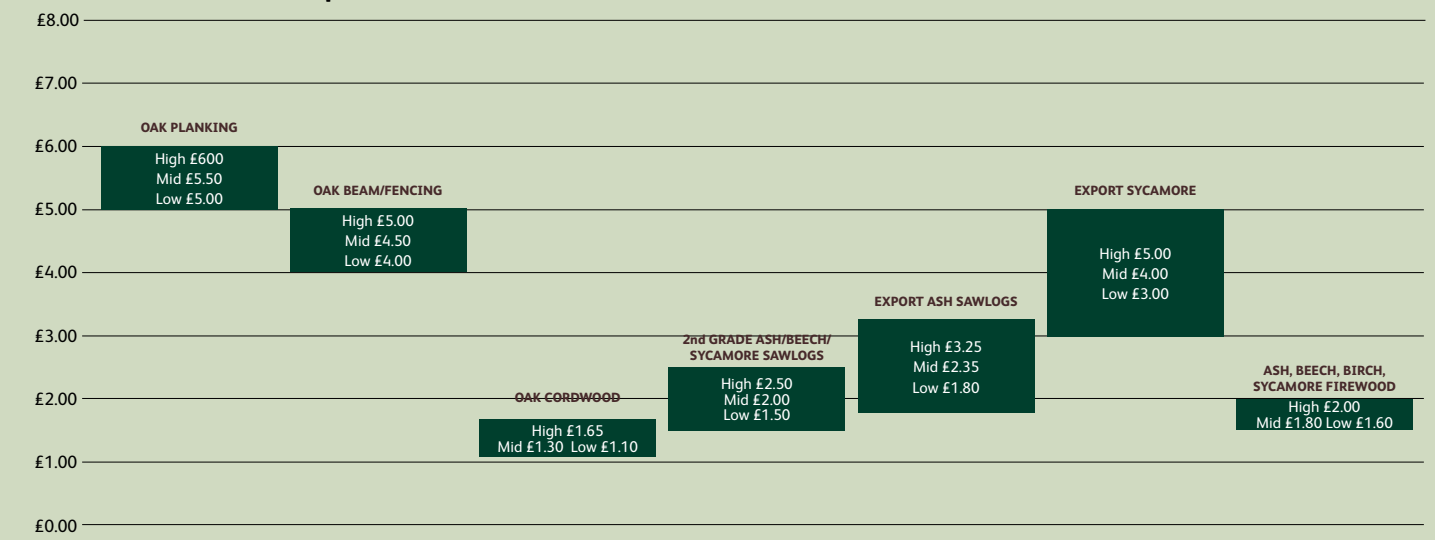
North England and Scotland prices JAS 2015 (£T delivered)



National round hardwood prices for JAS 2015 (£m³ roadside)



National round hardwood prices for JAS 2015 (£hft roadside)



Hardwoods

The hardwood market is very quiet over spring and summer although some late sales in spring 2015 produced some good prices for oak, from £6/hft for good planking / beam material down to £4.75/hft for fencing / beam oak. The market for well-presented homegrown oak remains good and sellers are urged to plan ahead to ensure their timber is well marketed.

A parcel of nice clean, good sized white ash in Northamptonshire also attracted seven strong bids and sold well, but smaller diameter clean white ash further North has been very challenging to sell.

The firewood market has most definitely slowed down and prices have fallen back to more realistic levels in some parts of the country however, there is still a mismatch between areas of supply and areas of demand. Some sales attract good numbers of bidders and fetch excellent prices whereas others perfectly good parcels can be difficult to sell and in some areas there are high roadside stocks of firewood material. The North Midlands, Yorkshire and Lanca-

shire remain strong markets with good demand and prices for processor sized material.

Despite the modest falls in price for firewood in some areas the market remains considerably better than it was five years ago, roadside prices of £40 to £50 per tonne are very attractive and allow most conventional commercial woodlands to be brought into management in some way. Mechanised harvesting has become the norm in most hardwood plantings carried out prior to the early 1980s where timber production was an objective in the establishment, this significantly reduces harvesting costs and improves the return for the grower.

