

# FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS



October 2016 Issue 77



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## Biosecurity: Pine Processionary Moth

Pine Processionary Moth has been a serious pest of pines in Southern Europe for many years. Climate change means it is spreading north.

It is now established in France, as far north as the English Channel.



John H. Ghent, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org  
Images supplied courtesy of Forest Research



William M Ciesla, Bugwood.org

As well as pine trees, most notably Scots pine, Corsican pine and lodgepole pine; European larch and Atlas cedar are also at risk.

In 1995, Pine Processionary Moth was found in the UK. It had arrived on imported nursery stock from Italy. This could easily happen again.

The Forestry Commission states that 'the most likely pathway for the moth to be introduced into the UK is as eggs or larvae attached to imported pine planting stock, or for pupae to be transported in the soil associated with imported trees'.

Lorry loads of trees are imported into the UK every week. This trade is almost impossible to police. Pests and diseases will get through.

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Change as an opportunity p4



Chain technology gets new edge p18



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# An investment in our industry



Confor membership is a wise investment, says Confor chief executive **Stuart Goodall**

October is membership renewal time, when we at Confor ask you to spend some of your hard earned money with us.

"Why should I?", you may ask. And it's a fair question.

Our aim at Confor is to provide both direct benefit to you and to act on the big issues and opportunities that the sector faces. We do that through direct member services and through our lobbying and promotional work.

On page 7 and 9 we have set out just a few highlights of what we have achieved on your behalf over the last 12 months. If you would like to know more, then do please get in touch.

Membership income has grown steadily in recent years and that has enabled us to do more to support you. Overall, the sector is growing stronger and I believe that Confor has played a valuable part in achieving that. We need your continued support to drive further progress.

Please renew promptly and, if you have time, take a pause for thought and think if there is someone you believe should also be a member. Give them this magazine (after you've read it of course) and provide us with their details.

The more members we have, the more we can achieve for you.

We signed up 60 new members at this year's APF, both big and small, and I was heartened by the positive feedback we received from those members who came to the company AGM – it was a full house. There is a lot to do, but the Confor team is determined to do its best for you.

## Dignity at a time of tragedy

With the APF in mind, I would like to share a personal perspective from this year's demo. On the Tuesday before the event there was a tragic incident which resulted in the death of one of the volunteers, a stalwart of the demo over many years and a valued friend to those in the APF and beyond, Frank Sheridan.

The impact on Frank's wife who was at the demo, on those who saw the incident, and on the APF team as a whole is difficult to fully appreciate, but their response was, and is, inspiring.

The dignity of Frank's wife Aileen was remarkable and it was touching to see how she sought and received comfort and support from those around her. The compassion, resilience and professionalism shown by the APF team was what pulled them through and it meant that visitors simply experienced another excellent demo.

Our thoughts are with Aileen and her family, and with the APF team.

All about membership

[www.confor.org.uk/join-us](http://www.confor.org.uk/join-us)

Confor 2017 diaries will be sent out to members with the December issue

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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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# Forestry in a post-Brexit

“It is really important that we look at change as an opportunity, not just a challenge” says Confor chief executive Stuart Goddall

Confor has consulted the forestry and wood-processing sector in the aftermath of Brexit and produced a new report with the aim of shaping a bright future for the industry.

Recommendations in each of five key areas identified by Confor form the basis of a new report called *A thriving forestry and timber sector in a post-Brexit world*.

“We looked at the big issues before the vote, what impact the decision to leave might have after the vote – and now we have consulted widely as we endeavour to shape the future our industry wants,” said Stuart Goodall.

“With the whole future of rural policy and funding up for discussion, there is a tremendous opportunity to integrate forestry and timber production as a major driver of rural development.”

“What we have tried to do with this latest report is to examine what the sector wants to happen in order to create the best conditions for it to thrive. But at the same time, we understand that we also need to work with other rural interests to shape a bright future for the rural economy as a whole.”

Following initial consultation, five work-streams were identified by Mr Goodall and Confor’s technical director Andrew Heald, and Confor members were invited to come up with recommendations for change in each area.

## THE FIVE WORK-STREAMS

- **How do we deliver the new planting and restocking of the productive forests that drives the UK timber industry?**
- **How do we develop a truly integrated rural policy and support framework?**
- **EU environmental legislation: should it all be retained unchanged?**
- **Timber Standards, trade regulations and migrant labour: How do we retain access to markets and labour?**
- **How can we strengthen plant health and protection without restricting domestic trade?**

The above recommendations have been included in Confor’s report which will be shared and discussed with politicians at the Conservative Party conference, SNP conference and the

October meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry.

“It is very important that we get across to politicians the key priorities of the sector,” said Mr Heald. “We do not want to become consumed by the technicalities of Brexit – we recognise change is coming and we want to shape the future in a positive way. It is really vital, for example, that we put forward positive recommendations to encourage more tree planting, especially in England.

“The latest statistics confirm our fears that planting in England is pitifully low and we really need to look to a future where we create a policy and business framework which allows more planting to take place.”

## Joining efforts for a strong post-Brexit future

Mr Heald praised the Confor members who have provided input into the work-streams – Crispin Golding, Graham Taylor, John Gallagher Oliver Combe and Jim Pratt.

“They have come up with some great recommendations in a short space of time and given us a strong base on which to build that thriving future we all want,” he said.

Stuart Goodall stressed that Confor had consulted widely on the recommendations – and would continue to do so.

“We got both verbal and written feedback at the APF exhibition as well as constantly discussing the issue with the profession at all levels and encouraging the work-stream leaders to do the same,” he said.

“Confor also recognises the need for collaboration across the rural sector to shape a positive post-Brexit future. While all rural interests will make a strong case for their specific sector, constant jostling for position will not deliver a thriving future for our rural economy. We need to work together on some basic principles in the interests of our rural communities; that’s why we organised an APF event with the Forestry Commission, CLA and NFU (see report on p12) and a fringe event at the Conservative Party conference involving The Woodland Trust and CLA.”

Mr Goodall added: “The debate about Brexit will continue; this is far from the final word. Confor’s position will continue to evolve, based on the priorities of its members and the interests of the wider sector. However, this report gives us a very strong base on which to build the thriving future we all want for the sector.”



## SHAPING THE FUTURE

For a hard copy of *A thriving forestry and timber sector in a post-Brexit world*, call the Confor office on 0131 240 1410.

- Next steps for Confor are to discuss the report with politicians through October at the Conservative and SNP conferences and at the APPGF at Westminster.

Confor will also continue to meet with other interest groups to find areas of common ground.



## RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

### New planting and restocking

- Simplify the application process, and drastically reduce lead-in times by reducing administration. The current application process needs to be streamlined and made much more systematic. There must be clarity and transparency in the consultation process
- Presumption in favour of new planting. New schemes, which are UKFS-compliant and located in 'favoured' areas should be fast-tracked. The focus of public consultation should be based on information-gathering. The role of Forestry Commission should be as a facilitator to move schemes forward.
- Link woodland creation to house building or other development permissions. Explore the potential to connect new developments with woodland creation, particularly in urban and suburban areas. Any loss of woodland (of all types) must be fully compensated by new woodland planting.

### Rural policy and funding

- Develop an Integrated Rural Land Management policy. There is an urgent need for fully integrated land use policies, and to move away from silo thinking by separate forestry, environmental and farming interests. Land use policies must interconnect with local development and planning policies.
  - Simplify rural support mechanisms to focus on outcomes of land management. The focus of public funding for land management must be the delivery of public good and clearly targeted at achieving agreed outcomes. Support mechanisms must be robust and transparent, to drive confidence in long term business planning.
- Use Natural Capital Valuation techniques to support transparent decision-making. There are opportunities to use Natural Capital and other ecosystem service valuation techniques to assist in land use planning and decision-making, particularly in understanding and comparing 'trade-offs'. Techniques must focus on whole life cycles and include costing of any subsequent off-setting and off-shoring.

### Environmental legislation

- Carry out a risk-based revision of Environmental Impact Assessment thresholds. Large planting schemes in areas of relatively low risk should not require EIAs. Where practicable, there should be a move from EIAs towards a wider assessment of benefits from new planting schemes, such as carbon storage, flood mitigation and economics.

- Interpretation and implementation of regulations must be consistent across all rural industries. Regulatory agencies must work with all land managers fairly, to ensure good practice and minimise negative impact.
- Review EU Environmental Directives and their impact on sawmills and processors to ensure they are delivering the desired outcomes and not unfairly penalising UK sawmills

### Timber standards, trade regulations and migrant labour

- Revise the Construction Products Regulation (305/2011/EU). As an EU regulation this applies across the whole EU and sets out "mandated characteristics" for certain construction products and is aimed at breaking down technical barriers to trade. Revising this regulation could low the barrier for UK forest products to be used more widely in construction.
- Ensure continued free movement of labour, or at least a seasonal rural worker scheme. The free movement of labour is essential across many parts of the forestry and timber sector, from nurseries, to planting squads to our sawmills and timber processors.
- Adopt a timber-first policy in procurement contracts, with a preference for domestic production. There is increasing interest in using more timber in construction, from Glue-lam and CLT replacing steel beams, to greater use of timber frame in off-site construction. Valuing the embedded carbon in forest products could drive forward its use.

### Plant health

- Phytosanitary certificates should be required for all imported material. Better regulation of all plant material would limit the chance of new exotic pests and disease entering the UK; this regulation must also cover horticultural products as well as forestry.
- The importation of 'firewood' should be restricted? Restricting the importation of all firewood would severely reduce the risk of pest and disease entering the UK and increase demand for low grade fuel wood from the UK's under managed woods.
- Achieve consistent levels of new planting to enable nurseries to meet demand with domestic production. Short-term and inconsistent grant schemes leads to yo-yoing in planting, this means Long term stable and consistent support for new woodland creation would enable tree nurseries to better plan production, this in turn would mean less reliance on imported plants so reducing disease risk.

For report and all on Brexit visit

[www.confor.org.uk/news/brexit](http://www.confor.org.uk/news/brexit)

Tell Confor what you think on Brexit

Email [haveyoursay@confor.org.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@confor.org.uk)

# Concerns over Canopy Cover Report

*Estimates of Change in Canopy Cover in British Woodlands*, published in August by The Forestry Commission, shows that for every 100ha of coniferous woodland harvested in 2006, only just over half has been restocked with productive conifer species.

This failure to restock, combined with a historically low level of new planting, threatens the longer-term future of the forestry and timber sector, and confirms the concerns of many that restocking was simply not keeping pace with increased levels of harvesting.

“A small reduction in area is to be expected as traditional 20th century plantations are replaced by more diverse, multi-purpose forests, but the scale of these losses presents a serious risk to the future of one of the UK’s few sustainable and low-carbon industries,” said Andrew Heald of Confor.

The report shows some of the harvested forest is being replanted with broadleaf species, but large areas are being left unplanted as open ground or left fallow for long periods. Whilst the report is described by some as “a snapshot” it highlights the lack of robust data on restocking, and raises questions about the long-term timber forecasts.

Alastair Kerr, Director General of the Wood Panel Industries Federation (WPIF) said: “The emergence of a major UK forestry and wood processing sector, which is internationally competitive, has been a considerable success story, playing a key role in meeting carbon reduction targets and enabling the UK panel industry to supply up to two-thirds of the domestic demand for its product types. It is vital to the long-term investment and growth of processing industries that the decline in domestic commercial softwood planting is addressed as a matter of priority.”

In September, leading forestry NGO WWF also published a report warning that UK busi-

nesses face a timber supply crunch as leading countries that supply wood products to the UK, face running out of timber in the next few years.

The supply crisis has been exacerbated by the failure of the UK and devolved governments to meet planting targets. In 2015, only 122ha of new woodland (all broadleaves) were planted in Wales compared to a target of 2000ha, whilst in recent years the Assembly Government has converted nearly 20,000ha of productive conifer woodlands to either broadleaves or open ground.

In England, the latest official statistics show that only 546ha were planted between April 2015 and March 2016 – less than 30% of the annual target needed to meet a manifesto commitment by the Conservative Party to plant 11m trees by 2020.

## Scotland takes lead

In Scotland, the Government has set ambitious woodland creation targets and Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity, has stressed his commitment to hit the targets and help secure the future of this vital rural industry.

Confor has called on the UK, Welsh and Northern Irish Governments to match this commitment from the Scottish Government and act urgently to ensure all harvested areas on both public and private lands are fully and appropriately restocked and that the UK’s valuable softwood resource is protected, as part of the future sustainable development of the UK.

Andrew Heald said: “Governments across the UK have strong international commitments to sustainable forest management. It is time that commitment is also focused on forest management a little closer to home – by increasing tree cover, ensuring adequate planting of productive timber crops and assuring the continued success of the forestry and forest products sector.”

## Consultation open on future of Scottish forestry

The Scottish Government has opened a consultation, *The Future of Forestry in Scotland*, which would complete the full devolution of forestry to Scotland and update the Forestry Act of 1967.

The consultation, which runs to 09 November, has three elements:

- Proposal for new organisational arrangements for Forestry Commission Scotland;
- Questions regarding future cross-border co-ordination on forestry;
- Questions on how legislation should be framed to deliver the new arrangements.

Introducing the consultation, Fergus Ewing - Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity, said: “The Scottish forestry sector is a success story and makes a major contribution to our rural economy – a recent report calculated this to be close to £1bn GVA annually, supporting 25,000 jobs.

“I am keen for us to maximise the contribution forestry makes to Scotland’s rural economy. Completing the devolution of forestry is an important part of this ambition.”

Confor has argued that the sector would benefit from a continued strong core of professional civil servants within the Scottish Government devoted to forestry with the expertise to understand and support modern forestry practices.

It has also made strong representation regarding the significant productive forest resource managed by the Forestry Commission. This resource is a key asset that has helped support the significant growth of wood processing in Scotland. The consultation recognises the vital importance for a guaranteed future timber supply, which Confor’s Chief Executive Stuart Goodall said was vital to drive investment and confidence.

“The private forestry sector now provides a majority of the wood consumed in Scotland by mills, but the productive woodland managed by the Forestry Commission is also very important,” said Mr Goodall. “It is good to see that Fergus Ewing recognises this and the consultation makes clear that future wood supply will be guaranteed.

