

# FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS



December 2016 Issue 78

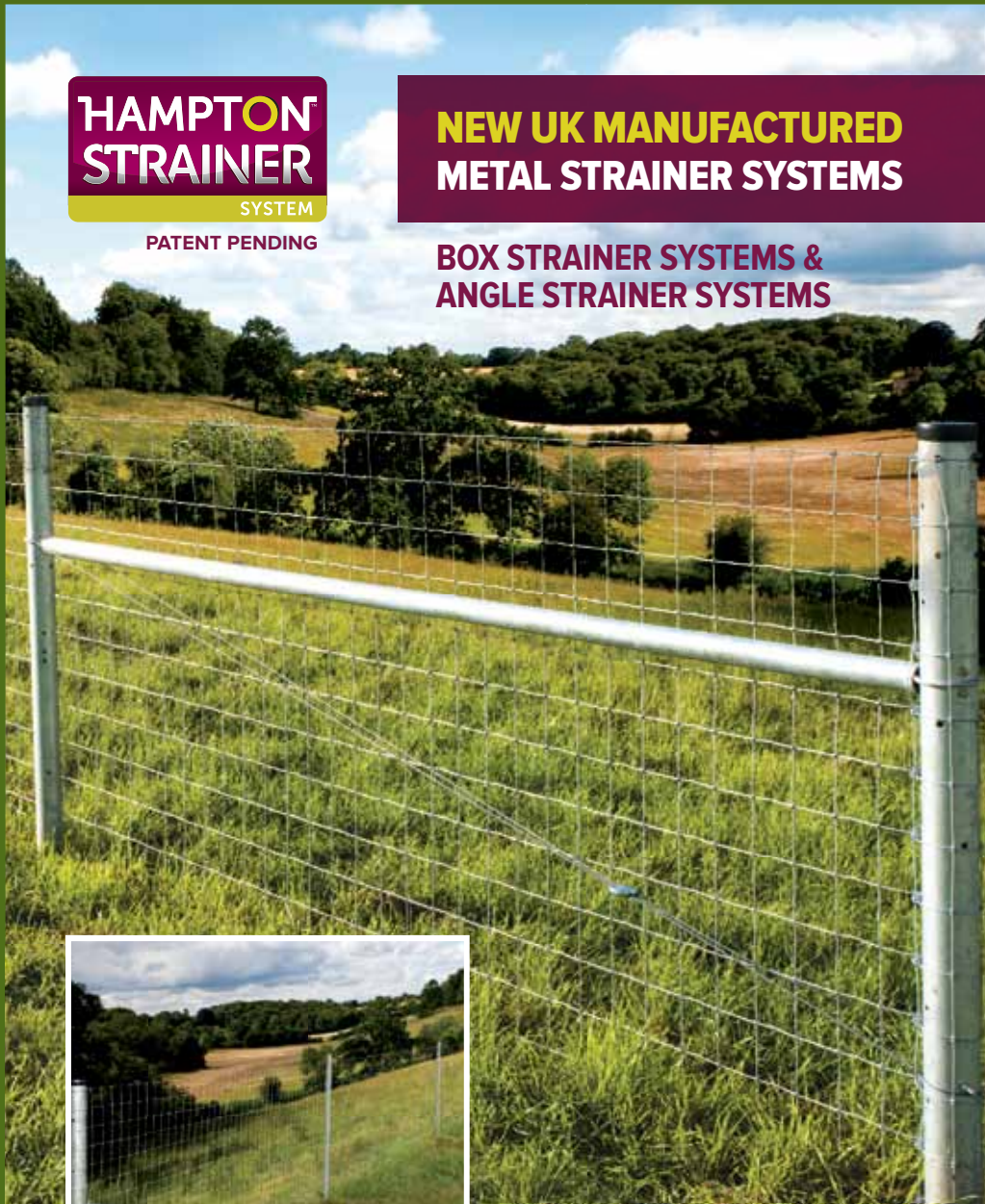
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Confor chief executive **Stuart Goodall** on the importance of getting across consistent, clear messages

## Sticking with the facts

‘Post-truth’ has been declared as the Oxford Dictionaries’ international word of the year. Defined as “circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than emotional appeals”, it could be summarised as “Listen to what I say, but not too closely...”.

Thankfully, at Confor we’re happy to stick with the facts, and this is central to how we lobby on behalf of the industry and promote it in the media. We produce objective, easily digested information that is tailored to the audience we are seeking to inform and influence.

2016 has seen our political influence increase further with our all-party group at Westminster securing an inquiry into forestry as well as funding for preparing planting plans. Across the UK we have frequent meetings with ministers and key politicians who can help support our objectives, from driving up planting to supporting our views in consultations.

We have also continued to secure mainstream media coverage of the sector, including persuading Countryfile to transmit a forestry feature in early 2017. This complements our strong online and social media presence, vital if we are to reach policy influencers, politicians and journalists. Our new website was shortlisted for the TTJ industry awards.

It is always challenging to get people to listen and especially to understand – it can take three or four attempts before the latter is achieved. It’s vital, therefore, that the sector provides consistent, clear messages and that we take every opportunity to get those messages over.

In that vein, I would encourage everyone in the sector to look (and keep looking) at the Confor website. Please link to it, feature the videos and animation on your own sites, join in social media and retweet or share our updates on LinkedIn. You can even talk to people about what’s on there – thankfully, face-to-face communication hasn’t yet become redundant.

We are always happy to provide you with copies of our material, please use it. And if you have secured media coverage, tell us so we can give it further publicity.

We need good awareness and understanding of our sector to secure further influence and impact, something we can work on together in 2017.

## All about membership

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

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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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Professor Julian Evans OBE FICFor



# FC set to fall short of planting target

- Confor says FC record “not good enough”
- Target “won’t be reached until 2027”
- Planting density raises concerns

The latest Forestry Commission planting statistics suggest the UK Government will fail in its pledge to plant 11m trees in the lifetime of the 2015-2020 Parliament – and will not meet the target until 2027.

When the latest FC figures were published, Confor calculated that an average of only 75,166 trees had been planted every month during the period since the present Government came to office. At that rate, it will take 12.2 years from the May 2015 election to hit the 11m trees target frequently repeated by Government ministers.

Confor’s chief executive Stuart Goodall described the planting figures as “simply not good enough”.

He said much more needed to be done and while he welcomed the recent announcement of the £19m Woodland Carbon Fund (WCF), there was a deeper, underlying problem.

He explained: “The planting figures describe ‘a slower uptake of the new grant’ under the Countryside Stewardship scheme. Confor and others warned that the scheme would be cumbersome and unattractive and that has proved to be the case. Defra and Forestry Commission England are seeking to understand the practical barriers to planting trees and there is a strong argument to follow Scotland’s lead where a former Chief Planner Jim Mackinnon was appointed by the forestry minister to examine what those barriers are and how to overcome them.”

Mr Goodall noted that the scheme at Jerah – a new productive woodland in Scotland – was a great example of modern, mixed forestry with 69% of productive conifers, 21% of na-

tive broadleaves and amenity species and 10% open ground.

“Jerah also involved very close working with the community, local authority, archaeologists and environmentalists to ensure the cultural and natural heritage of the area was respected,” said Mr Goodall. “It is a brilliant example of modern forest planting and collaboration with all the relevant interest groups.

“It shows what can be achieved by skilled, determined forestry professionals who can build partnerships – but it also highlights the very disappointing position in England”.

Mr Goodall also said there was a chance to highlight the potential of the forestry sector and schemes like Jerah when the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee takes evidence as part of its inquiry into forestry.

“We need to use the inquiry to really raise our sights about what can be achieved,” he said. “Forestry across the UK is worth almost £2bn to the UK economy every year and employs almost 80,000 people – but there is a massive demand for timber and strong policy drivers to increase employment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Confor’s response to the consultation says that the English forestry sector can “deliver not only for rural employment but also on the Government’s climate change commitments, and on the wider environmental, social and recreational benefits that could flow from that”. It also highlights Confor research suggesting 7000 new jobs could be created by exploiting new markets for timber and managing our forests more effectively.

## One million = plenty of trees?

Putting England’s tree planting record in perspective

### ENGLAND’S DISMAL RECORD

#### ENGLAND

Gross total land area of 13m ha (approx) of which 1009ha planted with 1,353,000 trees (no species breakdown available). Average planting density 1341 trees per hectare. Planting period from April 2015 until end Sept 2016.

#### JERAH

Gross land total of 1005ha of which 583ha planted with 1.3m trees of which 69% (897,000) productive conifers and 21% (273,000) native broadleaves and (13,000) Scots Pine. Average planting density 2230 trees per hectare. Planting time 22 weeks.



A significant million: Jerah was designed over a two-year period and planted in 2015, involving 583ha of woodland creation using 1.3m trees (and 16 species). (Photo: Tilhill)





# Scotland embraces 'once-in-a-generation' forestry opportunity

Confor is playing a central role in shaping the future of forestry in Scotland as full devolution presents a 'once-in-a-generation opportunity' for the sector.

The Scottish Government has pledged to introduce a new Bill, designed to replace the 1967 Forestry Act, by June 2017, with a new legislative and regulatory framework for forestry in Scotland. The proposals would create a new forestry division within the Scottish Government and a new agency to take on the work of Forest Enterprise Scotland managing the National Forest Estate.

The consultation on The Future of Forestry in Scotland ended on 09 November, with Confor submitting its evidence after a period of intense activity, including meetings with members and with Fergus Ewing, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity, who is taking forward the new legislation.

"Fergus Ewing has shown he is both passionate and practical in his approach to the future of forestry," said Confor chief executive Stuart Goodall. "He has already stressed that he wants to drive up planting and hit the annual 10,000 hectare target - and has taken practical action to do that by commissioning the report on barriers to planting from former Chief Planner Jim Mackinnon.