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

UPM Tilhill timber bulletin

The bulletin looks at the main drivers affecting the UK timber industry both at home and abroad, together with trends and pricing forecasts.

It says 2015 is proving to be a hugely challenging year for the timber industry with the detriments of the strong pound on one side and the robust economy and the predicted dramatic growth for both private and public sector housing over the coming years on the other side. While the growth of the UK economy in the last year is good news overall, the report cites the strength of the pound against the euro and Swedish krona as the key influences on the sawn timber market which has seen a recent downward shift. The bulletin can be downloaded from www.upm-tilhill.com (news section)



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Currency pendulum swing puts UK timber under pressure

Euroforest market report,
by Ashley Williams

Anyone who has been enjoying the pleasures of mainland Europe in recent weeks will have noticed: what a pleasant surprise how far a pound sterling stretches, even a café au lait in France seems reasonable. Unfortunately, the consequence of a strong pound makes the UK an extremely attractive destination for imported timber; the strength of Sterling against the Euro and the Swedish Krona has put the home grown timber trade under severe pressure in terms of price. The relative weakness of sterling for some years now has enabled the home grown trade to grow its market share significantly and to invest in new capacity as the increment from the UK forest has increased. This positive feel-good factor for the home grown trade has come to a shuddering halt, at the time of writing this report the Euro stands at 1.43 to the pound and Swedish Krona at 13.25 to the pound.

The exchange rate at these levels has a particular effect on the construction grades of timber, where home grown C16 competes directly with imported timber. The price differential enjoyed by home grown timber over imported timber has now completely disappeared with

overall prices down significantly compared to last year. The sawn fencing market where many bespoke products are produced is less in direct competition with the imported trade. This has created a slight North-South divide in the UK, with most of the major mills in the North being orientated towards the production of carcassing and the mills in the South generally directing their production towards the fencing market. This geographical divide is evident in the trend in log prices with the downward adjustment in the log price in the North much more marked than in the south; however the general direction of travel for round timber prices is downward. In the north mills are looking to drop prices to the very low fifties per tonne, whilst in the South the drop is currently less dramatic. Production levels at sawmills, whilst not drastically reduced are not being pushed and again this is more the case the further north one looks.

The overall market for timber in the UK is still growing, however the percentage of the market enjoyed by the home grown trade is significantly reduced; the fortunes of the home grown trade are essentially being driven by currency fluctuations. This tightening of the market is made all the more uncomfortable because it is in such stark contrast to last year when sawmills just could not cut enough wood to satisfy demand. The picture looking forward is difficult to predict, but with UK economy being one of

the few growing in Europe coupled with the currency the UK is a very attractive market for imported timber.

The small round wood market is patchy across the country, with currently surplus volume in some areas; again the situation is more difficult in the north than it is in the south. Overall, the main panel producers are busy supplying a buoyant construction industry, chipboard sales are good whilst MDF is at similar levels to last year. Imports into the panel sector are an issue in value added products but overall sales are good. Most mills are well supplied with volume in particular in areas where technical issues or maintenance shut downs have meant more volume is available than is being consumed, this is particularly true in north Scotland and the Scottish borders. Further south the market continues in balance with some regional shortages such as south Wales.

The small round wood fencing market continues to be buoyant with healthy demand for material, although as usual in the summer not as hectic as earlier in the year.

Overall the market is certainly facing currency driven issues and a rebasing of pricing levels for round timber that is more acute in the north of the UK than it is in the south. Could be quote The market has been on an upward trajectory for several years and is once again illustrating that it is cyclical by nature.

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Confor
Nursery Producers' Group



Forest Research hosts nursery industry meet

The annual industry-wide meeting organised by the Confor Nursery Group was kindly hosted by Forest Research at Alice Holt in July this year. It provided another great opportunity for communication throughout the supply chain; seed collection and nurseries through to the grant system controlling forest planting. We were pleased to have NRW, FCE and FCS representation and nurseries received a good update from

all three countries as to the most recent state of affairs with the grant applications. The 'who's who' update from Forest Research and the Forestry Commission was very timely, as many of our key contacts are moving about, and we ended the visit with a tour around the research facilities and arboretum at Alice Holt.