“We are very encouraged by the enthusiastic approach of Mr Ewing, who has consistently stressed the need to raise the level of tree planting since he came into post. He has taken a very practical approach and we are already starting to see results.”

**Preliminary field survey estimates of restocking within areas of apparent woodlands in transition and new clearfell identified in 2006 imagery.**

	Clearfell observed in 2006		
	Area of original clearfell (000 ha)	SE%	% of original clearfell area
<b>Restocked area</b>			
<b>All conifers</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>51</b>
Sitka spruce	42.9	4	39
Larches	4.3	14	4
Other conifers	8.1	12	7
<b>All broadleaves</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>
Birches	11.3	10	10
Willow	1.4	16	1
Other broadleaves	6.7	13	6
<b>All species</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Non-restocked area</b>			
Woodlands in transition	24.6	8	23
Open area	9.3		8
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.9</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>109.0</b>		<b>100</b>

Confor is helping to organise a seminar on the consultation on 03 November in Edinburgh. Email [liz@confor.org.uk](mailto:liz@confor.org.uk) or call 0131 240 1410 if you would like to attend.

[www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/08/1075/331855](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/08/1075/331855)





# Speaking up and speaking out!

## Communicating our sector

Confor has had its busiest and best-ever year in terms of sharing the forestry and timber industry's compelling message with a wider audience – and engaging politicians and other interest groups. At all times, the primary focus is on how this communication and engagement reinforces Confor's leadership role and delivers tangible member benefits.

### Short film



Our short film telling the story of the industry and the people who work in it - Our Forests, Our People - was launched at the end of January 2016 and has been seen by around 4500 people. It was followed with four shorter films of around two minutes: Forestry and People; Forestry and the Environment; Forestry and the Economy; and Forestry and Climate Change.

### Animation



Animating Forestry was launched in March to tell the story of the connection between local, productive forests and the wooden materials we all take for granted. The animation has proved extremely popular across a range of platforms and with the support of sustainability website Green.TV, it has had almost 50,000 views. Confor has now had a request to translate the film into both Spanish and Catalan for wider dissemination.

### Publications



Confor produced reports before and after the vote to leave the European Union, The Referendum: seeing the EU for the trees and The Impact of leaving the European Union on the UK forestry sector, later re-published as a report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry (APPGF) as Shaping a post-EU future for the UK forestry sector.

Other publications in 2016 have included: Forestry and Flooding; Gender and Diversity in Forestry in Scotland; and Growing a Resilient Scotland (the manifesto for the Scottish elections). All publications are available on the Confor website.

### Media coverage



Significant media coverage has been gained around these publications across trade and mainstream media, including a slot on BBC's prime-time programme The One Show making the connection between planting more trees to provide timber to support a major industry.

Confor's media coverage has included regular articles in The Scotsman and Scotland on Sunday and a broad range of national media (including The Sunday Times), increased coverage in the farming press and local media across Britain.

### Website and Social media



Confor's new website is one of four finalists of the TTJ awards for best website. And we will be launching more exciting web features in the future!

Social media coverage has been ramped up, with much greater engagement on Twitter and a step-up in the use of Linked In, combined with constant member communication.



**Confor**  
Promoting forestry and wood



# Businesses must attract 'widest range of employees'

In a seminar to discuss diversity and gender in the forestry sector in Scotland it was told businesses will suffer unless they attract the widest range of employees available. The event was organised by Confor to follow up on the findings of its report *Gender & Diversity in Forestry in Scotland*.

Attendees included forest managers, educationalists and speakers from Women in Agriculture, the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland and Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths).

Jo O'Hara, Head of Forestry Commission Scotland, said forestry was in a renaissance, and changing for the better in terms of diversity.

Dr Eleanor Harris, joint organiser of the event and author of the initial report, said: "Encouraging more women into forestry is not just a task for women; there is also a very important role for senior men as champions of early-career female foresters. It's about challenging the culture."

Andrew Heald, Technical Director of Confor, who organised the event with Dr Harris, said: "If we don't address this issue, there is a real cost for businesses in terms of lost employees and lack of resilience."

Elizabeth Barron-Majerik, Head of the School of Forestry at Inverness College UHI, will report back on the workshop she ran at the event. This will feed into a report by Dr Harris, who said: "The energy and connections generated

“ **More diversity means more ideas, means more products, means more growth.**  
Talat Yaqoob of Equate Scotland

in the room are certainly not going to go away. I can't wait to see how this network begins to develop and shape the future of the industry.”

The report is available on the Confor website under publications [www.confor.org.uk/resources/publications/confor-publications/](http://www.confor.org.uk/resources/publications/confor-publications/) For information about the work of the group, email [eleanormharris@gmail.com](mailto:eleanormharris@gmail.com)

For all the latest news go to

[www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk) click on News and then Latest News.

## Innovation fund re-opens

Confor has urged the industry to apply for Woodland Creation Planning Grants after the Forestry Innovation Fund re-opened to applications. After a very positive initial response to funding being made available for WCPFs, Phase 2 was opened on 05 September by Forestry Commission England.

Chris Davies MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry, who pressed for the fund to be re-opened, said: "The fund has done an important job in de-risking the early application process for creating new woodland - and the number of schemes put forward showed the potential demand out there."

When the fund first opened (December 2015 - February 2016), an initial tranche of up to £200,000 to fund WCPGs saw ten planting schemes totalling in excess of 1000 hectares put forward.

Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive of Confor, said: "The opening of Phase 2 is very welcome. The schemes coming forward thanks to this fund can make a real difference to the amount of planting in England and lift it from its current historic low - and in doing that, stimulate rural employment and help with climate change targets."

Information on the WCPG, including the application form, is available on the Forestry Commission's website.





# Confor: Lobbying for forestry

## Confor has stepped up its political engagement over the last year, with tangible benefits for members.

- Rory Stewart, then Forestry Minister, announced the launch of the £1m Forestry Innovation Fund at a conference organised by Confor at Westminster in November 2015. Confor is planning another Westminster event with new minister, Dr Thérèse Coffey.
- Phase 1 of the Forestry Innovation Fund opened in December 2015, offering planning grants to help de-risk planting applications - with more than 1,000 hectares of planting schemes put forward. Phase 2 of the fund opened for business in September 2016 after Confor and the APPGF highlighted the success of Phase 1.
- Lobbying by Confor and the chair of the APPGF, Chris Davies MP, has led to an inquiry into forestry by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee, starting this month. [Oct]

- The APPG on Forestry has been revitalised, with Confor bringing together politicians and a range of interest groups to discuss major issues, including the role of forestry in tackling flooding and the impact of Brexit on the sector. The reports produced before and after the vote were discussed at meetings of the APPGF and Confor is now working with experts to identify how the sector sees the shape of forestry funding and policy after Brexit.
- Key recommendations in Confor's manifesto for the Scottish Parliament elections were picked up in the SNP manifesto - and are now being taken forward by SNP as the largest party in the Scottish Parliament.
- Confor is working closely with Scotland's new Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for forestry, Fergus Ewing, who is determined to meet planting targets. Mr Ewing has appointed a former Chief Planner to look at the processes which slow down planting applications.
- Confor worked with the Scottish Government ahead of the launch of a consultation on The Future of Forestry in Scotland, running from 31 August to 9 November. The consultation focuses on the economic contribution of forestry in Scotland, a result of Confor constantly stressing that forestry and timber is a £1 billion industry employing 25,000 people.
- Confor held a very successful forestry conference in Edinburgh in March 2016 and is supporting a seminar on The Future of Forestry consultation in November.
- Confor also maintains very close links with the devolved administrations in Cardiff and Belfast and is working on strategies to drive up planting in both jurisdictions.



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# APF 2016 breaks all records

APF 2016, the UK's largest forestry, woodland, trees and timber show, which took place on 15-17 September was the most successful yet and broke all previous records.

Exhibitor numbers, at 315, were 15% up on the previous 2014 record. Visitor numbers smashed the previous record by 4,500, up 25% on the 2014 total, to over 22,000.

Exhibition Secretary, Ian Millward, commented "The APF Team are delighted with the success of the show. We have had very positive feedback from exhibitors and visitors alike. Many exhibitors reported doing record business and

some of our first time smaller exhibitors were amazed at the business they did. Many have already requested about booking for next time. The APF would also like to thank all our sponsors Husqvarna, A W Jenkinson, Tilhill Forestry, Euroforest, Blount UK, Forestry Journal, The Forestry Commission, Haix, Kubota, Komatsu, Först, Arbortec and Timberwolf for their support in making the show what it is."

## APF 2018

will take place on the same site at Ragley Estate on 20/21/22 September 2018. All 2016 exhibitors will be offered first refusal on the same site they had this time. Details and booking forms will be available in April 2017.





# Opportunities and threats in a post-Brexit world

## Leading opinion-formers join panel for APF debate

A full house gathered at this year's APF to listen to and quiz a prestigious panel on the topical issue of forestry and rural policy and support in a post-Brexit UK.

The panel was chaired by Confor Chief Executive Stuart Goodall and featured Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of the Forestry Commission, Ross Murray, President of CLA and Andrea Murray, Head of Policy at the NFU. Refreshments were kindly sponsored by Pryor & Rickett.

Questions had been submitted beforehand and these were intermingled with comments and questions from the floor.

### New opportunities in a Brave New World

The panel was uniformly clear that Brexit would herald major changes for the forestry and wider rural sector, and that it provided real opportunities for forestry and wood processing. Ross Murray talked about a Brave New World with new opportunities for land-based industries, especially those that provided both economic and environmental benefits.

The UK's exiting from CAP would provide the opportunity to take decisions "on this side of the channel". Andrea Murray highlighted the opportunity to "blow apart" the artificial split between Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 funding under CAP, between direct subsidy payments and rural development/environment.

There was common recognition that the levels of funding which currently go into CAP are unlikely to continue beyond 2020. The CAP provided a focus and legislative base for agricultural support, but when that disappeared there would be difficult questions about why farmers should continue to receive support when there was so much pressure to spend money on the NHS, education, infrastructure, etc. Andrea Murray noted that farmers would have to work hard to develop

“All rural interest groups will need to work hard to present their ideas to politicians and finding common ground will be crucial for success.”

and communicate an argument for future support as they became exposed to unprecedented scrutiny.

The point was made that all sectors would need to work hard to present their messages and ideas to politicians, civil servants and the wider public, and that there was much common ground between the groups represented on the panel.

All panel members highlighted a potential greater focus on public funding for public benefits, though some groups and commentators are likely to value and highlight non-market benefits more than others. A fundamental challenge would be how to help support profitable activity on the land, wherever the funding came from.

### A Kingdom 'United' on agricultural policy

There was an interesting discussion around whether Brexit would result in a common agricultural policy across the UK. The speakers suggested that such an approach would help maintain some form of level-playing field across the four countries, even though there would be pressures in each country to re-target funding.

While devolved administrations may naturally seek to develop local solutions, rejecting a UK-wide framework may undermine the argument

to retain the current financial arrangements whereby Scotland, Wales and Ireland receive a higher share of CAP money than their respective populations would suggest, and considerably higher than the amounts allocated for general spending under the existing 'Barnett formula'.

A ring-fenced pot of funding for farming (and forestry) may also be easier to secure if there was a UK-wide set of guiding principles for farming that allowed for 'subtle differences' between countries. If there was no ring-fenced pot, then the panel warned that current funding could easily be lost.

### Re-thinking biosecurity on the British Isles

The particular issue of plant health was raised with questions submitted beforehand and from the floor.

In response to a challenge that post-Brexit the UK should recognise its status as an island and take far stronger measures to restrict imports of living plant material, there was strong support for a significant 'beefing-up' of checks on imports and greater controls to protect against importing pests and disease. This could include requiring exporters to take more responsibility for ensuring the safety of exports to the UK.

Harry Studholme responded in detail to a question regarding action to tackle imports of firewood that could act as a pathway for Emerald Ash Borer. It is estimated that large volumes of potentially infected firewood is being imported from Eastern Europe where this particular pest is widespread. Sir Harry noted that the FC had re-targeted resources to tackle pests and diseases. It was suggested, however, that that might not be sufficient and that more pressure should be put on the UK government to provide further resources.

In summing up, the chair reflected the audience view that it had been a very interesting and informative debate, but that of course there was still much to do before any new policy emerged from government.

“No time should be wasted in getting our arguments over.”





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APF  
2016







## Forum makes an impact

The Timber Transport Forum shared a stand at the APF with James Jones & Sons, Michelin Tyres and Tireboss, providing a cohort of interest and expertise on lower impact timber vehicles. The James Jones lorry is state of the art with tyre pressure control on every axle, maxi tyres on the trailer, an overhead wire detector on the crane and a Navman tracking system that can highlight risk factors to drivers as they reach a forest site. Michelin were re-grooving tyres onsite and discussing the finer points of tyre technology with a steady stream of timber hauliers. Tireboss, one of the companies offering tyre pressure control systems, were on hand with information on system capacity and the costs of fitting.

New timber lorries were scattered throughout the APF site and nearly all featured lower impact wheel configurations and Tireboss or Bigfoot tyre pressure control systems. Also evident were tyre pressure maintenance systems. These can technically adjust the pressure of each tyre but they have a low flow rate and are designed to

maintain tyre pressure rather than alter pressures significantly in real time.

Discussion on the stand was well-informed with most hauliers aware of the 'Tread Softly' agenda and considering investment decisions in the knowledge that there is a growing demand for lower impact haulage. It will however be vital that where contracts require lower impact solutions, the mechanisms are in place to monitor and evidence their use, allowing hauliers who invest in the kit to demonstrate compliance and compete favourably in the haulage market.

With the increased use of in-forest chippers there was interest in the idea of bulk chip carriers which can negotiate forest roads and fragile public roads. While there is undoubtedly a niche market for lower impact chip lorries, what proportion of the fleet would be appropriate is yet to be defined.

The Loglift stand offered a vision of the future with a remote crane operation system. The driver sits in the lorry cab operating crane joysticks. He wears 3d goggles giving 240 degree vision around the loading arm.

## Demo in a class of its own

Two local schools braved APF 2016 and went away with beaming smiles, hoarse voices and goodie bags and teacher resources courtesy of AW Jenkinson, Mitsubishi and Forestry Commission.