"It is also great to hear the Cabinet Secretary constantly referring to the £1 billion industry in Scotland and the 25,000 people employed by it. Not only that, Mr Ewing wants to grow the sector further by planting now to secure its future - and he has got himself out there in front of people who work in the sector, to hear their views directly and to discuss his plans openly. It's a really refreshing approach."

Mr Goodall

Fergus Ewing is 'passionate and practical in his approach to the future of forestry'

represented Confor at two forestry summits called by Fergus Ewing, in Dumfries & Galloway and the Highlands. The Confor chief executive spoke at the second summit and at a seminar which Confor helped to organise just a week before the consultation closed.

"There has been a lot of high-quality debate about the bill and what it proposes," said Mr Goodall. He said the three key questions were:

How do we help a successful industry to be even more successful?

How do we ensure we retain a strong core of forestry expertise at the heart of Government?

How do we guarantee future timber supplies from the National Forest Estate?

"If we can get it right, this really is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the sector to secure a bright long-term future."

The introduction to Confor's consultation response says: "The private sector, in particular through Confor, has found its voice and is taking a lead in developing policy for the sector and establishing how Scotland's forests, both private and public, can provide a myriad of economic, environmental and social benefits for the people of Scotland."

The Scottish Government is expected to publish the responses to the consultation by the end of November and its response by the end of February - before introducing the Bill in June.

"As well as engaging with Mr Ewing, we have been regularly speaking to his officials and advisers, and working with other MSPs to get them out to see the forestry sector at first hand," said Mr Goodall.

"We will continue to work with everyone who shares a desire to shape a positive future for forestry and for Scotland's economy, environment and communities."

Read Confor's responses to this and other consultations at [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)



# Producers should be market-led, conference delegates told

Forest owners must focus more on customers' needs, emphasise quality and embrace diversity to deliver economically successful woodlands. These were some of the central arguments made at Making Woodlands Pay, a conference organised by Confor and the Royal Forestry Society.

Forestry Commission Chairman, woodland owner and investment adviser Sir Harry Studholme said "producing what people want" had to be a primary consideration for all forest owners. And Keith Blacker, of wooden log store manufacturer Edystone of Llanfyllin, said the industry had to be much more focused on what the customer wanted. "The forestry sector tends to look at planting a tree first and thinking about what the customer wants last," Blacker said.

Sir Harry said the UK forestry sector had to be aware of the impact of and opportunities offered by global trends, especially the fact that China – already by far the world's largest timber importer – would require more imports in future when logging in its national forests ends in 2017. "Inexorable demand will fuel an enormous demand for timber," he said.

Oliver Combe, of Timber Auctions, said Brexit also offered major opportunities: "Our world was turned upside down but it does create opportunities." A sluggish market in late 2015 had transformed, with sawmills busy and looking for timber and investing in increased capacity. Prices for good-quality timber were strong, with the pound likely to remain weak for five to ten years – and if the pound continued to fall and reached parity with the Euro, Mr Combe thought we might see rising UK timber exports, possibly some of them to China.

However, Mr Combe said planting trends bore no relation to market demand. "We produce 12 million tonnes of softwoods annually in the UK and 500,000 tonnes of hardwood. That [much greater demand for softwood] does not represent what is happening with planting – we are planting more hardwood, which the market does not really want."

Sir Harry said it was "a real challenge" to ensure continued productive planting and warned of a hardwood glut, with the 500,000 tonnes likely to rise to three million tonnes due to planting

**“We are planting more hardwood, which the market does not really want.**

Sir Harry Studholme



A forest block is being surveyed to ensure the highest value is recovered from the trees. In this case, trees will be cut for niche market products. Credit: Forestry Commission

policies. Despite the rise in woodfuel demand, it would be tough to find markets for so much hardwood, he argued.

Oliver Combe said firewood markets, which had been "fantastic" for the forestry sector before tailing off due to imports and cheap oil, showed signs of bouncing back. Justin Mumford of Lockhart Garrett agreed, saying firewood had been a "fundamental game-changer for lowland forestry", with prices rising from around £2 to £22 per tonne – but he warned against complacency as half of UK internet firewood buyers were supplied with wood from abroad. He urged producers to diversify their markets and recover higher value from hardwood, not just "mash it up" into firewood. He added: "Quality is critical. If you have the quality, you can go up the value scale."



Scientist inspects some of the Sitka spruce pollens held in cold storage. Credit: Forestry Commission

## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT

### 'Keep an open mind when it comes to tree breeding'

Jason Sinden of Tilhill Forestry said if the forestry sector wanted to grow trees that provided strong, stiff timber with good sonic qualities and elasticity which did not warp when dried, it had to consider the entire range of possibilities to achieve this.

Tree breeding strategies were already moving from selection to editing and now building from scratch (synthetic organisms have been around since 2010), he concluded.

Steve Lee of Forest Research described the cost and complexity of "the long, slow process of tree breeding". He said good trees were a prod-





Effective marketing is important; you need to understand what you are selling.”

Justin Mumford thought woodland owners were becoming more savvy about marketing and said “a good quality brand and delivery to the end user allows you to gain a premium price”. However, he warned owners to invest early in the process to make woodlands pay - in mechanization, plant protection and especially infrastructure, which could save money further down the line on planting, maintenance and thinning.

Despite the uncertainty of Brexit, Mr Mumford thought grants were here to stay in forestry, especially as the government was looking increasingly at the sector’s wider benefits, including flood alleviation, climate change mitigation, soil management and biodiversity. He also stressed the growing importance of deriving an income from trees when “standing and alive” via recreational opportunities (like Go Ape and paintball centres) and the Woodland Carbon Code, which placed a new value on timber.

uct of both their environment and genetics and it was time-consuming, expensive and challenging to separate out the genetic element.

“Are we breeding the right trees?” Lee asked. “They [the coniferous trees currently the main research focus] are fast-growing and straight but a shorter rotation means there is more juvenile core at the centre of the tree – and we need to ensure that it is strong enough to make construction grade timber.”

Lee said we are sometimes guilty of wanting to grow the perfect tree and added: “One person’s perfect tree is another person’s wrong tree. We have to go where the money is.”

Confor’s Technical Director Andrew Heald said the UK should follow the lead of other countries and look to match species with soil and climate: “It’s called precise silviculture; what we do here is imprecise silviculture.”

Mr Heald admitted it was difficult to predict future market trends when looking at tree breeding. “When I first went to Brazil, they were trying to reduce the lignin in the tree. Now they want to increase the lignin because of its value as a fuel.”

## CERTIFICATION

# FSC International strikes again

Following FSC’s International rejection of the 4th revision of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, Confor has been working hard to resolve the issue as soon as possible. Technical Director Andrew Heald, said “We have had a frustrating meeting with the Director General of FSC International Kim Carstensen and with the Head of Policy Standards Unit Joachim Droste; four weeks after being told about the rejection we are still waiting for a detailed explanation of why.”

Andrew added “We have been in constant dialogue with FSC UK who have been very supportive and helpful in difficult circumstances.” Andrew

has also spoken with several members of the FSC International Board prior to their recent quarterly meeting. “It is hugely frustrating when FSC International say they want to streamline standards and focus on outcomes, that they then micro-manage UKWAS and dismiss the expert opinions of the 25 strong UKWAS Steering Group.”

The UKWAS steering group, which represents everyone from the RSPB and Woodland Trust to management companies and the ICF, was due to meet on Friday 02 December, when a decision on whether to appeal FSC International’s decision would be taken.

## Update on UKFS revision

Confor is representing forest owners and managers on the “Reference Group” which is advising on the light-touch review of the UK Forest Standard and guidelines documents. After a meeting of the group this month, Technical Director Andrew Heald says that “good progress has been made, and the project is on the right track”.

We expect to see a draft of the UKFS Guidelines documents around the turn of the year, and to have a new 4th edition of the Standard in place by the end of March 2017. This will update, consolidate and extend the life of the Standard and Guidelines and:

- ensure the series includes recent changes to legislation relevant to forestry and other regula-

tory requirements;

- reflect key policy changes arising from increased devolution;
- update with developments in the organisations and mandates of the forestry authorities (eg NRW replacing the Forestry Commission in Wales).

The review is being overseen by a Steering Group comprising forestry policy leads from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, chaired by Forestry Commission Cross-border services. Further input and advice is provided by the external reference group of sector representatives, including Confor.

The 4th edition will be digital only and optimised for mobile devices.

## Confor welcomes new Carbon Fund

A new grant opened on 10 November aimed at encouraging planting of new large-scale multi-purpose woodlands across the country. This will help to meet Government’s future carbon targets and deliver a wide range of other benefits including increased recreation, biodiversity, improved water quality, prevention of soil erosion, enhanced flood protection and producing timber and wood fuel.

“Confor has lobbied hard for greater productive tree planting, and this additional funding will help to provide the resource that the forestry sector needs for the future”, said chief executive Stuart Goodall.

“This fund will target the planting of forests over 30ha, the scale needed to make a new forest

viable for producing future supplies of wood, as well as delivering the wide range of environmental benefits that modern forests provide.”

The scheme is open to landowners, eligible farmers, local authorities, community forests and others. Multiple ownerships can apply for one scheme.

Maximum grants available will range between £6800 and £8500 per hectare depending on its location, with the higher rate available where there is an access need and permissive access is granted. Discretionary footpath access payments will also be available.

Details about the Woodland Carbon Fund, eligibility and the application forms and guidance are at [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-wcf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-wcf).

## Accolade for website

Confor’s new website was nominated for the 2016 Timber Trade Journal Annual Awards. Now in their 20th year, the Awards showcase the sector as a major, modern and forward-looking industry.

Narrowly missing out on a first place, Confor chief executive, Stuart Goodhall, said: “This nomination asserts our ambition to put communications at the heart of Confor’s operation to drive



UK forestry forwards. The team has worked really hard to get us here and I look forward to carrying this momentum into 2017”.