Another excellent example of industry-wide communication facilitated by Confor!



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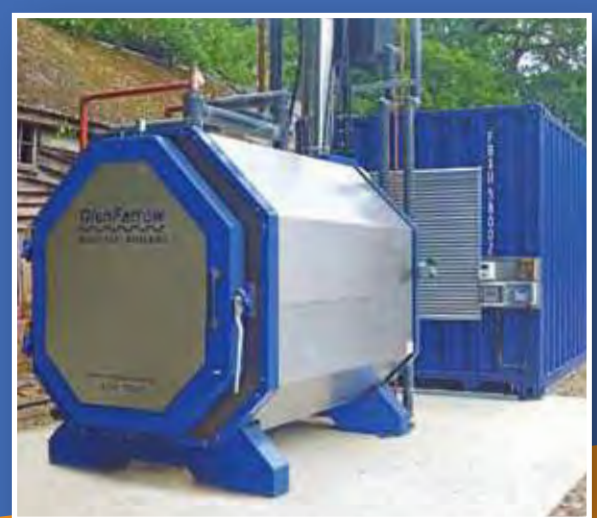
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Pine marten: are other species at risk?

Following our article on the Pine marten in the last issue, **Rosie and Henry Humphreys** wrote to ask about the risk to other species. **Huw Denman** of **Selectfor** responded



Does the pine marten also predate on other native species, ie song birds, ground-nesting birds, voles etc? We did experience awful consequences from the presence of a polecat in our hen run. Would a pine marten:

- a) thrive in the southern part of the country hardwoods?
- b) be a threat to domestic or free-range poultry farms?

Much as we are desperate to remove the dreaded grey from this country (living close to a Woodland Trust area is a real disadvantage...) we don't want to encourage another tyranny.

Rosie and Henry Humphreys
USK Castle Estate, Usk South Wales

The pine marten is a carnivore, however is quite omnivorous in its diet. A number of dietary studies have shown that the main preferred food is small mammals such as short-tailed field voles, bank voles and wood mice, but that food preference is influenced by seasonal availability, so for example, berries and fruit form a big part of their diet in the autumn, including wild cherry, wild raspberry, ivy berries, rowan berries. They will also eat carrion, rats, rabbits and hares, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, bird's eggs, crustaceans, beetles, earthworms, caterpillars, molluscs, hazelnuts, fungi and even raspberry jam. Their diet is very much influenced by availability and so rare species are not likely to be encountered and therefore not impacted. Most studies have found that red squirrels to be less than 2% of

their diet, and one French study suggested that the presence of pine martens may be important in maintaining the health of red squirrel populations by eliminating the less fit and healthy reds. Research carried out by Emma Sheehy in south-east Ireland in 2013 showed that grey squirrels constituted 15.6% of marten diet where the range of the two species overlapped, however the mechanism for the disappearance of grey squirrels in the presence of martens requires further research, and may involve factors other than simply predation.

Pine martens will certainly predate on wild birds. However, their presence is not likely to result in the local or national extinction of any bird species. Predation by martens is likely to be on the more common species.

Grey squirrels also predate on birds eggs and chicks and if you consider that an average grey squirrel weighs perhaps 550g, and that greys can live at up to 16 squirrels per hectare, equal to 8.8kg of grey squirrel biomass per hectare, and that the average pine marten weighs perhaps 1.7kg and they live at a maybe a maximum of three per km², equal to 0.051kg of marten biomass per hectare, the environmental impact of greys on their environment, and on birds must be far greater than having pine martens in a woodland.

Pine martens avoid open ground and are therefore not likely to come across black grouse nests. As mentioned, martens are opportunistic, and would certainly kill domestic hens if they came across them. They live at much lower densities than foxes and polecats, are generally nocturnal, so if hens are locked in at night, the likelihood of problems with martens isn't very likely. Free range hens would be vulnerable of course, but foxes, polecats and goshawks would be a much bigger problem. The Vincent Wildlife Trust

(VWT) have guidance available on their website regarding construction of marten-proof hen and pheasant pens.