Industry volunteers ably guided the groups around the show, following a range of routes, explaining the forest cycle, answering plenty of tricky questions and allowing the children to each complete a FC Discovery Trail booklet as they went. These have gone back to school and will hopefully be used in further work. Demonstrations in the craft area also allowed some hands-on time too.

After lunch the pole climbers in the main arena were given some extra support from the children – let's hope their encouraging calls gave the climbers additional impetus.

Roman Way First School is now the proud owner of this beautiful Eagle – they watched it being carved in the thirty minute competition and their teacher rushed back to bid for it in the auction. Neil Johnson,



teacher at Roman Way commented "The carving of the eagle has pride of place in our outside classroom and the whole school have enjoyed looking at and touching it!"

*Picture: Richard Palmer, AW Jenkinson*

### Rhys Thomas wins FISA quiz

The FISA chainsaw quiz ran over the three days of the show, culminating in those sheets scoring over 25 out of the total 28 available marks, being put in a draw. The winner was drawn out at the end of the last show day by FISA CEO Gillian Clark. Lucky winner was Rhys Thomas.





## Harvester powers on in challenging conditions

Confor was approached by a representative of Logset at the APF and kindly invited FTN to Aberfoyle to view Logset's impressive new 12H GTE Hybrid harvester. This big-wheeled harvester with its integrated diesel engine and electric motor is marketed as Efficient, Economic and

good for the Environment.

A typical Aberfoyle day, ie pouring rain, provided the conditions for an impressive demonstration of harvesting on steep ground. On-lookers were impressed by the stability of the machine as it coped with the challenging terrain as well as its power through the crane. The hybrid engine provides the ability to adapt to changed power requirements and deliver lower fuel consumption, emissions and noise level.

The numbers provided are fuel savings of up to 10-30% compared to traditional technology, and 15-30% lower CO<sub>2</sub> and smaller particle emissions.

The hybrid engine is designed to eliminate the power peaks that are normally required from the engine, with the benefit that a stable engine performance saves significant amounts of fuel, prolongs the engine lifetime and lowers maintenance costs.

The 28.5 inch wheels provide ground clearance, helpful when the stumps are a little higher than desired, and contribute to a more comfortable ride. This is a seriously impressive machine.

*Editor's note: FTN welcomes invitations to view new technology. Please get in touch.*



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### CONFOR SIGNED UP 60 NEW MEMBERS AT APF. CONFIRMED SO FAR:

Arber Forest & Garden, Abergavenny  
Arbor Services Ltd, Somerset  
Atkinson Vos, Lancaster  
Brampton Valley Training, Buckinghamshire  
Clive Francis Arb Services, Abergavenny  
Coed y Cardi Sawmill, Ceredigion  
Contract Energy Services, Somerset  
Ebdon Firewood Ltd, Somerset  
Fordaq, Brussels  
Forest Machine Services Ltd, Northumberland

Forest Plans, West Yorkshire  
H G Verney & Son Ltd, Herefordshire  
Helix Agencies Ltd, Huddersfield  
John Shipp Forestry Contractor, Essex  
Land Logic Timber, Somerset  
Longbow Forestry, Cumbria  
Malwa Forest AB, Sweden  
Oakleaf Forestry, Co. Armagh  
People and Land Ltd, West Lothian  
R Walker Timber Merchant, Co Durham  
Roebuck Forestry Services, Cumbria  
S R Forestry, Hampshire  
Shillofad Ltd, Gloucestershire  
Sylvan Resources Ltd, Shropshire  
Treeworks, Perthshire  
Western Bio Energy Ltd, South Wales  
Alastair Gow, Aberdeenshire  
Amanda Calvert, Inverness-shire  
Andrew Stockton, Northamptonshire

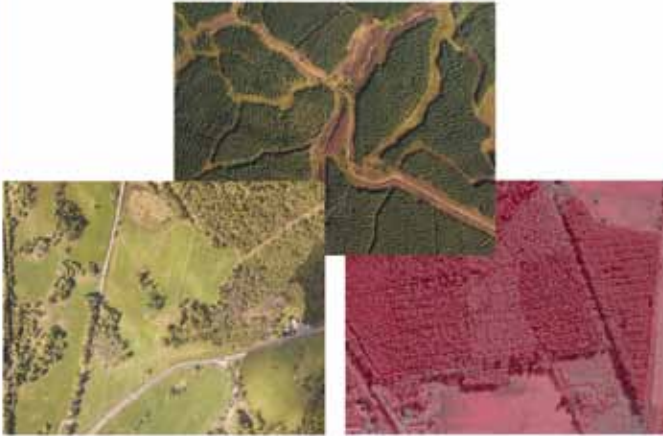
Annabel Martin, Inverness-shire  
Anthony Milner, Leicester  
Callum Rushton, Lancashire  
Daniel Ackerley, Chester  
David Pennefather, Hampshire  
Dewi Roebuck, North Wales  
Ewan Ryan, Monmouthshire  
Fiona Andrews, Essex  
Gary Stoker, Cumbria  
Hannah Stirling, Roxburghshire  
Hugh Jones, Ceredigion  
Jeremy Hunter, Berkshire  
Kate & Chris Jones, Powys  
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# From steel band to top-of-the-market chain

## Husqvarna takes chain manufacturing to a new level, reports Stef Kaiser

On 30 August, X-CUT, the first Husqvarna-manufactured saw chain was unveiled at the Husqvarna factory in Sweden. Husqvarna kindly invited a selection of trade press professionals from across Europe to take part in what was an exciting and well-hosted two-day adventure aimed at giving insight into a fascinating four-year product design process that led to the creation of a new league of chains to maximise output for loggers.

The performance of a chainsaw is highly dependent (some say up to 50%) on the quality of the chain which is why Husqvarna has decided to manufacture its own saw chains, giving users the opportunity to increase productivity with a chain designed to maximise the performance of Husqvarna chainsaws.

### 'Cutting-edge' (literally) computer simulation in product design

The R&D department has taken the chain design to a next level, by using computer simulations of dynamic forces acting on the chain when in use, to digitally analyse the points where most stresses act on the chain. This helped to fine-tune geometries for increased durability and cutting efficiency.

Husqvarna claims to be the first manufacturer to come up with such a product-specific simulation, which in itself took two weeks to design.

### A billion Krona investment

The announcement of an unusually high investment of one billion Swedish Krona in the chain factory was made in 2013. As there are no standard equipment and processes for building chains, Husqvarna's manufacturing machines had to be custom-designed and built, with direct input from suppliers.

The factory employs over 100 people and is strategically located beside the chainsaw R&D department. All parts of the saw chain are manufactured on-site, from raw steel to finished product, reducing dependency on external suppliers and securing quality. The factory is designed to be environmental impact neutral, and uses state of the art technology to recycle both chemicals and energy.

## What makes a good chain?

Displaying an impressive amount of passion for the product design process, lead engineer Per Carlback explained what technical aspects Husqvarna focussed on to produce a chain that excels in performance, durability and overall quality.



### Long-lasting sharpness

Husqvarna designers have improved the geometry of the cutters and refined the microstructure of the steel and the thickness of the chrome layers to give the X-CUT chain a sharpness out-of-the-box that lasts considerably longer before filing is needed. In lab conditions, the chain's sharpness lasts 10% longer than a comparable Husqvarna H30 chain.



### High durability

A chain turns about 250 times per second and immense forces act on it during this movement. Reducing wear on the cutting system and therefore increasing durability is a major challenge for chain manufacturers. Husqvarna has developed state-of-the-art processes including tumbling, heat treatment, induction hardening, and shot peening, reducing the need for service and downtime.



### Low stretch

The X-CUT chain is pre-stretched at the factory, which increases the amount of time the chain can be used before re-tensioning is needed, hence reducing downtime. This reduced need for adjustments decreases the risk of damaging the cutting system due to a slacking chain. The invention of a pre-stretching machine for the factory in itself was an R&D challenge.



### Good overall cutting efficiency

Engineers have worked hard to create a chain that works faster and smoother. Not only is a well-balanced cutter angle essential, but also the thickness of the chrome layer on the chain surface is key to cutting efficiency. For optimal performance, the layer should be between six and ten microns. Another factor is the careful handling of the cutter in factory before the chain is boxed.







Above: the author testing the X-CUT. A picture for everyone's entertainment. Although psychological bias after a passionately presented marketing morning might have been a factor, even to us first-time chainsawers among the event attendees the value of the new saw was immediately evident. I tested the X-CUT first – and was surprised that only minimal force was needed to pull the chain down. I assumed that chainsawing was more effortless than I had previously thought, but when using the previous model for comparison, significantly more force was needed to get through the log. Coming from me, this is of course no more than anecdotal comment...

Picture: Mark Andrews

## Market niche and price

The new Husqvarna X-CUT SP33G chain will replace the current H30 chain. This .325" 1.3mm narrow kerf chain is used widely in the UK by occasional users such as landowners and farmers and this will be the target user group for this chain. The SP33G

will be fitted on all 400 series saws as standard, with the exception of the 455.

Recommended price for the X-CUT SP33G saw chain in UK will be £24.00 for 13 inches, £27.00 for 15 inches and £29.00 for 18 inches.

## Chain specifications

### General

Chain type .....Semi-chisel  
 Chain type variant.....Pixel (narrow kerf)  
 Pitch .....0.325"  
 Gauge.....1,3mm (0.050")  
 Drive link type.....Bumper drive link  
 Kickback reduction .....Low kickback bumper  
 No. of drive links (DL).....56 / 64 / 72

Recommended file: 4.8 mm; round file

### Compatibility

Bar Length 13" (56DL)  
 15"  
 (64DL)  
 18" (72DL)

### Chainsaw models

Husqvarna 435  
 Husqvarna 440  
 Husqvarna 445  
 Husqvarna 450



## Branding: learning from the masters

We at Confor have long been pointing out the importance of 'corporate appearance' to shape public perceptions of our sector. Of course, Husqvarna is a company with a huge turnover and lots of money to pour into marketing. Nevertheless, I was deeply impressed by how the money was spent to create an image of the logging sector that is young, innovative, exciting and diverse. Their brand ambassadors – professionals hand-picked from around the world – truly convince by presenting themselves in a con-

fidant, professional, passionate and very natural way. The inclusion of female loggers in the H-team, such as arborists Ann Elisabeth or Jo Hedger (picture), does not come across as forced in any way.

Looking at the high-quality marketing material and the corporate culture and look they have created, I doubt that any young person looking for career options would ever perceive the logging sector as anything other than exciting. Good opportunity to learn from the big players!

# Increasing connectivity in forestry

## How can technology and innovation support a sustainable cause?

We have all seen cases where technology is introduced just “because we can”. True innovation doesn’t push to make use of new technological discoveries; it happens at the intersection of technical possibilities, business opportunity and, very importantly, customer needs. We don’t want technology for the sake of it.

In forestry, we need technological innovation that supports a sustainable business case.

At the same time of the X-CUT launch in Sweden, Husqvarna held a workshop to get first industry feedback on some of the product designs their R&D department has in the pipeline. The idea was to get a better understanding of what future customers of tech products really want and need; the outcome of the workshop should help Husqvarna decide which projects to

prioritise for development. The workshop was led by Director of Group Connectivity Dr. Petra Sundström who researches man-machine interaction and is keen to help Husqvarna lead the way in futureproofing forestry in the age of digitalisation.

### Technology designed for humans and businesses

There is a whole arsenal of ideas out there that are 100% technically feasible but fail to be developed or adopted by a sector due to either a lack of income generation potential or, simply because the cost of a new product or the hassle of learning how to use it exceeds the perceived benefit for the client. For example, most of us have been reluctant to give Google Glasses a seri-

ous try because they don’t cater for our need for a calmer, less overwhelming daily environment.

There are a range of challenges to the adoption of new technologies in the British forestry sector. One reason is the small scale of operations compared to other countries; however, there is also a certain reluctance to change traditional ways of doing things: a good example is digital measuring of road side timber stacks and the feeding of data into centralised systems that track the timber from tree to sawmill.

Propositions of connectivity systems that, in theory, help us streamline communication between workers and along the supply chain, can fail for often over-looked reasons: apps or intelligent devices may not be intuitive enough or not suitable for the technology needs of a specific user group. In some cases, communication technology will only work if all “participants” are equipped with a device. For example, simple systems to improve communication during felling operations might only work if all workers, project managers and even clients adopt the system. This may mean that a gradual adoption of the technology might not be meaningful.


Many of “connectivity” products require internet access which could be a challenge in remote forest locations. However, often what is desired is connectivity within a working team, for which Internet would not be required. For internet-reliant apps (eg real-time price information), connectivity will become less and less a problem, due to the use of drones, satellites etc. If there are a strong business case and customer demand, these technicalities will be easily solved.

## In what areas can digital technologies support our sector?


During the workshop, the R&D department presented us with some ideas for specific products that could be developed, including the technical requirements, the business opportunities, the customer needs covered and the “connectivity level” of the product (ie how a product is linked to other softwares or devices).


The attending journalists and forestry professionals from across Europe were then asked to brainstorm about the customer needs in their sector and come up with specific product ideas they would want to have developed.


Areas where technology could be meaningful are:


 **Work process support**  
Digital work orders to facilitate coordination of tasks and billing (could include intelligent equipment, that automatically tell you when work is completed)


Sensors for precision planting or cutting of logs


 **Work process mapping**  
Interesting for planting or harvesting operations: mapping of areas that have been harvested, of differences in productivity; guidance for harvesting operators based on work progress and even client input.

 **Instruction and knowledge**  
Equipment can give instruction on what combination of parts should be used (in a chain saw for example)


 **Services and sales**  
Tell operators where spare parts can be found at a certain time. Or where a certain service can be found.

 **Safety**  
Multipurpose harness belt with different possibilities. Intelligent equipment could detect, for example, that operator is lying in unusual position and could alert medical services. Or equipment could alert if not used in safe manner (eg leaning of tractor in slope, angle of chainsaw)

 **Theft**  
Location of equipment / traceability. Software key on phone to make equipment work.

 **Communication**  
Network connecting people and different devices and pieces of equipment in forest and/or beyond.

Connecting devices: eg bluetooth headphones for communication within work team in forest, intelligent watches that allow to answer the phone without having access to it while wearing safety equipment etc.