## TIMBER TRANSPORT

# Scottish rural roads fit for 21st century

by **Roland Stiven**,  
Project Manager,  
Timber Transport Forum



This summer Audit Scotland published their third report in six years on the state of Scotland's roads. They were looking at the effectiveness of management and maintenance measures across both the trunk roads (managed by Scottish Government) and the local roads managed by the local authorities. The figures they give are stark. Only 63% of local roads are considered to be in acceptable condition.

There are 56,000km of road in Scotland. The vast majority (94%), are local roads. Initial estimates by the Timber Transport Forum (a partnership of public and private organisations) suggest the forestry sector uses about a third of the local road network across 12 rural council areas, roughly 10,000km of minor roads. These are mostly 'C' and unclassified roads, serving around 3000 sites where timber leaves a forest and comes onto the public road network. Most of the roads are single tracked and were constructed to their current form about a century ago. Most of the forests have been planted since the 1950s.

This aged infrastructure puts a dampener on our industry. It adds to the many risks we deal with in managing forests and in marketing 7.5m tonnes of timber each year. It adds to the cost of haulage, creates friction with neighbouring communities and impacts on many day to day decisions such as, the viability of thinning, where to harvest first, what to replant and whether, and where, to plant new forests.

Poor infrastructure affects other land uses

and rural businesses too as well as the resilient locals who have to use the roads every day. In October the Forum attended the Rural Parliament – a gathering of rural development professionals and activists – and received strong support for our call for the modernisation of rural transport infrastructure. If we want a 21st century rural economy we need modern rural roads.

So how much might this cost? In 2014/15 Argyll and Bute Council upgraded about 11km of the B836 in Cowal to enable sustainable use by timber lorries. This involved strengthening edges, constructing or enlarging passing places, widening corners, resurfacing and white-lining. The £1,500,000 cost was half-funded by the Scottish Government's Strategic Timber Transport Scheme but still used up a large part of the road department's annual budget.

This level of investment might be warranted on a proportion of the 10,000km network. Roads with more occasional timber traffic could get away with less. So, let's say half a billion for starters?

### Limitations

The existing Strategic Timber Transport Fund has created about £50m of investment over ten years. It is valuable but has its limitations. As a non state-aid approved fund it focuses on environmental and social benefits which can make

the application process cumbersome. More critically however, the annual spend is often limited by the requirement for match funding. Council's respond to their local electorate's priorities. The roads departments are doing well if they can secure a few £100,000s for upgrading very minor roads and even then, an annual, time-limited grant can be difficult to respond to in terms of committee processes, followed by design and tendering timescales.

There remains a disconnect between national policies for land use – which are set and funded by national government – and the infrastructure they rely on, which is largely the responsibility of rural local authorities. The forests are here to stay and contribute £1bn each year to the Scottish economy, providing 25,000 jobs. Might the proposed integration of the Forestry Commission into Scottish Government encourage better policy alignment and resource integration?

There is no question that the rural roads need the investment. Forestry provides both a rationale and a spur for modernisation. In some places, infrastructure improvements will stimulate wider rural development.

The industry needs to press for a substantial, medium to long term programme of investment, with workable mechanisms for prioritising and resourcing. A 'Rural Deal'? or perhaps a Scottish Rural Infrastructure Programme?



“ There remains a disconnect between national policies for land use and the infrastructure they rely on

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# Project aims for efficiency and sustainability



A European research project is pioneering new applications to improve forest operations

How could the European bio-based industry intensify its practices and take advantage of its growth potential in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner? Research project EFFORTE is looking for answers from forest management and wood harvesting practices.

In a joint effort, European forest research institutions and industry are set to find cost-effective and environmentally friendly solutions for forest operations. One of the aims of the EFFORTE project is to develop real-time applications for forecasting the most efficient and environmentally sustainable interval for wood procurement and will develop and pilot new methods and applications utilising big data.

“The questions of terrain trafficability and environmental sustainability are very relevant to the forest sector all over Europe. In all parts of the continent, there are seasons of difficulty with the wood procurement process, especially concerning the condition of forest soil”, says EF-

FORTE project’s coordinator Jori Uusitalo from the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke).

## Efficiency also through mechanisation and big data

EFFORTE will also pursue higher productivity and efficiency in forest operations such as tree planting and young stand cleaning operations through mechanisation.

Big data, on the other hand, provides a huge opportunity to increase efficiency of forest operations. EFFORTE researchers will develop and pilot precision forestry applications together with the industry sector.

“Big data connects knowledge of weather and soil conditions and efficient silviculture and harvesting actions with the demand and expectations from forest industries and the society. This makes it possible to adopt precision forestry management practices”, Jori Uusitalo says.

## Public-private finance

EFFORTE brings together European research organisations and the forest industry. The project is financed by a new type of public-private partnership: the Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI). While the BBI program’s total funding is €3.7bn, EFFORTE project has a budget of €4.2m, half of which is financed by BBI and the other half funded by the consortium partners themselves.



## How the UK is contributing

by Shaun Mochan

Woodilee Consultancy and James Jones will undertake a UK-based field experiment in relation to trafficability on harvesting sites. The aim is to develop models of mechanical properties of forest soils based on soil texture, soil moisture status and forest stand levels. We will also look at ground pressure metrics and stress distribution at the machine tyre and track soil surface interface level to try and prevent major rutting on sensitive forest sites. The project also looks at soil deformation due to mechanized harvesting and forwarding operations and resilience of soil to compaction. The long-term effects of forest trafficability on soil function, ie is it detrimental to soil nutrient value, water exposure and replanting tree root development.

These field trials will be jointly coordinated by Woodilee and James Jones in the Aberdeenshire area on sandy, loam, clay soils. The outcomes will be simulated models and numerous reports relating to harvesting and soil water or ground water habitats in relation to nutrient value and growth sustainability and the silviculture effects of rutting, water, soil and harvesting methods; ie what machine type is best suited to different soil types and what is the long-term effect on second rotation crops.

The overall project aims to understand the different aspects of harvesting and silviculture systems relating to second rotation crops after harvesting, rutting and soil disturbance. We will also be using multiple data streams (‘big data’) analytics to derive model outcomes. We will be feeding in as much data as possible, such as stem file data from harvesters, machine outputs (eg fuel, hour operated, outputs, maintenance, tyre pressure, chain or tracks) and also forest data such as soil type, water, and the use of satellite and Lidar data to give accurate mapping and long-term planning.

*Shaun Mochan is managing director, Woodilee Consultancy Ltd*

## FACT FILE

EFFORTE is a three-year research project, continuing until 31 August 2019.

The project is coordinated by Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke).

### Project partners

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- Metsäteho Oy, Finland
- UPM-Kymmene OYJ, Finland
- Stora Enso OYJ, Finland
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- Holmen Aktiebolag, Sweden
- Sveaskog Förvaltnings AB, Sweden
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- Institut Technologique Foret Cellulose Bois-Construction Ameublement (FCBA), France
- Forets et Bois de L’est Société Cooperative Agricole (FBE), France
- Office National des Forets (ONF), France
- Société d’Exploitation Forestiere de l’Est (SEFE), France
- Comptoir des Bois de Brive (CBB), France
- Union Française Industries Cartons, Papiers et Celluloses (COPACEL), France
- Woodilee Consultancy Ltd, United Kingdom
- James Jones and Sons Ltd, United Kingdom
- Eidgenössisches Departement für Wirtschaft, Bildung und Forschung (WBF), Switzerland

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[www.bbi-europe.eu/project/efforte](http://www.bbi-europe.eu/project/efforte)



# Encouraging European collaboration on research and innovation

## Forest-based Sector Technology Platform



This summer saw the fruition of Forest Research's work to create a UK National Support Group to strengthen interactions with the European Forest-based Technology Platform (FTP).

Established in 2005, the FTP is an industry-driven initiative of the European forestry, woodworking, pulp, paper and processing industries. Its purpose is to drive innovation and European competitiveness by encouraging industry participation in research and ensuring forestry sector interests are properly reflected in EU research programmes. Its National Support Groups (NSGs) provide links to national research and innovation activities, and encourage the participation of national stakeholders in research.

With the addition of the UK, the FTP network now has NSGs in 24 European countries. Formalising the UK's full participation, FTP Managing Director Johan Elvnert emphasised the similarities between the UK and other European countries in terms of innovation interests: "Analysis carried out by the FTP in May 2016 confirmed that 80% of the innovation concerns of the UK forest-based sector are shared by other European partners."

**“The FTP ... has brought businesses and researchers from different sectors together to understand new opportunities**

Alison Melvin, Business Development Manager at Forest Research, who has led development of the UK NSG, explains that the focus is now to help UK stakeholders to foster and maintain longer-term research collaboration with their European counterparts.

"UK researchers have strong collaborations with European partners through participation in research programmes such as Horizon 2020, which we hope will continue, but participation in the FTP means we can also link directly with countries sharing similar innovation interests. For example, English regions with a predominance of hardwoods can benefit from connecting with French and German research and innovation initiatives in this field; and Scotland's softwood collaborations with the Nordic countries also provide good springboards for further development."

### Stakeholder support

The UK National Support Group has been warmly welcomed by industry stakeholders.

Andrew Heald, Confor's technical director believes the FTP will be a good catalyst to develop collaboration between businesses and researchers: "The FTP is acknowledged as one of the most successful of the EU's 26 Technology Platforms, not just because it has helped to double the funding for forest-based topics in Horizon 2020 work programmes, but also because it has brought businesses and researchers from different sectors together to understand new opportunities."

David Hopkins, Director of the Timber Trade Federation (TTF), added: "The UK is already greatly expanding its use of wood in construction, so there are great opportunities to develop European links in this part of the sector as well."  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/ftp](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/ftp)  
[www.forestplatform.org/en/about-ftp](http://www.forestplatform.org/en/about-ftp)

## Australians upgrade pulpwood into high-value hardwood substitute

Researchers from the Flinders Centre for NanoScale Science & Technology (CNST) in South Australia have collaborated with Australian company 3RT Holdings Pty Ltd to develop a method for converting cheap pulpwood into a highly sustainable tropical hardwood substitute.