I've been actively involved in the management of woodlands in the Irish midlands which had been dominated by grey squirrels for decades (being close to the original release site in Co. Longford in 2011). These are oak woodlands with hazel and other species, and the damage by grey squirrels was very evident when I first saw these woodlands in 1999. From around 1995 onwards, grey squirrels disappeared and reds soon reappeared. It soon became obvious that pine martens were also present. Martens and red squirrels had been absent since the beginning of the 20th century. I can vouch for the fact that these woodlands in County Laois have ground nesting woodcock present and many Irish hares and seem unaffected by the presence of pine martens, having come across the occupied woodcock nests by accident, as well as young leverets.

Would martens live in hardwood forests in Wales or southern England? Yes, provided the woodland is large enough to support them and connected to other woodlands to allow dispersal and colonisation. Martens prefer three-dimensional habitat, including both woodlands and areas with cliffs and crags. As well as available food they also need cavities for resting and breeding, provided by hollow trees, small caves but also abandoned large nests such as a buzzards nest or sometimes an abandoned building. A large (>100 hectare) and diverse species woodland with a well-developed ground flora is likely to be better than a uniform un-thinned plantation. In woodlands without many natural cavities, martens readily use VWT nest boxes designed for marten use, which makes it possible to encourage breeding in areas away from productive forestry and disturbance, and also easy monitoring as the martens will sue the top of their boxes for depositing scats.

The design for the VWT marten den box, advice on construction of marten proof hen and game-bird pens, and other useful advice and guidance on pine martens can be found on the VWT website: www.vwt.org.uk/downloads/

Predation by martens is likely to be on the more common species



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HARVESTING

Management changes drive move to wire

by Peter Lloyd,
Natural Resources Wales

Over the last few years skyline and highlead extraction systems have slowly gained popularity throughout Wales' commercial forests. A lot of factors have contributed to this rise in wire rope working and although not certain the future is looking strong for this developing sector of the industry. One of the most notable increases would be the popularity in using excavator based cable crane systems to extract timber.

One of the main factors driving this change is in the way commercial forest are now worked and managed. Limiting soil erosion, compaction and pollution from silt and mud leaving site is at the core of NRW's management principles when working areas of forest, these problems are often exacerbated when the site is on a steep slope. The use of wire rope extraction methods often limits the need for the traditional facilities used to harvest such extreme sites and offers a much softer footprint. Saving on expensive facilities such as large lengths of stone tracking can be a real bonus, these facilities can often be required in areas such as national parks where consent to build them may not be granted due to the visual impact.

There is also application to use these cable cranes on flat areas that are very wet and prone to high levels of soil erosion, upland deep peat sites are a classic example of this. An experienced team of motor manual fellers coupled with an efficient cable crane team can fell and extract up to 400t per week. This may not compete with a harvester forwarder team directly but when you consider the amount of ground damage a forwarder can create this can often be an option worth considering. Often the timber won't be completely extracted using a cable crane, but



will be offering support to the harvester and forwarder. The nature of the base machine means that the cable crane is incredibly versatile, often the bucket is fully functional and the operator is able to turn stumps and create ad-hoc facilities to reach larger areas or work more safely; this can be a real asset in providing support to a harvester and forwarder team by traveling through a coupe to extract from areas that might be too wet to send in the forwarder. The set up time is also a real advantage with these systems, the advantage is partly down to the weight of the machine and the ability for the operator to stabilise the machine using the bucket and arm; this results in a vastly reduced set up time and the ability to move around the coupe.

It's not just a shift in environmental principles driving this change, NRW is committed to thinning more of its forest estate; in meeting this objective a lot of the flatter, less complicated areas have been previously worked or committed into a long-term contract this has resulted in a large proportion of areas needing to be thinned on steep and often inaccessible slopes. These environments are what the ca-

ble cranes are built for and is where they excel. There are companies within the UK that will fabricate parts and adapt 360 excavators so they are fit for purpose, often these modifications are designed under the guidance of the contractors and owners who know what they want and what will work best for them, this form of extraction with excavators is still in its relative infancy and this close partnership between the manufactures and owner/operators is certainly driving the technology forward. Larger excavators are being converted and larger winch drums are being fitted to push the limit of what these machines are capable of and therefore increase their commercial viability. With an excavator based skyline system it would not be uncommon to extract timber from distances up to 400m (and is only limited by the size of the base machine and winch drum), this capability and experience is starting to shift the balance away from the traditional forwarder extraction method.