 **Information hubs**  
An example are apps for real-time and client-tailored market information.





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# Digital option for estimating forest growth

Robert Matthews, Ewan Mackie and Suzanne Martin of Forest Research introduce Forest Yield, the digital version of the forest yield tables

## Predicting forest growth using yield tables

The growth rate of a forest depends on many variables including the species planted, site conditions, rotation length and silvicultural system. In Britain it is usually described in terms of 'yield class'; this is a measurement of the amount of solid stem wood added to an area of woodland in cubic meters per hectare per year ( $m^3 ha^{-1} yr^{-1}$ ). The yield class can be estimated for a species by measuring the top height of the stand of trees and using this measurement and the age of the trees to find their predicted yield class in a table.

Yield tables are one of the foundations of forest management as they provide information about the patterns of tree growth and potential productivity that can be expected in forest stands of different tree species, with varying growth rates, when managed in different ways. The tables are used by forest managers when making decisions about the future management of a forest – whether it is an individual stand of trees or a whole estate. They are also applied when forecasting future levels of production, when making commitments to supply timber markets, and for planning and scheduling forest operations.

## What is Forest Yield?

In April of this year, Forestry Commission published the Forest Yield software package. The software is an important replacement for the forest yield tables previously published in the Forestry Commission Booklet 48, *Yield models for forest management*. Based on scientific modelling of tree growth by Forest Research, the digital version of Forest Yield provides easy access to yield tables for around 150 tree species currently growing in Britain. It is accompanied by a user manual and a handbook that explains in accessible language, the basic theory of forest growth and yield, and its practical application in British forestry. Measures of forest growth such as top height, cumulative volume production and mean annual increment are all explained, as are the vital statistics of yield class and particularly General Yield Class. Forest practitioners, researchers and students will all find it useful and it is possible that even some seasoned foresters may find that they discover something new about these fundamental subjects in forest management.

The Forest Yield tables present values for all the main growth and yield variables for a sequence of stand ages (see Figure 1). Within the software it is easy to display these General Yield Class 'curves' for tree species (see Figure

Species	Yield class	Thinning treatment	Initial spacing	Stand area
Sitka spruce	12	Intermediate	2.0	1.00

Age yrs	Top ht m	Trees /ha	Mean dbh cm	BA m³/ha	Mean vol m³	Vol m³/ha	Trees /ha	Mean dbh cm	BA m³/ha	Mean vol m³	Vol m³/ha	CUMULATIVE PRODUCTION BA m³/ha	Vol m³/ha	Vol m³/ha /yr
20	7.300	2309	11.450	23.775	0.029	65.900	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	23.775	65.900	3.295
21	7.834	2309	11.956	25.923	0.034	79.260	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	25.906	79.260	3.774
22	8.368	2296	12.473	28.053	0.040	92.620	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	28.037	92.620	4.210
23	8.902	2284	12.972	30.184	0.046	105.98	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	30.169	105.98	4.608
24	9.436	2272	13.457	32.315	0.053	119.34	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	32.300	119.34	4.973
25	9.970	2260	13.930	34.445	0.059	132.70	799	12.210	9.351	0.053	42.000	34.431	132.70	5.308
26	10.484	1450	15.417	27.067	0.074	107.20	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	36.418	149.20	5.738
27	10.998	1450	15.972	29.054	0.085	123.70	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	38.404	165.70	6.137
28	11.512	1450	16.510	31.040	0.097	140.20	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	40.391	182.20	6.507
29	12.026	1450	17.030	33.027	0.108	156.70	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	42.378	198.70	6.852

Figure 1. Forest Yield screenshot showing an example yield table window showing annualised values

Figure 2 (right) Forest Yield screenshot showing General Yield Class curves window

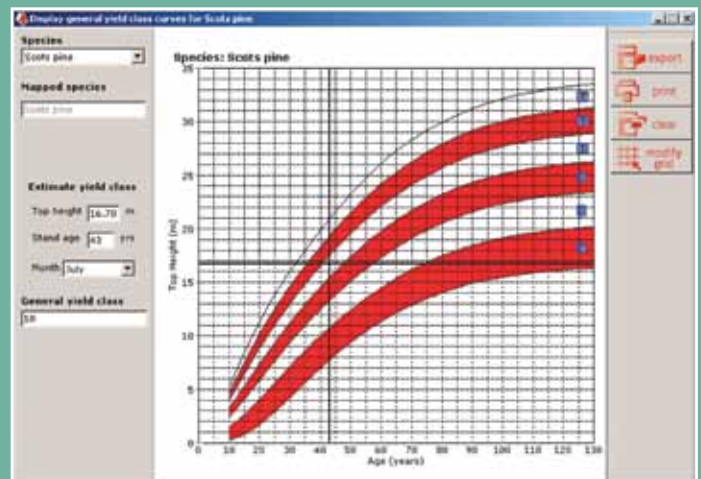


Figure 3 (below right) Forest Yield screenshot showing yield tables selection window

1st thin delay	1st thin type	1st thin age	2nd thin age	Max MAI age	Sub thin type	Late thin age	Late thin cycle
0 years	INTERMED	17 years	22 years	40 years	INTERMED	N/A	N/A

2), and to calculate yield class when the user provides information on the species, top height and age of the trees in question. The accurate reporting of yield class directly from measurements should prove a welcome feature, although some diehard practitioners may lament the passing of the days when it was necessary to squint at a small chart of top height curves aided by a ruler!

## How can I find the best yield table?

Most of the tables in the software are the same as those originally published in Forestry Com-

mission Booklet 48. A yield table is selected that is most suitable for the situation being considered, based on combination of tree species, yield class, initial (planting) spacing and management prescription (generally consisting of a thinning regime). This process has been made much easier in the Forest Yield software, the yield table selection screen helps guide the user to the most suitable yield table, by narrowing down the various options available as species, yield class, spacing and management prescription are selected in turn (see Figure 3). The

*Continued on p24*

## TECHNOLOGY

*Continued from p23*

Forest Yield software also allows the user to set some preferences when displaying yield tables. For example, it is possible to display yield results for every year, not just at five year intervals, as presented in the in Booklet 48. Yield tables can also be displayed for thinned stands, showing results for the main crop either before or after thinning.

While it is not possible to produce bespoke yield tables for all possible tree species grown in Britain, if a yield table for a species is not available, the Forest Yield software can be used to automatically select a model for the “nearest suitable” recommended tree species.

The user can print any of the yield tables using the software, or can export them to a range of commonly used file formats, including Microsoft Excel.

### What else is new in the Forest Yield software?

Forest Yield includes new yield tables for Sitka spruce, which can be used as an alternative to the originals. These are based on the preliminary outputs of a dynamic growth and yield model developed by Forest Research, which is currently in use as a research tool. The new tables cover a wider range of initial spacings and thinning prescriptions, so may be particularly useful for application to Sitka spruce stands managed according to prescriptions not covered in the original yield tables. The new tables also provide improved predictions for unthinned



Forest Yield now includes yield tables for Sitka spruce

stands thanks to a revised model of tree survival and mortality.

The old Booklet 48 publication offered very little information on predicted volume assortments - a measure of the proportions of total stand volume falling in different sizes, such as sawlogs and small roundwood, based on top diameter classes. This has been improved in the Forest Yield software, by allowing the user to display volume assortments for all ages in any of the yield tables. The user can even choose the top diameter classes referred to when displaying assortments as one of the options for setting preferences in the software.

Forest Yield (version 1.0) can be downloaded from the Forest Research website (see below) using a unique access code. Individual access codes can be purchased from Forestry Commission Publications for £50 + VAT. The website also gives details of discounts for multiple single-user licences.

The handbook on forest growth is supplied as part of the software package. It is also available as a free pdf, or can be bought separately in hard copy for £19.

For more detailed information on Forest Yield and to download a copy please visit [www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/forestryield](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/forestryield)

## Husqvarna launches VR limbing game

On 31 August, Husqvarna released the first Virtual Reality (VR) chainsaw game - Husqvarna Limberjack. Via Valve's platform Steam, the game is now available to download world-wide for anyone that wants to test their limbing skills and compete for the new world championship title.

With the game, Husqvarna hopes to gather insights on how new technology can play a future role in educating and training users on proper product use as well as generate interest for logging.

“VR limbing combines two extremes, one of the oldest professions in the world together with the newest technology available,” says Lars Strandell, multiple medallist from the bi-annual World Logging Championship. “Husqvarna Limberjack is fun and educational and just like limbing in the real world, technique, precision and speed is crucial for productivity and a good result.”

The game is optimized for HTC Vive and can be downloaded for free on Steam and also available via [www.limberjackvr.com](http://www.limberjackvr.com).





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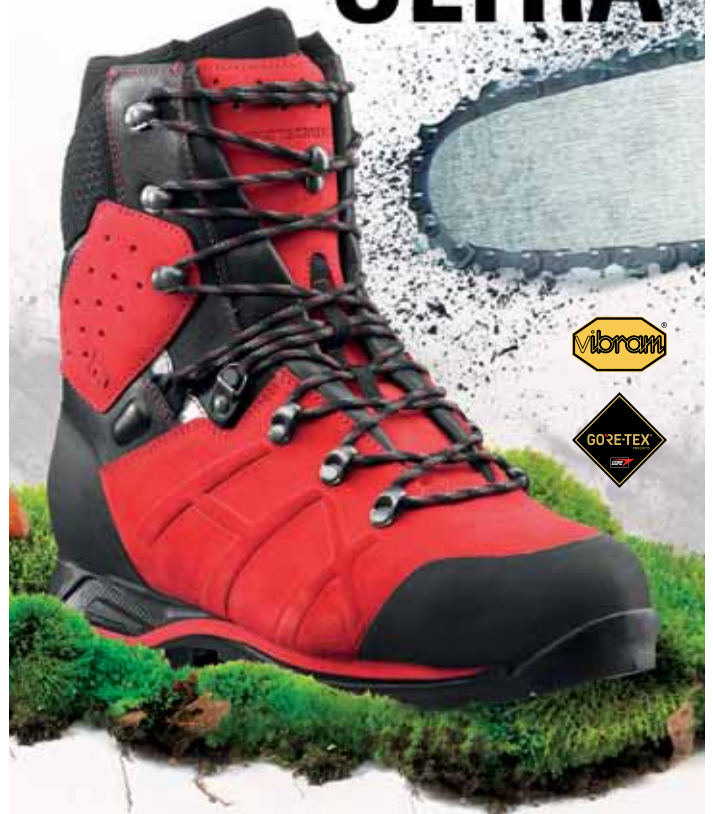
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### WALES

Martin Bishop, Confor national manager for Wales  
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[martin.bishop@confor.org.uk](mailto:martin.bishop@confor.org.uk)



#### WG launches new fund

A new Growth and Prosperity Fund has been launched in late September by Welsh Government to support jobs and business growth

The Fund, part of a 10 point Business Confidence Plan announced by First Minister Carwyn Jones, is split into two tranches with £2m allocated for smaller projects with grants ranging from £5,000 to £25,000 and £3m allocated for larger capital investment projects with grants ranging from £50,000 up to £500,000.

Applications for the small fund are open until January 2017 while expressions of interest for the larger fund will be accepted up to 17 October 2016 when projects representing the best value for money will be invited to apply for funding.

The Fund is open to all SME businesses in Wales and the main aim is to create and safeguard jobs. Priority will be given to businesses looking to export and to companies creating high value jobs paying above the Welsh national average wage."

[www.businesswales.gov.wales](http://www.businesswales.gov.wales)

#### Mini tree felling competition

Confor is sponsoring the competition taking place on 08 October at Glynllifon College. The entry fee is £5, payable on the day.

For more information, contact Richard Siddons 07771 594770 or

[www.confor.org.uk/resources/events](http://www.confor.org.uk/resources/events)

#### Welsh Government questioned over creation of woodland spaces

North Wales Assembly Member Mark Isherwood has called on the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs to respond to Confor's concerns that the Welsh Government's action plan for 10,000 hectares of new woodland creation by 2020 is unlikely to succeed unless obstacles they have highlighted are resolved.

The Cabinet Secretary, Lesley Griffiths, said "I am concerned to hear that there is some concern from the sector, but I'll certainly look into it and will be very happy to meet them."



## RWAS Woodland Competition looking for new sponsors

The RWAS woodland competition has always been a successful event promoting keen competition between entrants with much prestige attributed to the competitors and winners, and, as reported in FTN August, this year's competition was no exception.

It was with great pleasure this year to have Stuart Goodall, Confor Chief Executive, to present the 2016 Woodland Competition Awards on the Tuesday 19 July at another successful summer show. The RWAS also thanks this year's judges, Tim Kirk and Alan Jones, for their diligent work in judging the entries from the counties Anglesey, Caernarfon, Meirionnydd, Denbighshire and Flint.

There was a good entry from the Private Woodland in the above counties but the society did not have any entries from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) who manages the public sector woodlands. This was disappointing as in the past NRW, and Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) before them, have presented a number of well managed and very worthy competitors to the competition.

It was at the 2015 Woodland Awards Ceremony when the NRW Chief Executive Emyr Roberts confirmed that NRW would support the Society's Woodland Competition with entries from the Welsh Government woodland estate (WGWE), when he presented the awards, again, to an entry entirely made up from the private sector from the counties in South Wales. Sadly this has not happened but we would be delighted to receive entries from the WGWE in 2017.

At the same event he also confirmed that NRW would also continue to sponsor the 2016 Woodland Competition. Sadly, despite FCW and subsequently NRW helping with the running of the competition since 1965, that sponsorship was withdrawn. The withdrawn sponsorship by NRW enforces comments highlighted in the 2016 Judges Report from competitors.

The competition has given the Forestry Industry a good indication of the quality of Welsh woodlands and has always encouraged skilful woodland management. It has been a prestigious and fiercely contested competition over many years and a long standing highlight of the forestry calendar in Wales, we would like that to continue and plans are already under way for the 2017 competition which will be held in the counties of mid - Brecon, Cardigan, Radnorshire & Montgomeryshire.

So a plea from the Chairman of the RWAS Forestry Section Committee Roger Nock MBE, that a new sponsor or sponsors be found to support the RWAS Woodland Competition which has been running since 1963.