3Wood contains the same properties as tropical hardwood but maintains a stronger dimensional stability and eliminates wastage.

"Almost 40 per cent of all logs in the world are being cut into chips for the pulp and paper industry", said 3RT managing director Peter Torreele. "This 3Wood makes the harvesting of native forests, unnecessary. We are aiming to replace all applications where today hardwood would be used if it were available – furniture, floors, frames and there are other possibilities – it is endless."

3Wood is made from a complete log – including wastewood – and does not bleed out or stain nearby floors or walls.

It is developed using ordinary pulpwood and then a water-based adhesive that reacts with the fibres in the wood to make it stronger.

### Compression

This process is known as lignocellulose manufacturing technology, which works to compress softwood to create a new product that is denser, harder and more durable than the original.

The wood is then exposed to a combination of temperature and pressure to form it into a rectangular shaped block with dimensions of 120cm x 13cm x 5cm.

CNST Director and co-developer David Lewis said 3Wood helped eliminate wastage and was a more environmentally friendly alternative to other products.

"We can manufacture blocks of wood out of pulpwood with the same strength as a 100-year-old tree but without the problems," he said.

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# Anti-forestry protests in County Leitrim

Not for the first time in its history Leitrim found itself in the forestry spotlight again this summer following a concerted campaign led by the Leitrim IFA (Irish Farmers Association) protesting and agitating against afforestation within the county. The campaign made national news in all media including TV, and necessitated the Minister Andrew Doyle going on national radio also to Leitrim to meet with the campaigners.

The protesters main claims were that forestry was a major contributor to de-population in the county, that investors, pension funds and vulture funds were responsible for most of the afforestation, and that very little employment was being created for Leitrim residents. Their headline claim was that 35% of the county was already planted however this was refuted by the minister as the official forest cover according to Forest Service statistics in Leitrim is 17%. In addition the claims that investors and pension/vulture funds were responsible for the majority of the planting were also rejected by the minister in parliament when he stated for the record that in 2015 80% of all new afforestation in Leitrim was carried out by farmers and in 2014 farmer planting accounted for 96% of the area afforested. The irony regarding employment is that one of the biggest employers in County Leitrim is Masonite Ltd. who employ 170 workers at their plant in Carrick on Shannon which manufactures moulded doors etc. from sawmill residues.

This is not the first time that forestry has been vilified in Leitrim. Back in the late eighties and early nineties when private afforestation was starting to gear up protests in Leitrim took a serious turn when machinery and equipment belonging to private forestry contractors was destroyed or burnt, and forestry personnel were prevented from gaining access to sites that were approved for planting. Going back further to the 1940s and continuing right through the

1950s, 60s and 70s state foresters encountered, and had to deal with frequent anti-forestry sentiment and resistance to state afforestation, which created difficulties in the day to day management of their forests.



The campaigners did succeed however in securing a commitment from the minister that a notice would have to be placed on all sites where owners are planning a forest in future as part of the approval process for grant aid. Forestry consultants and companies are concerned however that this will lead to a reduction in afforestation as potential new growers will be put off because the site notice will flag their intentions, and create pressure to sell their farms or land to locals rather than plant it.

## Dothistroma

The first case of Red Needle Blight in the Republic of Ireland was confirmed in October at two locations in Cork and Limerick. The species affected were thicket stage Scots pine. It is highly likely that more confirmations will follow especially as Scots pine has been planted extensively in mixtures as a nurse species for oak and beech since 1998 all over the country. In addition the fact that the disease has been present in Northern Ireland since 2011 will also impact on the spread of Dothistroma particularly in the northern counties of the republic.



## New Forestry Minister appointed

Ireland's forest industry got a new minister in 2016 with the appointment of Andrew Doyle T.D. The appointment was wholeheartedly welcomed by foresters, growers and the media alike as not alone does Andrew hail from County Wicklow, which at 22% has the most forest cover of any county in all of Ireland, but he is also a farm forester with over 30 acres of mainly conifer plantations on his farm in County Wicklow. In 2012 he chaired a strategically important Department of Agriculture committee which critically examined the role and future direction of Coillte, looking at potential options including a merger with Bord na Móna the state organisation with responsibility for the nation's bogs. Ultimately, however it was decided to leave Coillte intact.

He has a comprehensive knowledge of the industry, the personnel involved and the main current issues which need to be addressed. He is also seen as someone who will fight for more resources and a bigger budget for forestry at cabinet level, and who will be a tough negotiator at EU level because of his unique exposure to, and experience of the major benefits that forestry has brought to Ireland, and especially to his home county of Wicklow where it is an important source of employment. We wish him well over the next few years.

## Irish Forestry and Woodland Show 2017

The fourth IFWS will be back in in Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois on the 05-06 May 2017. The organisers have obviously responded to the very small attendance on the Sunday in 2015 and the views of many of the exhibitors who were not happy with having to exhibit on the Sunday, and gone back to a Friday and Saturday show. Hopefully there will be a major improvement to the organisation, promotion and onsite management of the show in 2017. In 2015 there was no show catalogue or programme, no public address and very little

signage on approaching roads or the wider regional road network. In addition it is imperative that the Forest Service have a prominent and active presence at the show after their absence in 2015 and hopefully will be joined by Coillte who were also absent in 2015. There was and is general agreement that Stradbally is an excellent site and location but the show needs a major organisational upgrade, bigger spend on promotion, and to have key stakeholders like the Forest Service and Coillte present if it is to survive and thrive.

## Timber prices

Timber prices in Ireland have softened considerably since the start of 2016 and that trend appears set to continue. Timber at roadside is currently trading at €32 for pulp, €45 for pallet and €60 for sawlog. First thinning's are still in good demand, with active competition between the panelboard sector and the general woodfuel & biomass sector keeping prices at very acceptable levels. Conifer first thinnings standing are selling from €8/m<sup>3</sup> to 12/m<sup>3</sup> with exceptional lots making up to €13/m<sup>3</sup>.

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# New value from multi-functional forests

**Jez Ralph** reports from the EIPAgri workshop on NTFP supply chains



Like agroforestry and tourism, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are usually considered fringe economic activities of forestry that are talked about more than their potential is ever realised. Yet over 90% of us regularly use and purchase forest-derived products. Think foliage and moss in floristry, wild mushroom packs in supermarkets, decorative cones, holly and mistletoe, the cork in last night's bottle of wine.

In an effort to drive forward technological advances that may create a growing industry, EIPAgri (The European Commission's agricultural innovation body) recently invited a group of forest supply chain experts to a workshop in Vienna to consider mechanisms for the development of serious NTFP supply chains.

It has always seemed a loss of potential that the vast volume of empty space and forest floor within a forest remains unused and under-

utilised. However, without good precedents that show how NTFPs can provide a real profitable product line, it will always be difficult to justify the investment needed to develop business ideas. At the workshop, amongst the usual case studies of wild mushroom markets and the highlighted benefits of extensive grazing of livestock in woodland and woodland for leisure activities - all of which offer relevant and interesting development opportunities - a number of new potential value chains stood out.

In particular those concentrating on technological advances to open up markets: a new drive towards bio-distillation of pine needles for resins, pharmaceuticals etc; the pulping of waste bark to create bio-composites for use in the burgeoning 3D printing sector; shade-tolerant herb and flower horticulture under canopy cover; grafting from plus trees to create pine orchards for the pine kernel industry on infertile land.

### A helping hand from technology: from traceability to redistributed manufacturing

Technology is providing a mechanism to develop products where previously the usual risk of NTFP development - lack of scale, low volume, niche markets, high costs - created a high level of vulnerability for businesses. This is especially true in the case of food products from

forests where a raft of legislation and also customer requirements demand traceability that can now be provided through use of now standard GPS enabled phones, apps and GIS software in a similar way to timber traceability. Likewise, issues of consistency in quality and supply, whether it be for niche fungus or bike trails, can be offset through digital aggregation of stocks and common selling through the web. Furthermore, advances in processing, such as small-scale distillation, is allowing localized producers to bring product to market cost-effectively.

This new world of "redistributed manufacturing" is taking hold in a huge variety of industries, not least of which agriculture, making use of relatively cheap digital technologies and both the timber and non-timber forest products are ripe for development and digital take up.



### Market the product, sell the story behind it

Whilst market assessments for new products can be difficult and legislation (especially in the case of producing and selling food crops) could make the timber world of felling licences seem child's play, in one area at least it seems forest products have a distinct promotional advantage over agricultural production. The idea of the traditional, the cultural and the wild connection to the forest can be harnessed in the same way the local food movement harness concepts of localness that draw in relatively high-spending demographics and small-volume niche products.

Potentially we are seeing a coming-of-age for non-timber products from our forests using technology to create production efficiencies and find markets within an increasing affluent population. Volume and niche markets, end use and part processed markets are beginning to be serviced from a maturing sector across Europe. And of course, the point of the workshop, European aid in the form of collaborative ventures and capital investment funding is available for development of these new products and services.

*Jez Ralph is the director of Timber Strategies (www.timberstrategies.com), estate manager at Hooke Park (hooke.park.aaschool.ac.uk) and managing Confor in England until Carolin's return from maternity leave.*

Do you exploit NTFPs as part of your business? Share your experience with us!  
[Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk](mailto:Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk)



Moss is a widely used NTFP. It is used for decorative purposes, and dyed varieties are available. Credit: gardeners.com



### Some web resources on non-timber forest products

**ForestHarvest** is a website dedicated to Scotland's wild and woodland products. It includes a directory of some of the businesses which are trading in wild harvested and woodland products.  
[www.forestharvest.org.uk](http://www.forestharvest.org.uk)

**StarTree** is a pan-European project to support the sustainable exploitation of forest resources for rural development. The webpage features regional case studies for West Wales and Scotland.  
<http://star-tree.eu/>

The **Forestry Commission** has a webpage on non-timber forest products:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/infd-5xney5](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/infd-5xney5)

# Climate change to drive growth in wood protection technology

By **Steve Young**,  
Wood Protection Association

The UK climate is getting warmer and wetter and British Standards and Building Regulations are likely to change as a result. From providing optional insurance against the risk of wood decay or insect attack right now, the use of pre-treated wood is likely to become a standard requirement for many structural timber components.