Unfortunately it's not all positive and there are few constraints as to why cable cranes

Continued on p48

An advertisement for ForestAndArb.com. The background is a photograph of a well-stocked hardware or forestry store. In the top left corner, there is a logo for ForestAndArb.com with the tagline "For all your forestry & arboricultural needs". In the bottom left corner, contact information is provided: "t: 01962 857951 e: sales@ForestAndArb.com". In the bottom right corner, there is a circular logo for the "Confor WOODLAND SHOW 2015" held from 10th - 11th September at Longleat Estate.

HARVESTING

Continued from p47

aren't as common as they could be; like most things it's down to the cost. With a base machine costing upwards of 50 thousand pounds and the costs associated with adapting the machine to be suitable the investment risk is understandably a large concern. The safety risk associated with having chainsaw operator's motor manually felling timber to be extracted is also a real issue with this type of working method, although this is where experience pays in dividends and a well organised site with a robust and well thought out method statement vastly increases the safety margin. The working cost due to a slower output is also a discouragement with owner/operators needing a steady stream of work to pay for their investment, this is where NRW has been working to encourage more investment in this working type.

There are many issues associated with marketing steep sloped thinning sites suited to cable crane extraction; one of these reasons being that there isn't a big enough contractor resource to respond to the increasing amount of thinnings being brought to open market. Despite this steady increase in steep or wet sites being brought to market contractors are cautious in investing in new equipment and skill bases as there's no guarantee that bidding on the sale parcel will secure the work. To address this issue NRW is currently creating sale parcels or long-term contracts (LTCs) consisting of a guaranteed period of work, either three or five years which will ensure any investment in machines or resources will be viable. Some of these LTCs will be grouped into working types such as standard harvester forwarder methods or wire rope work meaning investment in new machines and skill bases will be an attractive proposition. For NRW and the contractors this is a win win situation, NRW will have more of its estate thinned using specialist skills and machines and NRW's customers will have the chance to invest in new equipment, new employees and secure themselves steady work.

With the benefits associated with using these modern excavator based cable cranes and the shift in the way NRW will market and sell their steep sites the future of this modern way of working should go from strength to strength.



A private sector perspective

by Peter Whitfield, UPM Tilhill

The approach from NRW is welcomed as far as making a commitment to long-term contracts (LTCs) to encourage investment by contractors in Wales. However, what we have seen over the past 15 years is a decline in the availability of skyline teams and cable working and an increase in the capability of ground-based machines, particularly 8-wheeled harvesters which have increasingly safely pushed the boundaries on steep ground working. Sites that previously would have been considered exclusively cable crane are now being harvested by wheeled or tracked machinery and only the most challenging slopes are requiring some form of cable extraction. The preferred option is usually a combination of wheeled harvester along with an excavator based winch, either hi-leading or occasionally skylining.

It is rare to have a dedicated skyline outfit these days and there are few contractors who are prepared to take this task on. There are a number of important reasons for this both, health and safety driven and cost driven. There is no question that any operation that involves exposing men on steep hillsides to felling and/or choking trees contains a level of risk and any means of reducing this exposure has got to be pursued. The industry's record is clear on this and we should al-

ways be searching for ways of reducing the exposure to serious incidents and accidents. The availability of chainsaw operators to take on felling on steep ground is diminishing and the willingness for new recruits to take on the heavy physical requirements of working in cable teams has always been difficult. Understandably the majority of forestry workers prefer the safety and comfort of a cab on a machine to working on exposed hillsides. Importantly, the industry's commitment and actions to make sure that those working in exposed operations are well trained, that the activities are properly risk assessed and hazards mitigated is well evidenced by FISA and both harvesting companies and contractors alike.