#### Martin Bishop, Confor national manager in Wales adds:

The RWAS woodland awards is a long-standing and highly respected competition in Wales. Our thanks go to Roger, Iwan, Hugh Wheelton, the judges and the whole team for keeping it going. The costs involved can be significant and sponsorship is urgently needed to keep the competition going so I urge anyone who can help to do so.

Many of the obvious sponsors like forest management companies cannot do so as they are often competitors so in particular I encourage the wood processing sector to get involved and contribute in part to the quality of their own future timber supply, let's keep this competition going.

If anyone wishes to help and sponsor the Woodland Competition please contact [sponsorship@rwas.com](mailto:sponsorship@rwas.com) or RWAS, Llanelwedd, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3SY or contact [martin.bishop@confor.org.uk](mailto:martin.bishop@confor.org.uk)



Roger Nock, Chair of the RWS Woodlands Committee and one of the organisers of the competition, speaking at the RWS



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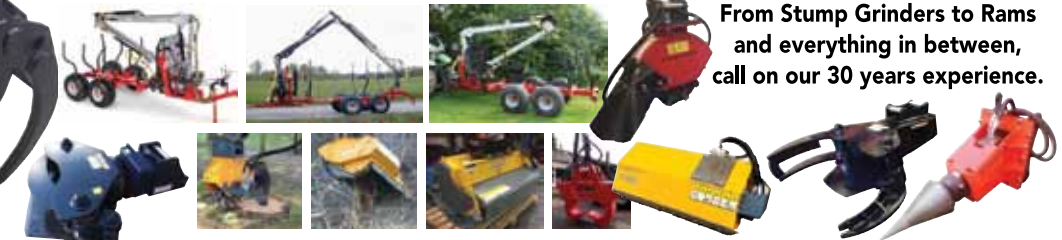
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### SCOTLAND

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#### Forestry grants budget availability in 2016

FCS have issued the following briefing: This is to let you know that there is still FGS capital grant available for the 2016 claim year. We are therefore taking a number of measures to encourage capital grant spend in 2016:

#### Applicants/owners with approved or pending applications with a 2017 claim year

We would like you to bring forward and claim your capital works in 2016 (by March 2017).

If you are able to take up this offer then please contact your local Conservancy to discuss. If you are yet to get your application approved (ie: pending application), please do not start any works.

#### Threshold Score change from 16 September 2016

The threshold score for Woodland Improvement Grant- Restructuring Regeneration and Woodland Improvement Grant - Habitats & Species/Liss has decreased from 4 to 2 for claim year 2016. The scoring threshold for Woodland Improvement Grant - Habitats & Species/ Liss has increased from 2 to 4 for applications with a 2017 claim year. Threshold scores for Forest Infrastructure and Co-operation have decreased from 2 to 1 for claim year 2016.

#### Applicants with approved applications with a 2016 claim year

We would also encourage applicants who have an approved contract containing a claim year(s) of 2016 to carry out all this work and not to delay as variations into 2017 may not be possible.

#### Forestry Summits

Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing is convening two forestry 'summits' on 23 September and 24 October in south and north Scotland respectively. It will be interesting to learn from these how Jim Mackinnon's review is progressing. He has been commissioned by Mr Ewing to examine the forestry scheme consultation processes with a view to speeding up approvals.

#### The Future of Forestry in Scotland

This consultation was launched in August, runs until 09 November and provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish a support

## A strategic vision for the uplands

SNH are seeking views on a scoping exercise they are carrying out, as proposed in the second Land Use Strategy to produce a strategic vision for the uplands of Scotland. Confor will be responding, and I would welcome members reactions to the questions they are asking - by 14th October:

#### Where are the uplands?

1. What broad characteristics should we use to define the uplands? What benefits do the uplands provide to Scotland?
2. What are the key social, economic and environmental benefits that the uplands provide for Scotland?
3. How can upland land use help to prevent or reduce the impacts of climate change?

#### What should an upland vision include?

4. A strategic vision could inform decisions about the balance between different land uses in different parts of the uplands. What are the key choices that an upland vision should address, and why?

5. Are there any other topics or issues that should be included in an upland vision, and if so why?
6. Are there any topics or issues that should be excluded from an upland vision, and if so why?

#### How should the vision be developed?

7. Which stakeholders do you think it would be particularly important to involve, and how? Would particular approaches be needed, for example, to reach particular groups?
8. What are your views on the process that might be needed to bring together the key interests and develop a shared vision?
9. Who would be best placed to lead this process?
10. What form should a vision for the uplands take (visual or descriptive, maps, diagrams or text)?
11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Below: Eskdalemuir by James England



and regulatory structure that can build on and further strengthen the leadership position that Scotland has in UK forestry. See report p6.

#### South Scotland Golden Eagle Project

This project has secured £1m from the Heritage Lottery Fund – see further details at <http://snh.presscentre.com/News-Releases/South-Scotland-Golden-Eagle-Project-secures-1-million-Heritage-Lottery-Fund-boost-268.aspx> Confor has made it quite clear that we can only support this project on the strict understanding that introduction of eagles to an area cannot be used as a reason to restrict

woodland management or new woodland creation.

#### Regional Scottish Forestry & Timber Technologies meetings

Details of these meetings will be available very soon, but make sure you have the dates in your diaries – all 6pm meetings preceded by a buffet at 5.15:

28 September – north-east at The Gordon Arms Hotel, Huntly

26 October – south at the Dryfesdale Hotel, Lockerbie

27 October – central at the Stirling Court Hotel (Stirling Uni campus)



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## ENGLAND

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### Forestry policy enquiry

Within the public sector the Environment Food and Rural Affairs parliamentary committee have announced an enquiry into the effectiveness of forestry policy in England. Whilst Confor will be taking an active part, anyone with an interest is invited to submit evidence.

### Boundary changes

Ongoing changes within the Environment Agency and Natural England have seen them combine their regional boundaries into 14 common regions and trying to strengthen regional work with the Forestry Commission. Changes to funding mechanisms have been widely advertised with most EU based funds needing contracts signed before the Autumn Statement on 23 November. We are hopeful of getting some indication of future mechanisms before the New Year.

### Charity secures mill's future

National charity Woodland Heritage IS the new owner of Whitney Sawmills, a business established by local craftsman Will Bullough over a quarter of a century ago in the charming

*Continued on p31*



# England's biggest new forest in 20 years planned

A proposal to plant more than 600,000 trees to create the largest new private sector woodland in England for more than 20 years has been officially launched. Confor has welcomed the proposed new forest as a huge step forward for forestry and the north-east of England generally.

The plan, at Doddington North Moor near Wooler, Northumberland, has a specific focus on extending the habitats favoured by red squirrels and helping to prevent flood risks.

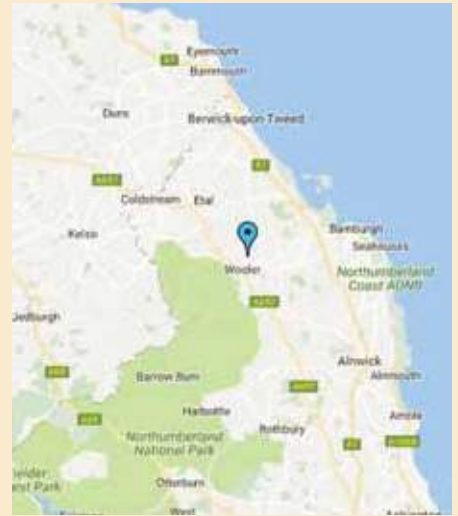
Andy Howard, project manager, said he was delighted with the level of public interest shown in the scheme at its public launch at The Glendale Show, near Wooler.

Mr Howard said: "Our proposal to plant over 600,000 new trees on a 354-hectare site (3.54 square km) is an exciting step forward for much-needed new forestry planting in England. New productive woodlands have a very different set of standards we must comply with nowadays, and our design for the Doddington North wood can provide a very diverse ecology with a wide range of species of tree, plant, bird and animal life supported."

Anne-Marie Trevelyan, MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed and Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry, said: "This is an excellent example of the kind of thoughtful, modern, multi-benefit forestry which we need in our rural areas."

The forestry and timber processing industry is a significant employer in the Wooler and wider Northumberland area. The Doddington North woodland scheme is designed to create and support local businesses and employment, from the establishment phase of the forest through to harvesting when the trees are mature.

Robert Scott, Managing Director of local sawmill A&J Scott Ltd, said: "An afforestation plan of this scale could be very beneficial to



our business in the future. We have in recent years, expressed our concerns regarding the future supply of the raw material for our sawmill, from both the private and state sectors. It is clear that the volumes of saw log material will decline within the next ten years and we are concerned that our ability to maintain a steady supply will be compromised, thus threatening the future of our business."

The launch of the scheme at the Glendale Show was the start of the public consultation process for assessing whether the project can gain consent from Forestry Commission England.

The next major event in that process is an open public meeting to be held from 5.30pm on Tuesday 18 October at The Black Bull, High Street, Wooler, and further information on the proposed new woodland can be found at [www.doddingtonnorth.org](http://www.doddingtonnorth.org)

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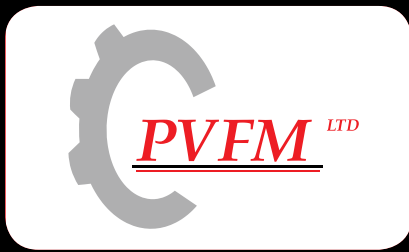
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## COUNTRY NEWS

Continued from p33

Herefordshire village of Whitney-on-Wye. In those days Will was a craftsman who became increasingly frustrated with the quality of the timber available. So he decided to try milling and drying his own materials little realising what this experiment would eventually lead to.

The sawmill grew steadily to become a UK-wide supplier of timber to businesses of all sizes from the grand Dumfries House project in Scotland to one-man boat builders in Cornwall. Over the years the mill has supplied many exciting, prestige projects such as fine oak for the Kings Dining Room in Edinburgh Castle, or sweet chestnut for the royal row barge, *Gloriana*. It is currently milling oak and elm for the restoration of H.M.S. *Victory* and more locally the rebuilding of Grade 1 listed *Llwyn Celyn* just over the border in Wales.

Woodland Heritage is a charity established in 1994 by two cabinet makers 'keen to put something back', with a key aim for the charity to promote the growing of trees and the use of wood. Working with Will Bullough, the popular 'From Woodland to Workshop' courses were established nearly a decade ago, all of which have been run from Whitney Sawmills and which have attracted well over two hundred students over the years, all from some part of the timber supply chain.



## Boost to Kielder visitor experience

Opportunities for visitors to live the wild life at Kielder Water & Forest Park will be created with the support of new funding of more than £330,000 made possible by National Lottery players. At the end of 2015, an initial Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £17,700 was handed to the Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust to develop its 'Living Wild at Kielder' project. This has now been followed with an additional £336,300 from HLF.

The project will help create "nature hubs" to allow people to experience and learn about the area's special animals and plants. This will be complemented by a year-round events and activity programme.

The Trust will create wildlife trails from Stonehaugh, Falstone and Greenhaugh villages with support from the local community. It will also work with businesses to increase take-up of the events and activities, and engage with visitors.

## Grown in Britain Week

This year's 2016 Grown in Britain week returns with a new bundle of events and themed days. Grown in Britain Week is: "A national celebration of wood and the amazing places and people that bring this fantastic material into our lives."

This year Grown in Britain has announced several new themed days to help supporters and partners make the most of the week of celebration. Contact [enquiries@growninbritain.org](mailto:enquiries@growninbritain.org) for more information.

### Monday 10 October – Construction Day

BRE are hosting the launch event for Grown in Britain. The event will take place in Garston, Watford and will demonstrate British timber being used in construction. The event will also allow delegates to visit the Zerobills house on the Innovation Park and learn about the latest Grown in Britain timber projects such as woodstock.

Late places could still be available

### Tuesday 11 October – Woodland Social Enterprise Day – making our local woodlands work

Working with the Plunkett Foundation and a local partners, Grown in Britain is helping local groups transform woodland areas. On Tuesday we celebrate woodland social enterprise and the value they bring to local economies and people throughout the UK.

### Wednesday 12 – Education Day – from young people to professional development

A feature of this day is the Royal Forestry Society one-day training course on tree and woodland management. The course is designed to meet the needs of new and novice woodland owners and others who wish to develop their knowledge and skills on Grading and measuring your timber

### Thursday 13 – Woodfuel Day – including the National Woodfuel Conference

Thursday is a celebration of woodfuel. The main event is the National Wood Fuel Conference, Chaired by Grown in Britain CEO Dougal Driver and held at Sandown Park Racecourse in Surrey.

### Friday 14 – Furniture Day – celebrating beautiful products made for home-grown wood

Friday sees Benchmark promoting their Grown in Britain branded 'Darby' table. Benchmark prides itself on being the first furniture maker in the UK to hold a Grown in Britain licence and both PEFC and FSC certification. The Darby Table, which is made from oak or elm, is an excellent example of how local sourcing benefits the UK economy. Also on Friday there will be a workshop on

valuing homegrown oak and other hardwood held at the Luss Estate offices by Loch Lomond.

The event is being held by Argyll Small Woods Cooperative, Simwood and Luss Estates.

### Saturday 15 – Show and Tell Day

A day for woods, forests and wood using businesses to open their doors to their supply chains, customers and communities

### Sunday 16 – Connection day – time to enjoy our fantastic woods and forests

A day to simply go and enjoy the UK's wonderful woodlands!

If you want to know about any of these events or want to run an event in GIBWeek2017 then please do get in touch by emailing [enquiries@growninbritain.org](mailto:enquiries@growninbritain.org) and follow us on @growninbritain for day to day updates and information.

Detailed information on events:

[www.growninbritain.org/grown-in-britain-week](http://www.growninbritain.org/grown-in-britain-week)



# Markets settle to life after Brexit

Timber Auctions market report by **Oliver Combe**



So the public have voted and by a very small margin decided that we should leave Europe. Is it any surprise that the British electorate chose to be governed by our own members of parliament rather than “a self-perpetuating supranational bureaucracy in Brussels”?

Despite the scare and doom-mongering life after Brexit does not seem so bad for primary producers like the forestry industry.

There is no doubt that there are those in Europe who will want to punish Britain for leaving the EU but there is a growing realism amongst the North European countries that things have to change.