Carbon storage and supply sustainability are the environmental benefits driving the renaissance in the use of wood as a construction material. And it is another environmental factor – climate change – that is likely to drive a complementary growth in the use of pre-treated wood. Pre-treatment combats any potential for decay or wood boring insects and makes construction timber highly durable for 60 years and more.

### **BSI moves to adapt British Standards for climate change**

A warmer, wetter and more extreme climate for the UK is now regarded as inevitable, according to Defra's Climate Projections. It is also inevitable that more extreme weather patterns will increase the potential for fungal decay and insect attack in components made from un-treated softwoods of low natural durability. Roofing timbers exposed to wetting from leaks are particularly vulnerable. Almost every stick of softwood timber currently used in roof construction today is untreated. When it costs just £30 to pre-treat the volume of timber required for a typical house to use unprotected wood seems like folly. The Climate Change Act 2008 requires that public and statutory organisations take action to adapt to the more extreme weather patterns predicted by Defra. The British Standards Institution (BSI) has identified thirteen potential climate change impacts on standards that need to be addressed if a building is to have a long and useful life. As a consequence, BSI has instructed the committees responsible for the content of all British Standards to review the implications of climate change impacts and incorporate new guidance where appropriate.

### **Pre-treatment no longer an optional extra**

BSI Committee B515 deals with the wood preservation standard, BS8417. B515 Chairman, Dr Chris Coggins says that the consideration of more extreme weather conditions are not included

in the current 2014 version of BS8417 but this is likely to change sooner rather than later: "Improved guidance on timber protection standards to meet climate change impacts are essential," says Coggins who has confirmed that following the recent publication of BS EN 350: 2016 relating to the durability of certain species and the service life expectations of exposed heartwood then a review of BS8417 will follow in 2017. WPA Director Steve Young says that WPA will be making a strong case for moving the pre-treatment of some constructional timber components from 'optional' to 'essential'.

He says: "Building designers cannot afford to wait for climate change to reveal its full effects over time, they need to act now by specifying timber that is fit to take on the likely challenges to its long term performance and particularly the risk posed by the spread of termites and House longhorn beetle caused by a warmer climate."

### **Warmer climate means an increased threat of insects**

Termites have spread from southern Europe through France and Germany and are now found in Calais. Occasional isolated outbreaks have occurred in the UK, the most recent being in North Devon. The Government has funded extensive attempts to eradicate this outbreak but without success. It is probably only a matter of time before termites become a threat in Southern England. Although the House longhorn beetle is active in North West Surrey and all softwood roofing timbers in that area must be treated, outbreaks in other areas UK are not unknown. WPA warns that the spread of House longhorn beetle and termites are likely to be an inevitable consequence of a warmer UK climate.

This should not come as a surprise. WPA first published a Climate Change Guidance Note in 1996. This highlighted the increased risk to non-durable timber from insects like termites and House longhorn beetle and from damp penetration caused by driving rain, damaged roofs, condensation and flash flooding. About the same time, BRE also published a report on climate change impact on UK Building Regulations which also highlighted the potential spread of termites, House long horn beetle and other insects. These early warnings fell on deaf ears.

### **WPA set to provide essential specification guidance**

Whilst most designers now accept the need to pre-treat softwood components exposed to the elements against the risk of decay the use of treated wood for internal structural applications and roof-



Pre-treatment for roofing and structural timber may become essential when the impacts of warmer and wetter climate conditions are adopted into British Standards.

**Inset: A 25-year-old structural veranda post infested with Longhorn beetle, SE London; rare outside its Surrey heartland but a sign of things to come for the rest of UK?**





ing timbers has tended to be viewed as an optional extra. The risk of insect attack during the life of a building continues to be disregarded altogether. The WPA believes that the move by BSI to factor climate change impacts into British Standards will change this. Steve Young confirms that WPA strategy is focused on raising awareness about the quality treatment of wood and being the champion for its specification as a modern, relevant and cost-effective construction material. He says: "Climate change will inevitably open opportunities for preservative treatments and modified woods and the WPA intends to help develop those opportunities by providing the essential generic technical guidance that supplements the minimum requirements set out in British Standards"

[steve@wood-protection.org](mailto:steve@wood-protection.org)  
[www.wood-protection.org](http://www.wood-protection.org)

# Counting the cost of timber treatment compliance

With concerns about the meaningfulness and costs of timber treatment compliance, Confor has been lobbying hard to keep charge levels fair.

Timber, as a product, has excellent environmental credentials. Commonly used softwoods require preservative protection before they can be used for many outdoor applications. Most timber companies operating industrial wood preservation plant require Pollution Prevention & Control (PPC) permits to operate.

## What is happening in Scotland?

In Scotland, these operations received notification from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) informing them of new, more complex permit charging schemes resulting in higher charges than elsewhere in the UK, as well as costly compliance requirements.

At the beginning of 2016, Confor successfully lobbied the forestry minister to reduce the standard permitting charge implementing the Industrial Emissions Directive. We are still challenging interpretation of the Directive as it is clear that other Member States in the EU are not applying it the same way as in the UK.

In recent months, Confor has co-ordinated meetings with SEPA involving the Wood Protection Association and UKFPA as businesses in the sector face higher charging levels which are being phased in that will increase PPC permit annual subsistence fees for such operations from the previous level of £2320 per installation to £3566. This 54% overall increase is hugely significant for our industry, which is largely made up of small and medium sized businesses.

## England and Wales

Charges have not risen at all this year and look to remain stable next year too. In 2-3 years, the charge level for a permitted wood treatment plant in Lockerbie will be more than twice that of an almost identical operation in Carlisle. Of course, this effect is multiplied many times over for major sawmilling groups with multiple treatment sites, of which there are several in Scotland.

SEPA has given permit holders no real explanation for these changes, other than an unfocussed 'need to fully recover overheads'.

Industry has significant concerns about consistency, inflexibility and proportionality in setting the compliance conditions for permitting and, in particular, the hidden costs of compliance in terms of management time

and the need to employ consultants and sub-contractors to carry out specialist aspects of the work.

Confor has made clear that more thought needs to be given by SEPA to providing regional inspectors with guidance on the appropriate degree of regulation for our sector, proportionate to the level of risk rather than using a 'one size fits all' approach to permitting. We are also organising industry meetings with SEPA to discuss the charging regime and associated implementing requirements.

## How it adds up

### Environmental monitoring

No wood treatment companies have the expertise to conduct this work without expert help, the cost of which can easily exceed £10,000 in the first 18 months and many times that for major sawmilling groups.

### Noise measurement

Whilst there is clearly no significant noise hazard from a wood treatment plant (this is obvious from a site visit), SEPA have refused industry's proposal that monitoring is periodically carried out in-house and insisted on a disproportionately sophisticated survey that will require the use of expensive external consultants (again costing several thousands).

### Resource utilisation auditing

Wood treatment plants' operational use of resources is extremely simple and low level. As closed systems they also produce very little waste. Reporting in this area could be simple and concise but again SEPA are asking for a level of detail that will take up much valuable management time.

All of these are potentially very damaging to the economic viability of what are mostly small to medium-sized companies.

# Buying preservative-treated wood

## Guidance from the Wood Protection Association

Assume that all treated wood is the same and you could be making a big mistake. Whilst one piece of treated wood may look very much like another, the level of preservative protection could be very different.

That's because the British Standard for wood preservation, BS8417, requires that the level of preservative impregnated into the wood reflect the components' end use and service life.

An outdoor deck or fence post in ground

contact, for example, will contain higher levels of preservative than an internal floor joist. The level of treatment reflects the risk of wetting and the onset of decay in service. Use a joist treated for an indoor application for, say, a garden deck joist and premature failure is almost inevitable.

BS8417 groups wood used in construction and landscaping into four Use Classes:

**Use class 1:** for internal applications where there is infrequent risk of wetting

**Use class 2:** for internal applications such as roof timbers where the wood may be exposed

to wetting, condensation or damp over its service life

**Use class 3:** wood exposed to the weather but not in direct soil or fresh water contact

**Use class 4:** wood used in permanent contact with the ground or fresh water

BS8417 further tailors the level of preservative treatment of a component by service life. The Standard provides for three desired service life periods - 15 years, 30 years and 60 years. Treated wood performs fantastically when it is treated correctly for its end use and desired service life.

## WPA's 10 top tips for buying preservative-treated wood

1 Always identify the application Use Class before ordering

2 Tell your supplier, in writing on a purchase order, preferably, that the wood must be impregnated in accordance with BS8417 for this Use Class.

3 Specify the desired service life period you require: 15, 30 or 60 years.

For external applications like fencing and decking 15 years is the default standard. Longer desired service life components – for example – 30 years fence posts, are usually treated to order so build this lead time into your project plans.

4 Incising (symmetrical piercing of the surface of sawn timber) is used to assist preservative penetration. Expect to see it on square sawn posts treated for the higher 30-year specification in BS8417.

5 Ask your supplier to confirm on the delivery note/ invoice or provide a separate treatment certificate that the wood supplied meets your specification.

6 When buying treated wood from stock always get the supplier to verify in writing which Use Class and desired service life standard it is treated for.

7 Never substitute wood treated for an indoor Use Class for an external Use Class – failure is inevitable.

8 For wood in permanent ground or freshwater contact Use Class 4 levels of protection must be achieved. Anything less and service life, structural safety and customer satisfaction will be compromised.