For cable crane operations to be both safe and productive means that contractors have to receive a fair rate for the job and in many cases that rate will determine that the standing timber has much reduced value, but that is the cost of exploiting the valuable resource still left to be harvested on steep ground.

So as the backlog of steep ground sites backs up the industry is finding ways to work some of them as machine capabilities are improved, but we will need to ensure that we have an adequate resource of skilled manpower and good cable based equipment to work the more extreme sites. Growers will have to recognise the high costs involved in this and be prepared accept this if we are to have a sustainable steep ground capability within the harvesting contractor resource for the future.

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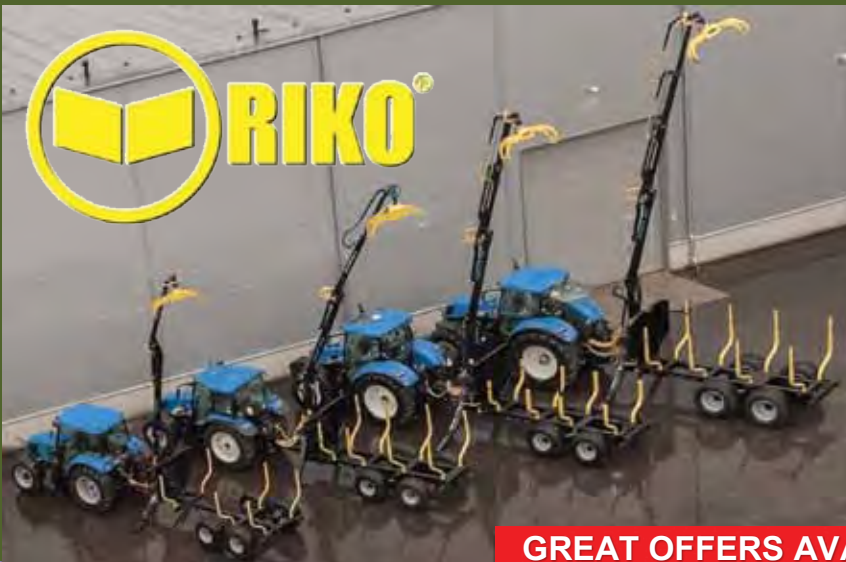
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£50,000 boost for Future Foresters from The Prince's Countryside Fund

The Royal Forestry Society's (RFS) Future Foresters programme is to receive a £50,000 grant over three years from The Prince's Countryside Fund to help it reach out and inspire young people considering a career in forestry and woodland management.

RFS Chief Executive Simon Lloyd said: "The grant recognises our aim to increase the profile of forestry as a worthwhile and accessible career, which will strengthen the pipeline of skills into the sector."

"We hope to help create a new woodland culture and to bring more woodlands into meaningful management for timber products, biodiversity, leisure and environmental benefits."

Future Foresters is inspiring young people to

enter forest industries, supporting them to gain skills, qualifications and experience, and find work.

It is developing:

- meaningful paid intern placements
- bursaries to help those from low income families to gain work experience
- a Careers Portal which it will host for the forestry sector
- a programme of outreach activities, talks and events for secondary schools and colleges
- links between students and landowners
- supporting research at colleges
- distance learning and other qualifications.

www.rfs.org.uk/future-foresters/



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PUBLICATIONS

Getting Started in Your Own Wood

by Professor Julian Evans & Will Rolls

With growing interest in woodland ownership from a broadening spectrum of people, the need for an accessible introduction to the subject is clear. Julian Evans and Will Rolls present a very readable journey through the myriad of mysteries that a prospective, or 'green', woodland owner could lie awake at night worrying about. Cast as an update to "Badgers, Beeches and Blisters", this is a ready-reckoner for the novice and a reminder to those with experience of the fundamental simplicity of silviculture.

To reduce the risk of my previous forestry knowledge colouring this review, I passed it on to my wife, Gillie, for her thoughts. Having been involved in careers guidance and after years of patiently listening to me prattling on about basal areas and other esoteric terminology, I thought this could be helpful. It was.