The aftermath of Brexit brought a sudden correction in exchange rates as markets struggled to work out what Britain leaving the EU would mean to European and global trade. In the short-term there has been a substantial reduction in value of the pound against the euro which has helped domestic processors compete with importers. Demand levels have remained stable and money remains cheap to borrow so the fundamental drivers of the economy look sound.

As expected, falling pound against the euro has led the timber importers to look for price increases on material ordered for delivery in Quarter 1 2017. It appears that as nobody in the trade really expected a no vote, little provision was made for this outcome and its impact on stock landed in quarters 3 and 4 of 2016, so shippers are honouring existing contracts. There are reasonable levels of imported stock in the supply chain and it looks like it will take at least three and more likely six months before the more expensive stock starts to feed into the system.

On the ground, the market has developed steadily over the last six months but with some very noticeable regional differences.

## North Scotland

Supply of standing timber to the market has been steady this year which has kept the market ticking along nicely. Prices have quietly increased over the year and there is now a mood of cautious optimism.

Most domestic sawmills have seen a steady upturn in demand through 2016 leading to increased activity levels with some sawmills running extra production shifts.

Roadside log stocks are well under control and mills are picking production up promptly as it hits the roadside. While prime spruce sawlogs remain in strong demand there have been good prices for the other main commercial species and sawlog parcels have been selling well with log prices approaching £60 per tonne delivered in some cases.

The Irish mills remain active purchasing on the West coast and this together with improved demand from the domestic mills has seen the market steadily improve.

Most mills have bought well this summer but are looking to secure supplies for the autumn and winter on what looks to be an improving market.

The small roundwood picture is not quite as rosy. Balcas have struggled with production problems this summer and this coupled with good supply levels has meant that Norbord have been on quota most of the summer. With the sawmills in the North being very busy there a plentiful supplies of sawmill chips and sawdust which has reduced demand for small roundwood so price have fallen to the very low £30s per tonne delivered.

There are signs that things are improving with Norbord recently lifting the mill quotas and Balcas starting to run a bit more consistently. Hopefully, as biofuel demand increases during the winter, there will be an upturn in demand for small roundwood.

**Increasing demand in the North especially for sawlogs has seen good prices for prime parcels and buyers starting to look outside their traditional catchments to ensure supply.**

## South Scotland and North England

After a slow start, there has been good supply to the market this year with some very good prices being realised. Demand has been brisk through all market sectors so most parcels have sold well.

The market in the Borders is characterised by a diversity of markets with strong competition for all product categories, including: small roundwood, fencing, palletwood, red logs and green quality saw logs. This, together with a varied merchant sector, ensures that prices for standing timber in the Borders are less volatile than other parts of the country. Add to this close proximity to markets and generally easier harvesting conditions than the North of Scotland and Wales and it leads to steadily increasing prices throughout 2016.

Demand from the pallet and sawn fencing mills has been brisk all year with the carcassing mills now starting to pick up as well which has seen sawlog prices steadily increasing throughout the year. Although there has been plentiful supply of timber to the market there has continued to be steady increases throughout the year. Although sawlog prices are not yet at the levels of late 2014 better quality spruce parcels are attracting log prices of around the £60 per tonne delivered mark.

Whilst demand for roundwood had been good for most of the year, the recent explosion in one of the boilers at Kronospan's Chirk CHP plant has had an immediate effect in the Borders. As Kronospan do not have enough electricity now to run the plant at full capacity they are currently running reduced hours and a limited number of production lines. Roundwood deliveries have been significantly reduced as they try and concentrate on using co-products to manage the site energy requirements effectively.

Deliveries of roundwood by train from the Borders have been suspended which has led to a build of roadside stock of small roundwood. The Borders is the market currently least reliant on biofuel but hopefully increasing demand during winter will underpin the small roundwood market over the next six months.

**Good demand for sawlogs with sawmills looking to secure supplies for spring 2017, small roundwood stocks building which will focus buyers on securing parcels with a high log content. Processors remain confident of the future and continue to invest in land, plant and processes to improve their operations. All of which will ultimately benefit the private grower.**



## Wales and South England

The market in South England and Wales has gone from strength to strength this year with excellent demand from the East Anglian mills, those in the Marches and the Welsh mills. All the main commercial sawlog species are selling well. The Kronospan problems will have an impact on demand for small roundwood throughout England however, there are plenty of biomass plants to underpin the market.

After a slow start in Wales there has been good supply from the private sector throughout the summer and into early autumn although buyers are still looking to secure further parcels of timber.

England remains much more challenging, with an apparent lack of supply of material to the market. There appears to me much less clearfelling and more thinning as landowners adapt their management practices to life without restocking grants and within the horrendous constraints of FSC certification for the lowland grower. The net result has been much less harvesting activity and contractors really struggling to find work for machines and merchants struggling to keep well-established squads in work.

Demand in England and Wales remains exceptional as modern, well-equipped processors fight to secure available supplies. Steady incremental growth of mills and discrete investment has seen some very substantial businesses created, Pontrilas are cutting very nearly 8000 tonnes per week of sawlogs sourced from throughout South West England and Wales. Thompsons sawmills in East Anglia are just completing a major refit which will substantially increase their throughput.

BSW Newbridge has announced plans to install a small log line to run alongside their existing band saw line which will increase their roundwood requirement and make the mill more versatile.

The fencing and pallet / packing markets are reporting good levels of demand and mills are managing to achieve modest price increases on prime products. In some cases lead times on prime products have increased to two or three weeks which is unusual in September, some mills are working hard to build stock levels over the winter in anticipation of improved demand in spring 2017.

There are also signs that the carcassing market may improve in early 2017 which will benefit some of the larger mills which cut a mix of carcassing, fencing and packaging timber.

**Strong demand for good quality crops especially FSC certified spruce and Douglas fir with excellent prices being achieved as buyers look to secure stock for spring 2017.**

## Hardwoods

Oak, oak, oak with a little bit of ash and poplar is the story of the sawlog market. These are the species for which there are known markets. Most other species remain sporadic specialities. Some interesting developments here post Brexit.

**OAK** The UK hardwood sawlog market is increasingly focused on oak and has for a while now relied on imports of French and some German oak for its core supply and supplemented this with English-grown oak as and when it was available. The ability to pick up the phone and order lorry loads of oak logs to the quality, length and diameter specification that suited the job in hand has really helped English hardwood mills maintain and build market share.

However, post Brexit the fall in the value of the pound against the euro has been somewhere in the order of 15 to 17% over barely three months. The price of imported oak logs has begun to increase to account for this. One sawmiller was quoted a 9% increase in the asking price over one month and then found that the grade of the material delivered had decreased.

European oak prices are increasing as demand continues to out-strip supply. There are a few reasons for such intense competition for the logs. Strong Stave markets for oak barrels, relatively weak euro making the oak attractive to Asia and the EUTR. For example, oak imports to the EU from the Ukraine, pre-EUTR, was 200,000m<sup>3</sup> per year, last year this figure was 28,000m<sup>3</sup> - this has put more pressure on EU-based sawmills and log availability. Most European mills are running short in some sizes at any given time although as oak felling increases in the winter supply should become a bit easier.

This has led to renewed interest in any parcels of home-grown oak offered to the market together with sawmills who have not recently bought home-grown material now becoming interested in it again. It will be interesting to see what impact this has on prices offered to the market this autumn.

**ASH** The domestic Ash market has picked up again but still remains small relative to the oak market. Prices have steadily improved for good quality white planking grade ash with prices around £3 per hoppus foot now being offered.

Increased demand due to changing fashions, restricted supply from the US due to Emerald ash borer regulations and uncertain supplies from Europe due to onwads march of Chalara disease all appear to be benefiting demand in the UK.

**POPLAR** The export market for poplar remains active and is still capable of offering good prices for quality material which is packed in containers and sent to the Far East for processing. Rather ironically poplar is becoming an increasingly important species in the UK kitchen and furniture markets, demand has increased steadily over the last few years and prices have been quietly increasing for material imported into the UK

**FIRE WOOD** Demand for firewood remains subdued with plentiful supply and demand still steady. Prices remain in the low £40s per tonne at roadside for processor sized material and £10 per tonne less for oak and log splitter fuel.

A run of mild winters and low fossil fuel prices have combined to literally take the heat out of this market over the last 18 to 24 months. On a positive note the oil price is starting to creep back up which should prevent any further falls in price and a few good strong frosts in October will hopefully improve demand.



### Global hardwood trends

Globally, hardwood markets have been improving and production is now under pressure as demand continues to improve in late 2016. The Brooks Brother autumn market report makes interesting reading "Asian Markets and, in particular China, are more active than last year. US and Canadian markets are good and European markets have been (pre-Brexit!) increasing, especially in countries like Spain, France and Italy. Latin America, the Middle East and Australia make up the other major markets and all are reported to have increasing lumber imports by volume YTD".

Maybe this together with a favourable exchange rate will lead to an improvement in the UK hardwood log market this winter.



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# Uncertainty is the watchword

Timber market report  
by **Peter Whitfield**  
Timber Operations  
Director Tilhill Forestry



The vote on Brexit has come and gone. The sky has not fallen in and indeed there is now good evidence that the initial reaction by the markets and the doom and gloom merchants was unfounded. However, it is early days yet and much has to be done to provide the real confidence business needs to continue to grow and invest. The priority for government now is to shore up business confidence. Much of this depends on the progress the government can make in its difficult task of ensuring that UK businesses have the ability to trade with their neighbours in the EU. One of the major areas that business will want to see got right is immigration; many business depend on EU workers for their business to function. Certainly as one goes around our wood processing plants and harvesting contractors it is clear to see that there is an increasing dependence on EU workers to fill skilled and semi-skilled jobs in the forest industry. Without these workers many businesses will struggle or indeed fail.

Clearly our currency has suffered a major knock but as far as many exporting businesses are concerned, the country has received an economic boost with the relatively rapid devaluation in sterling. Trading in a single market with a weak currency certainly has plenty of economic upside. This obviously applies equally to domestic industries such as timber, who have to compete with imports. On the downside there are likely to be inflationary consequences on the economy with rising costs of imports and the most recent construction PMIs do note a further steep acceleration in input cost inflation.

Whilst the full impact of exchange rates on sawn timber prices has not fully materialised as yet, history tells us a weak sterling currency is

good for the forest industry. To really make all this work we need to see a strong economy and particular good levels of new housing starts. Housing starts in the United Kingdom increased to 39,910 in the second quarter of 2016 from 35,390 in the first quarter of 2016. IHS Markit, which publishes the data, said there was evidence of "a renewed rise in staffing levels across the construction sector and a rebound in business expectations for the next 12 months". All this is good news but the sustainability of this upwards trend has yet to be proven. As a BBC journalist recently commented "...what consumers spend in the shops is far more significant" ...in terms of impacting on the health of the UK economy.

Log demand has been steady since the beginning of the year and the normal summer dip in demand has been and gone. Whilst there has been no evidence yet of dramatically increased demand, there has certainly been evidence of increased interest for logs to be exported to Ireland. Whilst this may be welcomed by some growers it does have a tendency to distort the market and this is not always helpful for UK based processors.

Small roundwood demand has remained fairly low coming out of the early summer mill and boiler shuts. There is evidence across the board of fairly high stocks of small roundwood. This again demonstrates the importance of the biomass market with regards to usage and the seasonality in respect of heat demand and drier biomass availability. In addition, Kronospan has had a breakdown resulting in a lengthy outage and a resultant lack of demand for chipwood. Indications are this could last for a number of months. At this stage there has been limited renewed interest in exports of small roundwood, largely due to a plentiful supply and high stock levels in Northern Europe.

So we continue in the vain of so many of these reports going back over time – uncertainty remains but with exchange rates in our favour the balance of probability is that this should help the timber market rather than hinder it from both the growers' and a processors' perspective.

## A new eSales system for the public sector

A new eSales system is shortly to be rolled out for use by the Forestry Commission in Scotland and England, and by Natural Resources Wales.

The present eSales service was started in 2004, but is considered no longer fit for purpose and cannot be developed further. It will cease to operate on 31 March 2017.

Software firm BiP has been awarded a six-year contract to deliver the new eSales service using its Delta software which is already in use by many government departments. Sales will continue, with normal gaps maintained between the last sale on the old system and the first on the new one.

The system is for businesses only, and will require customers to register via a company administrator, to plug the present gap whereby it is possible for individuals from the same company to bid for the same lot. Registration is open and many companies have already registered so that users' details have been migrated to the new system. After 30 September, businesses will have to complete their users' details online.

It is intended to develop the system to provide an online auction platform and catalogue sales in the future (e.g. for firewood, permits, publications, etc).

Anyone who wants to keep information from sales conducted on the old system needs to download relevant documents before that system is de-commissioned on 31 March. BiP will manage the new system, but the data will belong to FC and eventually to FCE, FCS and NRW, and so there should be no change to the ability to produce normal FC Statistics. NRW is already developing its own primary data bank / server.

Roadshow workshops are expected to be delivered in November.

Contact: *Stuart Balfour, FC Project Manager*  
[stuart.balfour@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.balfour@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)





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## Biomass project gives green light to woodland owners

A major new investment in combined heat and power production (CHP) has been announced by investors Copenhagen Infrastructure II and Burmeister and Wain Scandinavian Contractor A/S (BWSC). They are working with Estover Energy Ltd to develop a plant at Sandwich, Kent. The total investment of £160m will require a significant supply of hardwood from mid-2018 increasing at over time until full production is reached by 2020.

With the closure of St Regis Paper at Chepstow, over 10 years ago, the fluctuating firewood market has been the main outlet for broadleaved stands across southern England. This experienced investment team, with three plants operating or in construction already in the UK, offer a realistic opportunity for woodland owners to bring back into production the broadleaved sites that have been such a challenge. The south-east is no stranger to hardwood processing, when up to 1991 the paper mill at Kemsley offered the last serious outlet for

roundwood thinnings. The most recent estimated annual increment, for broadleaved forests in the region, is 650k tonnes every year, much of which has remained untouched since craft paper production finished at St Regis. The new enterprise will create a secure market for forest owners and land managers supporting thinning and clear felling on a long term basis.

The entire biomass requirement will be sourced under a long-term contract with Euroforest Ltd who will be offering their contracting experience and marketing expertise to growers to facilitate the harvesting and delivery of local supplies of hardwood from across the south-east.