9 Always use end grain preservative for sealing untreated wood exposed when cross cutting, notching or boring treated products during installation.

10 When third-party reassurance of fitness for purpose is required ask for components certificated under the WPA Benchmark quality assurance scheme. Find sources at [www.wood-protection.org/quality-assurance/](http://www.wood-protection.org/quality-assurance/)

If in doubt call the WPA helpline for free guidance on 01977 558274 or email [info@wood-protection.org](mailto:info@wood-protection.org)



## FENCING UPDATE

### UK Fencing Championships

It's that time of the year again! We are just in the early process of preparing for the 2017 UK Fencing Championships to be held on the 19 July at Driffeld Show.

If you are interested in competing in the 2017 competition please email, [simone@fencing-news.co.uk](mailto:simone@fencing-news.co.uk), fax 01274 621 730 or post: Fencing News, Office 1, 40 Stockhill Road, Greengates, Bradford, BD10 9AX

### UK-manufactured Hampton metal straining systems launched

Incorporating angle strainer and box strainer options, users of the new Hampton metal strainer systems can benefit from the superior durability and versatility of these ingenious metal designs.

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hassle free option that will last in excess of thirty years in normal conditions. The Hampton designed and patented, stainless steel strut connector, makes a change in the fence direction simple. Furthermore, ANY direction of the fence line can be achieved and multiple struts can be attached to any Hampton strainer post.

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The full Hampton product range can be viewed at [www.hamptonsteel.co.uk](http://www.hamptonsteel.co.uk). Contact the Hampton team on 01933 234070 to discuss your fencing requirements.



Hampton stand at the APF 2016





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# At last a UK quality scheme for treated wood!

**WPA Benchmark** – the quality scheme that gets right to the heart of treated wood fitness for purpose. **WPA Benchmark** provides independent reassurance that timber has been treated correctly for its end-use to deliver a service life in line with BS8417. Operated by the Wood Protection Association, the UK authority on wood preservation, **WPA Benchmark** has the credibility and relevance essential to build buyer confidence in treated wood performance.

For sources of treated wood products with the **WPA Benchmark** of quality e-mail: [info@wood-protection.org](mailto:info@wood-protection.org)  
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# A positive outlook for UK hardwoods

By **Tanya Gato**, Crown Estate

The Grown in Britain campaign took another step forward in September with the presentation of its feasibility study into the use of more home-grown hardwood by the UK construction industry.

The in-depth study titled “Woodstock” was launched at the last APF on 15/16 September, and aims to identify and address barriers to the expansion of the home grown hardwood sector.

## Reasons to be cheerful

The planets seem to be aligning for an improvement in the fortunes of the domestic timber industry.

The Social Value Act, which came into force in 2012, places a responsibility on public bodies to procure goods and services in a way that takes account of the social and environmental impacts of the procurement decision. Against this backdrop, GiB has been working hard in recent years to raise the profile of UK grown timber in all its guises, and has achieved significant endorsements from the construction companies, most of whom have a clear preference for products which are licensed as ‘Grown In Britain’ in their procurement statement.

With a total domestic hardwood consumption of 500,000m<sup>3</sup> per annum, of which less than 10% is from home grown sources, the potential to increase market share is clearly substantial.

Recent data suggests that we are not short of raw materials: The Forestry Commission’s 50-year forecast of hardwood timber availability in the UK (2014) estimates that there is in the order of 245m m<sup>3</sup> OB standing volume of broadleaf timber in the UK.

## The Woodstock Report

The Woodstock Report was inspired by GiB, with funding from Innovate UK and project leadership from English Woodlands Timber. It had

the specific aim of identifying opportunities for improving market share for domestic hardwood timber. The report has several authors and draws on expertise from across the forestry, sawmilling, and construction industries. Several aspects of the supply chain were researched in depth to look at constraints on increasing hardwood supplies, including growing stock availability, economic barriers to harvesting, potential processing efficiencies, and in particular constraints within the existing supply chain structure.

The Report is based on an in-depth survey of the views of two critical supply chain groups:

- **Suppliers & Processors:** round timber harvesters, timber importers, sawmillers, joinery manufacturers, & timber merchants.
- **End users:** including construction clients, Architects, Principal Contractors, and hardwood product manufacturers.

The survey responses reinforce the view that there is a desire amongst specifiers and end-users to engage with the home-grown supply chain. However, some barriers to greater utilisation of UK timber do exist. These were named by respondents as: a lack of knowledge as to who could supply home grown timber, belief that the timber required could not be supplied from UK sources and/or that UK-sourced material would be more expensive, and difficulties in procuring large volumes of finished products from a fragmented supply chain. Suppliers and processors highlighted issues around the consistency of grading standards, and supply lead times.

On the positive side, interviews with hardwood sawmillers showed that the industry has significant spare capacity in terms of both milling and kilning and could respond to higher demand if the opportunity arose.

At the growers end of the equation, the current expansion in biofuel harvesting may provide a baseline financial return from undermanaged woodlands, allowing even small amounts

## Next steps

The scale of untapped potential of the homegrown market, along with a currently favourable political climate, certainly gives cause for optimism. GIB’s next steps will focus on investigating options for:

- addressing customer demands for consistency of grading
- creating a consolidated supply platform to enable larger sawn product orders to be met
- financing the creation of larger stocks of standard joinery products sold in high volume.

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of millable hardwood present to be recovered economically, adding to available stocks.

The report also identifies that a further opportunities to displace imports could be achieved via species substitutions. The table indicates potential UK alternatives to imported hardwoods.

The Forestry Commissions Inventory Survey (2014) concluded that the current sustainable yield of hardwood from the UK Forest Estate could be around 10m m<sup>3</sup>, rising to 11.5m m<sup>3</sup> between 2017 and 2021, and in the longer-term stabilising at around 6m m<sup>3</sup>.

Assuming a conservative figure of 10% utilisation of the 6m m<sup>3</sup>, this could translate into 600,000m m<sup>3</sup> of quality sawlogs; after conversion, this could equate to 400,000m m<sup>3</sup> of sawn timber vs the 47,000m m<sup>3</sup> currently produced, or an eight to ten-fold increase on today’s position.

## Potential UK alternatives to imported hardwoods

Species	2014 Imported Quantity	Source	UK availability
Oak	168,000m <sup>3</sup>	Europe	Yes
Beech	25,000m <sup>3</sup>	Europe	Yes
Poplar	23,000m <sup>3</sup>	Europe	Yes
Ash	16,000m <sup>3</sup>	Europe	Yes
Maple	3,000m <sup>3</sup>	Europe	Yes
Cherry	1,000m <sup>3</sup>	Europe	Yes

For more information on how to join GIB as a grower, saw miller, or processor, please contact [enquiries@growninbritain.org](mailto:enquiries@growninbritain.org)  
The full report is available now available at [www.growninbritain.org](http://www.growninbritain.org)

# Conferences deliver the goods on timber housing

**Peter Wilson** reports on the Wood for Good 2016 conference programme

With the construction of huge numbers of new homes, a major policy ambition for both the UK and Scottish Governments, Wood for Good activity throughout the UK during 2016 focused on expanding the use of timber in new housing design and in demonstrating the many ways in which this can contribute significantly towards the volume of new units required. The principal vehicle for communicating these options to construction professionals, the development community and local politicians has been a high-profile series of conferences in four economically diverse locations - Edinburgh, Sheffield, London and Bristol - each of which explored a different aspect of modern housing design, but also the off-site manufacturing advantages inherent in the specification and use of modern timber products and systems.

## 1 The Innovative Timber House The New Architecture of Wood

The series began in Edinburgh with this conference aimed at providing delegates with fresh insights into the factors influencing the design of new housing and the inherent opportunities for innovation in new timber technology and timber construction methods. The event sought to capitalise on the existing knowledge and experience of timber construction amongst architects, engineers and other building industry professionals in Scotland, but whilst platform timber frame is undoubtedly the mainstay of house-building north of the border (occupying as it does upwards of 70 % of the market), its connection to larger concepts such as the circular economy and zero carbon construction led the audience into new - and for many - previously unknown areas of advanced timber technologies and the ecosystem that has now been established around the new Construction Scotland Innovation Centre to support new thinking in design and construction. To demonstrate how timber's many advantages might be exploited, connected areas of innovation in energy self-sufficiency and new financial models for housing preceded eye-opening presentations on subjects as diverse as radical new timber housing in the Netherlands and on the 'Wikihouse',

a digitally designed and locally manufactured, precision building system available to all as open-source software.

## 2 The Prefabricated Timber House Design

### Delivering Quality, Meeting Demand

The second conference - in Sheffield - sought to build on the Edinburgh event by highlighting the design and construction opportunities offered in offsite timber manufacturing, prefabrication and modular building technology and the different approaches available (hybrid, panellised, volumetric, etc.). Again, the intention was to broaden the context, first by explaining how offsite methods of construction can contribute significantly towards reaching zero carbon standards: second, to demonstrate how landfill waste from construction can be avoided or substantially reduced by utilising offsite manufacture; and third to highlight new technological and manufacturing developments in the use of timber products in UK housing design and the resources available to architects, engineers and other construction and housing professionals to help deliver a rapid, high-quality response to pressing housing demand. In taking these concepts into what was formerly the heartland of England's steel industry and where traditional methods of house construction still dominate, Wood for Good also sought to provide the local audience with information on current barriers to wide scale adoption of timber-based offsite construction and the possible routes to resolution.