It's a delicate balancing act to match an appealing read with an applied scientific subject. Quite frequently I found myself looking for a reference or a footnote that would guide me to where greater depth was available; either later in the book or in another source. But that is perhaps overly critical of something that may not concern the novice for he or she will be picking up knowledge from every page and thus enthused, will go on to research in greater depth.

Julian's earlier book, "A Wood of My Own", forms a foundation from which he draws examples of his own early worries towards a more relaxed understanding of the need for time, patience and tolerance in woodland management; a reminder that trees have lived in this world for millennia without our help. There is no need for urgency or panic, but much to be under-



taken, and enjoyed by steady application, little and often over time. The sense of satisfaction at a job completed oneself, clearly comes across.

Will Rolls brings in a detailed summary of practical information and, in this era of energy concern, the sections on firewood will be helpful to those with notions of sustainable heat. As someone with three stoves to feed and after an endless winter (we're still lighting a stove most nights) it's a timely reminder to keep the log store topped up.

John White and Stephen Evans have provided line drawings to illustrate and enliven the book. Sometimes I could have wished for a photograph or a larger-scale drawing to better see what was being depicted.

It's a very logical book with a healthy smattering of anecdote, making it a readable and enjoyable introduction. The reader should be able to fall sound asleep with less concern about the do's and don'ts of ownership or, better still, on a comforting mental arithmetic of next winter's firewood supply – or is it two years ahead? Read it and find the answer.

Fenning Welstead

ISBN 978-1-85623-212-8.
Paperback, 168pp. RRP: £12.95.
Permanent Publications,
April 2015



Deep peat practice guide launched

A new practice guide for managing deep peatland which is already planted with trees has been published by Forestry Commission Scotland. The guide, along with previously published peatland guidance is available on FCS' peatland habitats page: <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/images/corporate/pdf/afforested-deep-peatland-management-options.pdf>

WOODLAND OWNER

Professor Julian Evans OBE
on balancing interests
in woodland management



Woods and wildlife

I have two objectives in managing the small woodland we own in Hampshire: financial and wildlife enhancement. As Confor members know well, these are complementary and rarely compete. Productive woodlands that are well thinned and well roaded are good for most wildlife.

My thoughts are being concentrated in this matter as Network Rail are shortly to begin some major works upgrading their transformer which can only be accessed by coming through our wood. They have the right to do this but will be bring machinery and plant far bigger than ever envisaged 50 years ago when the existing easement was granted. And the works they propose will threaten the glades, ride-sides and bits of the conservation areas that have proved such a blessing.

Yesterday this conflict was brought home when I was with our agent who is negotiating on our behalf. It was that gloriously hot day, 1 July, and, for once, there were butterflies aplenty: lots of speckled woods, browns, ringlets, a couple of whites and, most gloriously, three fritillaries glinting copper-orange as they hurried by. Best of all, though, was seeing for the first time in the wood a white admiral, a lovely velvet black butterfly with a curving white stripe down each wing. I was thrilled. Yet the location of these entomological treasures was precisely on the route where the track will be upgraded and heavy machinery will traverse this autumn and winter. Will these butterflies survive and be around next summer?

My father, who was a keen amateur entomologist, lamented back in the 1960s that the abundance of insects was declining and was not as he remembered as a boy growing up in the Surrey countryside. Of course, that was when Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring' drew attention to the evils of organochlorine pesticides like DDT, but despite their being withdrawn years ago today we rarely see clouds of butterflies in our intensively managed countryside. So let me remind of the top six actions (below) we can all take in our woods, in addition to setting aside areas of special or designated importance, to help wildlife and specifically butterflies.

If all the above are done, the species of tree you are dealing with is actually relatively unimportant. Get the structure right, and wildlife will mostly follow.



- 1 Have plenty of open areas, glades, and ride-side stacking areas;
- 2 Encourage understorey to provide more structure and some edge effect – low shrubs, tall shrubs, small trees;
- 3 Cut tracks and rides in alternate years to allowing flowering and seed-setting of wildflowers;
- 4 Thin stands well;
- 5 Leave some standing dead trees – snags, the Americans call them;
- 6 Accumulate dead wood on the forest floor.

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