Constructed and run by BWSC under an operation and maintenance contract the plant will supply green power to 50,000 homes, and businesses at the local Discovery Park. Planned to produce 27.8MW of power it will be fired primarily with virgin wood sourced locally in the UK, expecting to be operational by summer 2018.

## Entrepreneurs on mission to 'make biomass easier'

Wood pellet boiler owners and entrepreneurs Charlie Henderson and Tim Barlow recently launched The Woodpicker after realising that getting prices for wood pellets could be so much easier. The company is already the first to make it possible to order blown wood pellets from anywhere at any time. Charlie and Tim aim to systematically tackle different aspects of the boiler owner experience with the ultimate aim of increasing uptake of biomass.

[www.thewoodpicker.com](http://www.thewoodpicker.com)



## Bold new dawn for Volvo

Eamonn Wall puts Volvo's XC90 through its paces

The launch last year of the new XC90 marked for Volvo a new beginning. Its Chinese owners have invested heavily in new platforms, new engines and new designs. This year saw the launch of a beautiful large estate, the V90 and its saloon version the S90.

These two models share much with the new XC90 which quickly proved a sales success throughout the world. It is slightly longer and wider than the original XC90, which was 12 years old at replacement time. It had seen its sales fall and discounts increase. The new XC90 changed all that with prices starting at about £45,000, similar price to the Land Rover Discovery and Audi Q7.

Volvo's lovely five-cylinder engines have been replaced by a family of four-cylinder diesel and petrol engines, either with 187 bhp or 232 bhp. Only the more powerful version dubbed D5 is available in the XC90, linked to an eight-speed automatic gearbox.

The new XC90 drives more like a BMW X5 than the softer riding Volvos that went previously. The engine is smooth enough and works well with the autobox, but sometimes you have to give the accelerator pedal a good prod to get action. The vehicle steers well and handles very well too. The interior is a very nice piece of design and it has the nicest interior door handles of any car I have tested. I liked the starter knob which sits just behind the gear leaver – a nice touch indeed, made of cut glass crystal. The seats are very comfortable and the third row is very easy to use too.

It's a fast car returning about 35mpg, though it does not sound as good as the diesel V6's found in the competition.

Dashboard buttons are few as nearly all functions (radio, sat nav, heater etc) are operated via a large easy to use digital touch screen.

All in all it's a very impressive machine.

*Eamonn Wall is a forestry and arboricultural consultant, and Director of Eamonn Wall and Co.*





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## FISA suspends FCA input on Steering Group

The FISA Steering Group and Board have suspended FISA's engagement with Forestry Contracting Association (FCA). The FCA will not be directly represented on the FISA Steering Group until further notice.

A press release from FISA, announcing the suspension, explains that "Since the inception of FISA over four years ago, the Forest Industry has successfully 'come together' to implement a Safety Accord for the purpose of making essential Health & Safety improvements across our industry.

"Commitment from industry players to the Accord has been excellent and we now have over 680 members. FISA has worked hand-in-glove with HSE to do its best to establish an organisation which will, over a realistic period of time, deliver the objectives of the Accord.

"However, the adoption of a set of Articles of Association and Rules (which regulate the way that the organisation operates, the representation and election of both Directors and Steering Group members) has been dogged by the uncooperative behaviour by representatives of the FCA which has been the only organisation which has impeded the progress of FISA on a sustained basis.

"These Articles and Rules were prepared by a FISA sub group which included a representative of the FCA, the group took expert legal advice and presented them to the FISA Steering Group throughout the process, the Steering Group recommended their adoption.

"Since that time representatives of the FCA have sought to frustrate the formal adoption of those Rules and Articles which has absorbed huge amounts of time for the FISA Board and Steering Group. This has a significant cost but more importantly has diverted effort from the purpose of FISA to improve safety on forestry."

A vote was held on 14 September. By majority vote, the Steering Group of FISA (ten in favour, one abstention and one against) and the Directors (three in favour and one against) decided that "future engagement with the FCA was counter-productive to the advancement of the objectives of the Accord and that engagement with the FCA should therefore be suspended".

The press release goes on to explain that the Health and Safety Executive is aware of this position and has not objected.



Professional logger Richard Elliott won gold for the UK at this year's World Logging Championships (WLC). The Devon-born logging champion delivered a perfect limbing routine, removing 30 branches from his log in only 16.23 seconds with a Husqvarna 372XP, finishing over four seconds before the first runner up.

## Ferguson expands logistics network

As of 05 September 2016, Barclay Bros Limited will be purchased for an undisclosed sum by Ferguson Transport (Spean Bridge) Ltd and merged with the Ferguson Transport group of companies trading as Ferguson Transport & Shipping.

Ferguson Transport & Shipping, Scotland's Environmental Haulier of the Year, has continued to grow in recent years, with continuous investment in staff, equipment and forward thinking to enhance the services it provides to its customers in the local and national economy. This further investment and commitment

by Ferguson Transport & Shipping through their steady growth strategy, and in enhancing their services further with their new business premises in the east of Scotland in Methill, adjacent to the Energy Park in Fife. Is an exciting new acquisition which will allow for Ferguson Transport & Shipping to expand on the excellent services, existing business and contracts established by Barclay Bros Limited. Like Ferguson Transport & Shipping, Barclay Bros Limited is a family run business that has been in the haulage industry for more than fifty years.

## Woodland Communications Day

The time for this year's Woodland Communication Day is fast approaching. The 2016 event will take place on Friday,

11 November 2016 at the Community Centre, Horringer.

Organiser Gary Battell said, "We have taken into account feedback received and have produced a fantastic programme with a wide range of topics that will be informative and thought provoking. I hope that you will find the time to attend as good communication, sharing knowledge and networking are so important in all sectors of our industry."

Early booking is advisable. For more information contact

Gary Battell (Woodland Advisor, Suffolk CC):

[gary.battell@suffolkcc.gov.uk](mailto:gary.battell@suffolkcc.gov.uk)

01473 264776

Full event programme and more forestry events can be found on the website:

[www.confor.org.uk/resources/events](http://www.confor.org.uk/resources/events)



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# Flooding central theme for engineering symposium

Roland Stiven reports on the Forestry Engineering Group annual symposium



There was a good turn-out at the Forestry Engineering Group annual symposium on 08 September at Newton Rigg. First up was Morgan Vuillermoz of FCBA (the French timber supply chain technical organisation) with an overview of the changes in the level of mechanisation of forest harvesting in France. With data on the numbers and types of machines and numbers on the improvements in productivity due to technological process and improved working practices. She also described the deliberate process of learning lessons from managing crisis – specifically the 1999 windblow when 140Mm<sup>3</sup> of timber was flooded overnight.

Also on machinery was Jock McKie of John Deere who described the continual struggle to balance the demand for bigger, more productive, more powerful, more robust, low-emission machines against the extra physical weight all of these requirements entail. Your average forwarder is now seven tonnes heavier than 15 years ago. To compensate, there has been a move from 6-8 axles, wider wheels, longer wheelbases and tracks, which in turn make machines bigger, require more power, creating more weight etc. etc. This all in the context of wetter, softer ground – particularly in northern Europe which is losing its hard-frost winters. On show over lunch was a shiny new John Deere 1270G harvester.

The main theme of the day was flooding; Engineering to Stem the Flow. Dr Andrew Black of Dundee University set the context, describing the dark art of flood risk estimation. The more pragmatic perhaps will simply specify an over-

size culvert to be on the safe side but when it comes to expensive bridges and runoff mitigation measures we need to use multiple sources of information (and a hydrologist) to reduce uncertainty in forecasts.

Tom Nisbet of Forest Research and Alan Eaves, Forest District manager for Yorkshire, described the studies conducted around Pickering since 2009 on flood risk management and the practical application of large woody dams and timber bunds to slow runoff in the upper catchment. It is vital to intervene at the right place otherwise chance synchronicity with flows from other catchments can make things worse downstream. That said, there are practical benefits of working in a well-roded forest with plenty of timber to hand rather than in the middle of a boggy moor.

Fiona McLay of SEPA took us through the headings of the Natural Flood Management Handbook and Hugh Chalmers of Tweed Forum described their ongoing work through the long-standing Tweed Catchment Management Plan.

Conor Price then presented the recent work by Scottish Borders Council implementing a flood risk management scheme for Selkirk, a combination of traditional hard infrastructure and 'deliberate' natural flood management; the latter sometimes involving some major civil engineering to reinstate the natural processes!

### Innovative haulier

From the timber transport perspective, the highlight of the day was John Scott of JST Services being presented with an IAgRE award for his contribution to forest engineering. John started out as a timber haulier but his natural flair for problem solving has led to him delivering major innovations in low ground pressure vehicles, floating piers and loading equipment.

Finally, I repeat my annual call for younger foresters to attend this annual FEG symposium and get involved in the world of forest engineering.



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# Onwards and upwards for Oak Processionary Moth

**Dr Terry Mabbett**  
on the continuing rise  
of oak processionary  
moth



Oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) is spreading far and wide despite a huge and costly control programme. During 2014, 46,500 trees were sprayed across 322 sites but OPM promptly spread farther and faster than ever. Breeding populations are confirmed in 25 out of 32 London Boroughs, five districts in Surrey, two in Hertfordshire and South Buckinghamshire. New and separate infestations continue to ‘pop-up’ despite EU Plant Passports since March 2008 and Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) inspections of oak imports since January 2013. Close examination indicates why the current control programme preferentially based on *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki* (Btk) (due to target organism specificity) has insufficient impact.

Btk lacks insecticide potency on the larger later instar OPM larvae. Water-based spray formulations can be washed off the leaves and Btk degrades rapidly in sunlight. Paired spray applications 10-14 days apart compensate but cannot overcome Btk’s increasing inability to kill OPM larvae much beyond the L2 stage, because the gut wall becomes increasingly resilient for the bacterial toxin to punch through.

Btk acts through ingestion only leaving oak leaves as the spray target, but most English

oaks are not sufficiently re-foliated to receive adequate spray coverage until late April/early May. Oak trees should be 60% re-foliated before the first spray is made. Oak trees in London and the immediate Home Counties did not attain this stage until the first week of May 2016, by which time OPM larvae that emerged in early April were already into the L3 stage.

There is also the question of collateral damage to other Lepidopterous larvae feeding on oak foliage during the same spray application ‘window’. And especially the intrinsically much smaller larvae of the green oak tortrix moth (*Tortrix viridana*) and main food source for blue tit nestlings during the month of May. Breeding success of the blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) and perhaps the closely related great tit (*Parus major*) is almost certainly compromised where Btk is sprayed over a number of years. Environmental surveying of insects, birds and bats conducted in woodland at Pangbourne in Berkshire before and after aerial application of Btk in May 2013, strongly supports this contention.

New outbreaks arising from infested planting material imported from EU countries are confirmed with increasing regularity. Since 2006 new and separate infestations have been confirmed at Bromley in south east London (2012), the Olympic Park at Newham in east London (2014), in and around RHS Wisley near Guildford in Surrey (2015) and East Barnet Village in northernmost London (2016). First confirmed outbreak in Hertfordshire at Watford in late July 2016 is 13km distant from the 2015 outer limit of the main west London infestation and therefore most likely to be another separately introduced occurrence.

Plant passports should confirm oak trees are nursery grown and sourced from an area where place of production and immediate vicinity are OPM-free. In Netherlands, where OPM is endemic, ‘immediate vicinity’ can mean as much as 50m. All this sounds reasonable enough until you realise that female and male moths can fly up to 5km and 20km, respectively.

Another confounding factor is nurseries buying in trees when they can’t meet an order from stock. Thus a consignment arriving from Europe may contain trees from two or more sites in different countries, although accompanying documentation may only relate to OPM status of the exporting nursery and immediate environment.

UK importers are required to notify APHA about all imports of a specified range of tree species (including oak trees for OPM) sourced from EU countries and Switzerland, so that APHA can inspect consignments for quarantine\* pests and plant pathogens. This should provide a much tighter barrier to OPM entry, although APHA say the purpose of the notification scheme is not to inspect every imported consignment. For *Quercus* (oak) APHA said “at



least 50% of consignments initially selected for inspection are inspected”.

The proportion of imported consignments actually notified to APHA is of equal importance. Forest nurseries including Confor members importing larger consignments of smaller and younger trees destined for commercial forest planting adhere to these requirements. However, is that universally true of the hundreds if not thousands of companies in the horticultural and gardening sectors generally importing much smaller size consignments. And of trees which will almost certainly be older and larger and therefore more likely to be carrying plaques of OPM eggs. This is because female OPM moths are known to preferentially oviposit on larger, taller and bushier plants thus presented. APHA says “given the nature of the trade we are not able to put a figure on compliance levels”.

And instructive to learn what proportion of plants in a consignment is actually inspected, because if not every tree then these two factors (trees within a single consignment originating from more than one source and site and consignments comprising trees of different age







## PLANTING



# Confor NPG on tour in East Lothian

A fine day beckoned in Haddington for the Confor Nursery Producers' Group summer meeting back in June – spirits were high the day before the EU Referendum vote.

With representatives from FC Scotland, Forest Research, FC England, Future Trees Trust, Woodland Trust, nurseries and seed suppliers, the age-old topics of little new planting and restocking across the country, coupled with the wide-ranging plant health issues facing the industry were high on the agenda. That said, the discussions moved swiftly to aspects of nursery resilience – appropriate nursery stock needs to be available to provide for the new planting aspirations and vital restocking work; and tree breeding for the future – both broadleaves and conifers and more than just the stock Sitka. Work continues across these areas with stakeholders across the industry getting involved and will be reported on further at a later date.

The meeting then moved to Alba Trees Nursery, a cell-grown forest tree and hedging nursery, growing over ten million quality trees. After everyone adhering to Alba's strict biosecurity policy, Rodney Shearer, Managing Direc-

tor, and his team gave us a very comprehensive tour around the nursery starting at the end of the nursery process, ie grading and despatch. Their traceability system allows them to follow any batch of seed through the process of sowing, pricking out, growing on and ultimately despatch – the buyer will know exactly where their plants have come from. This knowledge for growers and on down the supply chain is becoming more called for. A couple of short showers enabled some closer inspection of cells within the tunnels, but some just couldn't resist an extra shower for some unsuspecting wanderers from the automated irrigation system!