## 3 Solid Timber House Vertical Timber City

A significant shift in emphasis from low-scale domestic construction to the latest advances in tall timber building design formed the basis of the programme for 'Solid Timber House / Vertical Timber City', held in the recently refurbished Canada House premises of the High Commission for Canada in London. The aim here was to identify the different structural and constructional approaches currently being taken to the design of tall timber buildings, an international phenomenon that has as yet shown no limits to the ambitions of the architects, engineers and clients pioneering the way. Discussion of the recently-completed 14 storey modular 'Treet'







**Above: Heartlands, a Custom Build project in Cornwall, by HTA Design**

**Left: Vertical buildings: Design for a new mixed use development with 240 apartments in Frihamnen, in Stockholm city by Tham & Videgård.**



tower in Bergen preceded presentations on 30+ storey timber residential structures in cities as far apart as Vancouver and Vienna before the most provocative proposal of all: an 80 storey residential timber spire situated in London's Barbican district. With timber lamination technology not yet available to manufacture columns several storeys in height and 2.5 - 2.5m square, such a development is still some distance from becoming a reality but, in positing it at all, the architects and engineers involved have clearly indicated the research, development and manufacturing demands that lie ahead for the industry. This, coupled with concomitant investigations into the various ways in which future tall timber structures can be serviced and their potential to be energy self-sufficient, the urban design issues affecting the development of future districts comprised of tall timber structures and the design of micro-climatic spaces between tall timber structures gives credence to the notion put forward by architect Alex de Rijke that whilst the 20th century was one of concrete construction, the 21st century has the potential to be all about wood.

The final conference, held in Bristol, addressed the most recent development in housing in years - that of self- and custom-build housing. So important to the UK Government is this approach to the delivery of new homes to help deliver on targets set, that some £3bn has been allocated to the 'Home Building Fund' for new developments in England. Richard Bacon MP, eloquently explained the background to the Private Members Bill he initiated and which entered the statute book in April as the 'Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015'. This, together with the subsequent 'Housing and Planning Act 2016', requires local authorities in England to maintain registers of people interested in self-building new homes and of land within their boundaries that can be made available for new developments of 5-200 houses.

The scale of endeavour required to deliver large numbers of new homes by this route inevitably means manufacture at both speed and volume, an unparalleled incentive and opportunity for offsite manufacture - and, importantly, for far greater use of UK grown timber.

*Continued on p25*





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Chassis ground floor by Facit Homes

Continued from p23

The major players in this game such as Igloo and HAB already recognise the environment and constructional benefits to be accrued from such an approach: the challenge is to ensure that other construction collaborations are also made aware of the modern timber offsite manufacturing technologies available. Inevitably, some discussion ensued of Legal and General's huge new facility near Leeds which is mooted to produce 3000 modular units per year as well as the cross laminated timber panels from which they will be made. Bruce Bell of Facit Homes pointed out, however, that to deliver the housing numbers targeted by government by this route would require one third of all the factory space in the UK to be put to this use - a highly unlikely development. His own approach: to use offsite manufacturing technology onsite - i.e temporary, localised, manufacturing capacity housed in transportable containers and using locally-procured materials - may yet prove to be the model for the future.

Through the course of these four seminal events, Wood for Good addressed the issues that underlie the UK's housing deficit by providing up-to-date, objective information on the potential of timber-based products and state-of-the-art timber technologies to deliver new and often radical approaches to the design and construction of new homes. In doing so, it has created an important opening for new thinking on how the UK's forest industry might supply much of the raw material required to make these high added value products and to support the scale of offsite manufacturing and modular construction that lies ahead. The challenge now for the industry is to pro-actively address what is unquestionably the biggest construction opportunity presented to it in years.

*Peter Wilson is an architect and director of Timber Design Initiatives Ltd. The company works to deliver new approaches to education, innovation and the demonstration of best practice in the use of wood in architecture, design and construction and was commissioned by Wood for Good to organise its 2016 conference series.*

## WOOD FOR GOOD UPDATE

### Proving the case for timber in design and construction



#### Wood for Good seminars, awards and case study collection

'SepTimber' presented a series of timber seminars in Scotland in collaboration with FCS, A&DS and Edinburgh Napier University. In October, Wood for Good's last conference focussed on the new 'Right to Build' legislation and how to unleash the potential of the custom build market - evidently choosing timber solutions.

Various awards celebrated timber excellence throughout the autumn. Supporting the use of timber in social housing, Wood for Good presented the Structural Timber Award in this category. The campaign awarded best use of timber at the GIA Design awards. A major sponsor to the Wood Awards, the campaign highlighted win-

ning projects throughout November.

For 2017, a website relaunch is planned. The new site will feature more case studies with direct links to design and construction teams and their timber suppliers. It will also introduce a CPD events calendar including seminars for specifiers and contractors from across the industry.

If you have supplied timber to an interesting housing, education or public building project over the past two years or offer a training event on the use of timber, please contact: [Christiane.lellig@woodforgood.com](mailto:Christiane.lellig@woodforgood.com)



The Westwater Building - Dollar Academy; GIA Design Award 2016, Page Park Architects



### Best practice collaboration scoops Structural Timber Award

#### Dover Council/ Kingspan/ Jenner awarded best Social Housing project 2016

An annual celebration of excellence in the application of structural timber, Wood for Good proudly presented the Structural Timber Award for Social Housing this year. Four projects had been shortlisted in this category, showcasing innovative and best practice examples of collaboration, affordable housing in affluent areas and cost-effective developments in highly deprived areas.

Awarded best Social Housing project 2016, Castle Street Dover received highest acclaim as an outstanding example of collaboration between the Local Authority (Dover District Council), a developer (Kingspan Timber Solutions) and a specialist contractor (Jenner).

The development consists of eight affordable apartments on Castle Street, Dover. It is the first project in the planned regeneration of an affluent conservation area. The purpose-

built apartments were developed to provide affordable accommodation for retirees seeking to downsize.

Further shortlisted were Windmill House by Ocean Housing / Gilbert & Goode, Symonds Close by Winchester Council / T2 Architects, and Meadow Road by Worthing Homes.

Over 200 submissions had been entered for this year's Structural Timber Award. The big winner of this year's ceremony is Sarah Wigglesworth Architects for their Mellor Primary School project. The project was awarded Best Education Project and received the Judges Choice Award, the highest recognition across all award categories.

**Above: Christiane Lellig of Wood for Good joins the winning project team in the Social Housing category (Castle street)**

# Pioneering policy for Powys timber

By **Gary Newman** and **Tabitha Binding**

Powys County Council is taking a leadership role in the development of the Welsh timber industry. As Wales' largest county, Powys has a large area of land on which to grow trees, is the home of BSW and its geographical location enables it to service a ready market for timber products throughout Wales and England. The newly acquired freedom to build council houses has created a strong desire within the Powys Housing department to join-up timber supply with housing demand to facilitate the construction of modern high-performance timber houses and do this in a manner that maximises the social benefit of their procurement helping to create much needed employment opportunities for local people.

The first step for Powys was to create the Home Grown Home Partnership. The Partnership is chaired by Simon Inkson (Head of Housing in Powys) and consists of seven social housing providers, the Welsh Local Government Association and Community Housing Cymru (the umbrella body for the social housing or-



**Wales and West Housing's three story 13 unit development at Rhos on Sea (not Powys) using homegrown timber. WWH is one of the social housing members of the Home Grown Homes Partnership.**

ganisation who currently build 25% of all new homes in Wales). The purpose of this Partnership is to support the construction of modern high-performance and affordable homes in Wales which are based upon the use of wood and uses local manufacturers and local and homegrown timber resources where practical and possible.

### European funding

In August this year, the Home Grown Homes Partnership secured European Arwain funding to support supply chain development and have contracted Welsh timber development organisation, Woodknowledge Wales, to act as advisors to the Partnership and to develop a three year all Wales RDP project which is expected to begin in Spring 2017. An early priority has been to develop the Powys Wood Encouragement

Policy which is to be underpinned by an Action Plan to help turn aspiration into reality. This Wood Encouragement Policy took inspiration from a similar policy established in Victoria, Australia, and has also built on the lesson from the Wood First policy pioneered in British Columbia and adopted by Wood for Good in the UK. The Powys Wood Encouragement Policy is currently in draft form but will hopefully be approved and adopted before the end of this year.

Woodknowledge Wales and the Home Grown Homes Partnership anticipate that the pioneering leadership shown in Powys will spread to other Local Authorities – with the ultimate hope that Welsh Government will create and implement an industrial strategy for wood. In that regard the Swiss Government Wood Resource Policy sets a precedent and provides a useful template to follow.

## Opportunities for Welsh timber

Arguably there has never been so much favourable policy to support an unflinching focus on development of Welsh timber industries. Leaving aside Brexit, three key current opportunities are:

- The Climate Change Commission report following the historic Paris Agreement has, for the first time, described a target for creating a carbon store in construction by using timber. In short, if we want to both mitigate climate change and create new housing, then the material to use is wood.
- A recent high-level construction sector report – the so-called Farmer Review titled 'Modernise or Die' – has not minced words about the future for construction in the UK. The review states that skills shortages demand that house building moves rapidly to pre-manufactured approaches. The report

even recommends fiscal levers to drive this shift. The pre-eminent material for off-site construction is wood.

- Equally, the aspirations of the ambitious piece of social legislation in Wales – the Well-being of Future Generations Act, must surely lead to policies to support the substantial and sustainable expansion of Welsh forest industries.

However, Woodknowledge Wales chief executive, Gary Newman believes that success of the Powys Wood Encouragement Policy is not simply in the hands of the public sector. Targeting optimum economic, social and environmental outcomes is not a pick and mix exercise and demands more than a change in the public policy. He believes that the construction industry needs to rise to the challenge and focus more upon quality, sustainability and productivity innovations to improve the cost and performance of new homes. Growers and processors should, amongst other things, seek to maximise the value and benefit of wood by following a cascade principle of use which targets higher value construction sawnwood first.

Simon Inkson, Head of Housing at Powys County Council and chair of the Home Grown Homes Partnership said: "Powys County Council is determined to develop innovative solutions to address the loss of young economically active households from our communities by creating jobs in the growth, harvesting, processing and manufacture of homes from natural timber resources grown in rural communities.