The message as ever is: talk to the nursery as soon as you can and work closely with them on how applications are progressing.

Please do not hesitate to contact us as a group on [npg@confor.org.uk](mailto:npg@confor.org.uk); comments, questions and advice all welcome! For more info about the Confor Nursery Producers' Group, read 'About us' on [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)

and size) may have a bearing on the sampling methods to be used. APHA says "we set our inspections to give us at least a 95% probability (confidence level) of detecting pests randomly distributed on 1.5% of trees which is considered to be the detection threshold". For consignments with more than 1000 trees APHA inspect 200 trees taken at random from ten packages, or all packages if there are less than 10. This 200-tree sample size is maintained for consignments of less than 1000 trees and the entire consignment is inspected if it contains less than 200 trees.

OPM eradication is now impossible but increased usage of two other approved insecticides would help pest containment. Problem is the much wider and bigger effects of diflubenzuron (an insect growth regulator) and deltamethrin (a pyrethroid insecticide acting via the insect nervous system) on non-target species.

*\*A quarantine pest is of potential economic importance to the endangered area. Not yet present, or not widely distributed and being officially controlled". OPM meets these criteria.*



Members of the Confor Nursery Producers Group at Alba Trees with Derek Stewart, nursery manager, and, below, Kevin Shearer, transport manager



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## Glyphosate: the saga continues

So, the European Commission has made a decision at last - but unfortunately this is by no means the end of the story. The EC has granted a temporary approval to December 2017, and this will be reviewed in light of the findings of a further scientific assessment - this time by yet another group - The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki. This follows the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) who said in November 2015 that glyphosate "was unlikely to cause cancer in humans".

However, one change is now certain.

A number of glyphosate products are marketed with a co-formulant called POE tallow amine, which assists penetration and rainfastness. The use of this co-formulant is to be revoked which means that popular products in the UK such as Clinic Ace and Glyphos will eventually be withdrawn. No time scales for this have yet been announced (as at 09 September), but it is expected that on announcement there will be a six-months period for sales to be completed and then a further 12 months for growers to use up stocks - taking the use of these products to at least March 2018.

Fortunately, most glyphosate formulations, such as 'bioactive' products and the popular Monsanto Roundup ProActive and ProVantage do not contain tallow amines and will therefore be unaffected.

A list of the affected glyphosate products will be published in FTN when known.

## Spot spraying – an alternative option

Spot spraying by knapsack, whether for weeds or hylobius control, can be a difficult operation to gauge accurately, with the alternative, based on the cattle drench gun, often leading to aching hands due to the muscle power required to operate it.

So the introduction of the Dosador spot adapter from Brazil looked well worth appraising. This is a triggered measuring chamber which replaces the trigger mechanism on the knapsack sprayer.

The threads were the same as my CP knapsack so the conversion took just a few minutes to execute.

The spot application volume can be adjusted from 5ml to 25ml through a knurled disc. I set it to 10ml and depressed the trigger x10 and it gave me a very satisfactory 100ml.

There is a small 'dribble' at the end of each

## Drones for bracken control – is this the future?

Drone technology has improved dramatically over the last few years to the point where drones are rapidly gaining popularity for crop survey work, and now, for the application of herbicides.

Europe is rather lagging in the area as Japan has been utilising this technology for over a decade, so much of the development work has already been completed.

Crop surveying is typically undertaken with four rotor drones of a total weight of under 7kg. This weight limit is important, as this is the limit for 'low risk' commercial use, requiring only an NQE qualification, an appropriate public liability insurance, and PAW (permission for aerial work) from the Civil Air Authority for each flight site - which can be to maximum of 500m from the pilot (and a maximum height of 400ft).

The preferred option for spraying is an 8 or 12 rotor machine with a payload of 10kg+ which does require a higher level of supervision to operate, plus a PA7 spraying certificate.

There are some 10 pesticides approved for aerial application, including the insecticides lambda cyhalothrin, pirimicarb and diflubenzuron, the fungicides copper oxychloride and maneb and the herbicide asulam. Of these, only diflubenzuron (eg Dimilin) has full approval for use in the forest, and this for caterpillars including pine moth and pine looper.

However, of particular interest, is the potential for using Asulox, which currently has aerial authorisation for bracken control under the emergency approval procedure.

Aerial application is the method of choice for bracken control, but helicopter application is unsuitable for small areas, or ones with



multiple watercourses, and it is here that the drone could have a significant role, as hand application under the present regulations is impracticable.

Chinese specialist company DJI (Da-Jiang Innovations Science and Technology) has recently announced the 8 rotor Agras MG-1, which, assuming a 25 % solution of Asulox, will treat 0.25ha on each flight. Controlled by your ipad or iphone, one of the clever attributes of this machine is that the device remembers where the spray ran out - and returns to this location before applying the next bout.

Although the MG-1 is not available currently in the UK, drone specialist company DroneAG in Northumberland are developing similar 8 rotor spraying drones, to cost between £10k and £15k. They are currently negotiating approval for bracken spraying with CRD, and hope to gain a trial permit in time for applications over bracken this year.

Drone AG offer PA7 & CAA certification training, sales and contracting work, including aerial photography, and can be contacted on 01668 217100 or via [www.droneag.org](http://www.droneag.org)

spot spray, but no more than produced by many unconverted knapsacks.

The trigger spring is a little stronger than that on most knapsacks, but perfectly acceptable to work with.

Available from Christmas tree agent Snowbird at Grantham (tel: 01780 410 101 or [snowbird@btconnect.com](mailto:snowbird@btconnect.com)) the device + 45cm lance retails at £48 plus postage.

## MOT for mechanised sprayers

A reminder that any contractors or foresters who use tractor mounted or ATV mounted sprayers must have them tested by 13 November, after which their use will not be legal.

Details about the requirements and test centres can be found at <http://www.nsts.org.uk/about-sprayer-test-centres?mr=654>

## Change of email address

Please note that Colin Palmer's email address has changed to: [branchline@xln.co.uk](mailto:branchline@xln.co.uk) The @branchline.demon.co.uk domain now no longer functions.

### MEMBER SERVICES PESTICIDES HELPLINE



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

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# Thinning – a lost art?

One of my greatest pleasures as a harvesting forester at FC Grizedale in the mid-80s, and subsequently as a harvesting contractor, was to walk through a well-thinned stand of conifers. We were encouraged at Newton Rigg to measure the success of productive forestry in terms of the quality and proportion of sawlogs in a stand, and every operation, from ground preparation to final thinning, was a step on the way. Much depended on the skill and judgement of the harvesting squads, to strike that balance between the most beneficial thinning weight and the risk of windblow. Continuity played a big part; a squad would often thin the same stand several times, and would take pride in its development.

Now, as a forest surveyor, I visit dozens of stands throughout the north of England and Scotland, and can report that thinning appears to be a lost art. The majority of those stands in the 25-40 year-old range, mostly Sitka, have never been thinned. Admittedly, there may have been a degree of self-thinning, but this has often favoured the whips and wolf trees that would normally have been taken out; potential final-crop trees have struggled for space and light, and have put on height rather than girth. I find myself wondering if someone has actually done the sums, or whether this is a case of expediency over silviculture.

I spent my sandwich year with Tilhill, based in Carlisle, and much of that time producing Windthrow Hazard Classification maps for various properties in the Borders. Clearly, elevation was a major element, and the no-thin boundaries tended to follow contour lines. But the aim, as I understood it, was to identify stands that could, and would, be thinned. It was generally acknowledged that the first thinning may only break even, but was



seen as an investment, the dividend being the improving quality of the remaining trees. So what has changed?

I suspect, paradoxically, that technology has played a part. The chainsaw operator, looking up into the crowns to select the best stem to remove, has largely been replaced by a less-selective machine; the small thinning forwarder that could comfortably work in a single-tree-width rack has given way to one that would need two rows removed; and the

adoption of ditch-dollop ground preparation means that the huge quantities of brash and waste timber are not a hindrance to restocking. I also wonder if there simply isn't the managerial manpower to organise and supervise a selective thinning operation, as opposed to a clearfell.

I admit to an element of nostalgia. But I think I would miss the creativity of helping to mould 2500 trees per hectare into a quality final crop. Or even towards continuous cover.

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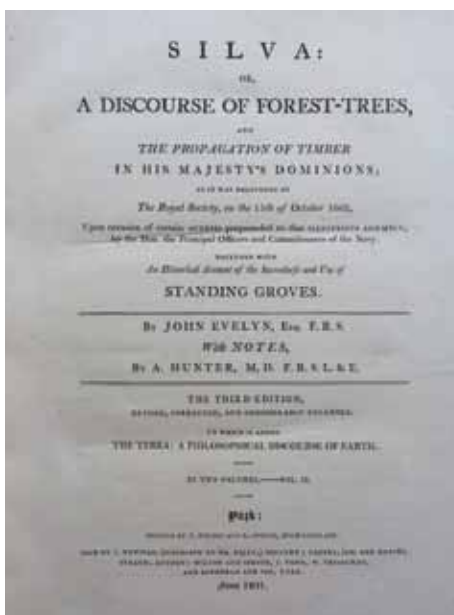
# Forestry's greatest literature?

This morning my wife and I were reading what I believe is the finest passage of prose in the English language – the first 14 verses of John's gospel in the Bible. Being in English it is a translation of course, but the words and what they say are sublime. It got me thinking about great literature in our field, forestry.

All of us will have our own opinions. What influenced us most? What did we find astonishing? What was so full of facts and advice that we return to it again and again? We can ask many questions as we explore this topic from different angles, and I expect there will be letters and correspondence offering many alternatives! Below I suggest five which I think measure up to being there among the all-time greats, plus an extra.

I list my offerings in chronological order of date of publication.

John Evelyn's *Silva*, presented to the Royal Society in 1662 and published in 1664, has to be one. Its numerous editions, its range and extent, its sheer breadth and depth of all things tree-wise – silviculture is much too narrow - has surely pride of place. I have a copy of Hunter's



The title page of Julian's 18th century edition of *Silva*

late 18th Century edition, interestingly spelt *Sylva* on the spine but *Silva* on the title page. In recent times there have been modern facsimiles and even a *New Sylva* by Gabriel Hemery which is modelled on Evelyn's *Magnus opus*.

The second for me is James Brown and John Nisbet's two volumes, *The Forester*, already in its 6th edition in 1894, which is the one I have, and runs to nearly 1200 pages. It is truly a silvicultural text and remarkably complete and, even today, always worth consulting.

Coming to the 20th century I offer Cyril Hart's *Practical Forestry for the Agent and*

*Surveyor*. This, too, has appeared in several editions and over several decades. What appeals is that as well as silviculture there is very practical advice on costings, returns, timber values, legislation and so on. For the student it was the finest of introductions to pretty well every aspect of our profession.

Perhaps a surprise is to cite David Johnston, Arnold Grayson and Roger Bradley's *Forest Planning*. It was a 21st birthday present while I was studying forestry at Bangor and I drank deeply from it to imbibe how modern economics and planning tools could be brought to bear on every aspect of managing a forest. While it was never revised from imperial to the metric system, it is unrivalled in its approach. A privilege for me is to have worked under all three authors in my research career.

Finally I include Oliver Rackham's antidote to *Forest Planning's* economic hegemony, *Ancient Woodlands*, published in 1980. Alongside Kirby's and Peterken's writings, it awakened foresters brought up on the uniformity of plantations to the immense value of woodlands for Britain's wildlife and biodiversity. For me it especially awakened interest in how the past has so influenced the present in shaping today's landscape and how coppice systems, woodland enclosures and related medieval practices played so central a role.

My 'extra' is not a great piece of writing, but tables of numbers, the Forestry Commission's *Booklet 34 Forest Management Tables*. Yield Class is at its core and this concept is Britain's greatest contribution to forest mensuration the world over: Booklet 34 was its apotheosis.

How grateful we should all be for the blessings of the labours of others.

## PUBLICATIONS

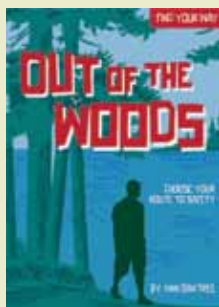
### Interactive adventure teaches forest safety

*Out of The Woods* – a new interactive forest adventure – is helping Forestry Commission Scotland explain the risks to be aware of in the woods in an unusual way.

With a nostalgic nod to the 'choose your own adventure' books from the 1980s, the self-directed story illustrates the range of dangers and risks hidden in a forest and gives a series of situations and a choice of actions or decision to be made. The mini-adventure lets children and adults alike safely encounter woodland dangers, assess their own risk and choose their route to safety.

Simon Hodge, Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise Scotland, which manages Scotland's national forest estate, said: "Forests are great places to go for a day out and are the perfect setting for adventures of all shapes and sizes but any adventurer worth their salt always makes sure that they don't do anything that will end up in them getting hurt.

"This story is a fun and safe way of letting young people know that the choices they make



will have consequences - that it's not such a good idea to clamber over that stack of logs, or that it's a really good idea to read the sign and do as it says."

The adventure takes 10 to 15 minutes and is ideal for a classroom or for home.

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/blog/1460-find-your-way>

### Harvesting Woodfuel from Hedges

This guide is based on the machinery trials carried out by the Organic Research Centre at Elm Farm and Wakelyns Agroforestry in

2014/15. It builds on related projects, and pulls together research, policy recommendations and management guidelines. It is aimed at those who are involved in managing hedges; farmers and landowners, agricultural, forestry and landscape contractors, countryside and conservation organisations, and local authorities.

It focuses on the logistics and practicalities as well as machinery selection and methods of harvesting hedges for woodfuel. It outlines why and how you might manage your hedges for woodfuel, includes advice on how to select appropriate hedges, how to plan their management, what the machinery and processing options are as well as the economics and legal considerations.

This guide is available to download as a pdf for free from the TWECOM page of the Organic Research Centre website at

<http://tinyurl.com/TWECOM>

For more information about this work, contact Dr Jo Smith at the Organic Research Centre at [jo.s@organicresearchcentre.com](mailto:jo.s@organicresearchcentre.com) or Meg Chambers at [meg.chambers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:meg.chambers@hotmail.co.uk)



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