"The project will, by creating well paid employment opportunities, play a part in addressing rural poverty. In the medium to longer term substantial sums of public and private finance will be invested in the growth of the city-regions of Wales and beyond. This project provides an opportunity for rural areas to flourish as a result of this investment and ensure that rural communities remain vibrant places for people to live, work and play in. This project is a key element of our Housing Strategy and we will work with partners across Wales to support them in the same way."





**The Wood Award 2016 judges selected Stanbrook Abbey as the Education & Public Sector category winner as it is “spiritually uplifting and sculptural within the landscape. The detailing on the furniture pieces in the church is superb”.**

**Location:** Wass, Yorkshire

**Architect:** Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

**Client/Owner:** Conventus of our Lady of Consolation, Stanbrook Abbey

**Structural Engineer:** Structures One, Buro Happold

**Main Contractor/Builder:** William Birch Construction, QSP Construction

**Joinery Company:** QSP Construction

**Organ Builder:** Jennings Organs

**Choir Stall Manufacturer:** Ooma Design Ltd

**Wood Supplier:** James Burrell, Vastern Timber Company Ltd

**Wood Species:** German Oak, Scottish Spruce, Douglas Fir, British Sycamore

<http://woodawards.com/shortlist-2016/stanbrook-abbey/>



Image: Hydar Dewachi

Magz Hall, Dreamspace (2016), commissioned for Jerwood Open Forest 2016, supported by Jerwood Charitable Foundation, Forestry Commission England and Arts Council England. Jerwood Open Forest runs from 2 November - 11 December 2016 (Mon–Fri from 10am–5pm, Sat & Sun from 10am–3pm) at Jerwood Space, 171 Union Street, London SE1 0LN.  
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# Market settles to business as usual

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



After a record year in 2015, the volume of UK forestry transactions has returned to its usual level. The exceptional activity in 2015 was the sale of UPM's Portfolio at £50m which was a one-off event.

## Scotland

The activity through 2016 has been slightly different in terms of the quality of forestry property presented to the market. There have been several forests of large acreage but relatively lower quality than in previous years. For example, the Forestry Commission's sale of The Barracks - 4500ha of maturing conifer crop. Located close to Rannoch Moor in the very heart of Scotland, it is some distance from markets and correspondingly not of the same value per hectare as a similarly aged crop in, say, the Scottish Borders. There have also been sales in the far north of Scotland where the road structure is not designed for carrying regular timber traffic. Agreed protocols for timber haulage have been put in place but this tends to prolong the forecast harvesting period for any specific forest, with a corresponding knock-on effect on the market value. These extensive plantations will produce substantial volumes of timber. It may be no bad thing that its extraction will be spread over a longer period in the context of sustainability.

In terms of market values, the sale of The Barracks achieved £2632 per stocked hectare for crops dating from 1960 through to 1990. In Caithness the Strathmore forest, 2769 hectare, comprised crops dating from 1981 to 1987. The sale price equated to about £2200 per stocked hectare. This reflected the quality of the crop and the distance from timber markets.

In contrast, market activity in the commercial forestry hotspots of the Scottish Borders has been relatively quieter this year, at least until recently. A notable sale at Black Stockarton, 143ha of high-yield class spruce, sold at over £14,000 per stocked hectare. As we go to print, John Clegg & Co is just launching Heathpool on to the market - 233ha of prime quality spruce,



Clockwise from above: The Barracks, Lock Wood and Heathpool

planted in 1990. This looks on track to generate timber income in about 10 years from now, potentially a very good time to have timber for sale. The guide price is £1.425m. Situated not far south of Edinburgh, this is likely to attract very strong interest.

New afforestation is being encouraged across the UK. Grant support for planting has generally looked attractive. The off-putting problem has been the convoluted consultation process with no predictable outcomes. This uncertainty has undoubtedly had a negative effect on potential investment. We detect that this is changing. The Scottish Government is now very keen to see new forestry moving ahead. England, particularly northern counties, is looking to forestry as a means of flood amelioration and we are beginning to see a number of quite substantial new planting schemes being considered. Recent announcements include £19m of grant support for new productive forest planting in England with a carbon sequestration target. Looking ahead to the projected reduction in home grown timber supplies beyond about 2035, this is very encouraging and, indeed, essential for the long-term wellbeing of the forestry sector.

## England and Wales

In England and Wales large-scale opportunities on the open market have been very scarce despite strong demand for quality woods in good locations. A private transaction was completed for substantial productive forest in northern

England at an indicated price of over £11,750 per hectare.

As I write, Savills have launched the Dunster Woods in Somerset. They are offered in three lots of 264ha, 183ha and 77ha, described as "a productive commercial forestry investment" guided at £2,950,000, £2,400,000 and £900,000 respectively. These are woods with a long reputation for quality and are expected to attract good interest.

At a smaller scale Lock Wood comprises 35.5ha on the banks of the River Thames. Visitors will be impressed by the quality of trees and its privacy. Unusually, the property includes an island in the Thames. In the past, an ornate bridge connected Lock Wood to the island where a most attractive pair of thatched cottages - now gone - was situated. Pleasure steamers ran from Oxford to the island, where afternoon tea could be taken by appointment. It is reputed Alice Liddell used to visit the island with Lewis Carroll who penned 'Alice Through the Looking Glass' shortly after one of these visits. All this at a guide price of offers over £800,000 via John Clegg & Co.

The same agents saw remarkable interest in Oakwood West, 34.0ha of beautifully presented late rotation conifers and broadleaves - a fine tribute to over 40 years of management by Roger Fitter, MBE - close to the popular location of Chichester, again demonstrated the virtues of quality and location. Guided at £560,000, offers over this figure were received at a very competi-

*Continued on p30*

Continued from p29  
tive closing date.

Swinn Wood in Lincolnshire was one of the strongest conservation woodlands seen on the market in many years. Managed for conservation over many years, detailed records had been kept on the wide variety of flora and fauna and six ponds had been created to attract additional wildlife. Despite its fairly remote location near Mablethorpe, the 20ha created strong interest with a sale price well in excess of the guide of £160,000. The quality here was not in the timber content but in the conservation interest.

Mid-November, at last saw a substantial Welsh upland, principally Sitka spruce, plantation in the 2016 market. Blaen Lliw Uchaf, 58.75ha near Bala in North Wales is guided at £450,000 via John Clegg & Co.

So although a quieter year in terms of total value, the market has shown considerable resilience with investors continuing to show confidence in forestry as a long term asset. The most important feature is that this is spread across the quality and geographic spectrum. There really is a forest to suit everyone.



## UK Forest Market Report

The annual report was launched on 16 and 17 November, in London and Edinburgh, to a diverse audience of woodland owners, investors, lawyers, land owners and other representatives of the UK forest industry.

Confor's Technical Director Andrew Heald attended: "At a time of economic uncertainty, particularly around the future of agricultural support payments, it was good to see so much confidence in the forestry and timber sector. Productive forestry is a great opportunity to deliver both economically and environmental diversity and resilience for our rural economy, and to create secure well paid jobs." The above article is a summary of the information compiled in the annual report.

[www.confor.org.uk/resources/publications/reference-publications/](http://www.confor.org.uk/resources/publications/reference-publications/)

# Currency movements dominate home grown sawn markets

## Euroforest market report, by Ashley Williams

The pound has been on a rollercoaster ride ever since the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU in June this year. The pound which began 2016 at about 1.40 to the euro is now trading at 1.15 having dipped to almost 1.05 post the Brexit vote. The value of sawn timber in the UK is heavily influenced by currency movements and having been held back by the value of sterling earlier in the year sawn timber prices are beginning to recover and the hope is that as the market picks up next spring that prices will recover. This should enable the UK home grown trade to recover some of the margin it has certainly lost since the second half of 2015 and all through 2016.

The signs are positive for UK sawmillers to have a very good year in 2017 provided there are no further significant movements in currency or other shocks in the economy. This augers very well for timber growers, with an anticipated strong demand for sawlogs in particular. UK sawmiller will be looking to respond to strong demand for their product by operating at full capacity and therefore looking for increased log volume with all the usual associated movement in price that follows increased demand.

The only downside on the demand front is small roundwood; there are significant downward pressures on small roundwood demand, the biggest of these being the slowdown of intake into Kronospan's plant at Chirk. Following a reduction in power availability at the plant due to a turbine failure, production has had to be readjusted. This has led to a significant reduction in small roundwood intake of almost 30,000 tonnes a week. The removal of such a substantial volume from the market has an inevitable effect on the movement of small roundwood on a national basis. It illustrates just how important the board manufactures are to the health of a functioning market in home grown timber. The disruption of supplies into Chirk is likely to continue until March and it will be sometime after that, that the market begins

to restore some equilibrium.

Other challenges in the small round wood market are the demise of Verdo as a pellet manufacturer in the UK. Verdo announced in October that they are closing both manufacturing plants at Andover and Grangemouth citing changes in carbon taxation and competition from imported pellets keeping prices at unsustainably low levels. Verdo will continue to distribute pellets and briquettes from the site at Andover. The movement in carbon taxes is effecting several biomass type operations with the biomass power station at Port Talbot in south Wales recently going into administration. The plant is still operating whilst a new buyer is sought.

There are, however, some good news for the small roundwood market - the commissioning of the Volac biomass plant near Lampeter in South Wales, together with the announcement of a new biomass-fired power station at Sandwich in Kent. The new plant in Kent being built by CIP of Denmark, will take largely hardwood roundwood, providing an outlet for hardwood that has been short of a market since the closure of the Bowater's plant in Kemsley some 30 years ago. The plant at Sandwich will begin taking deliveries from mid-2017, gearing up towards full production in mid-2018.

The market for standing timber in England and Wales has remained buoyant throughout the year with stable prices and plenty of demand for all softwood standing parcels. This reflects the nature of the sawn market in the south which is dominated by sawmillers who are by and large servicing the sawn fencing market which has been reasonably steady this year. The market in the north has been more subdued earlier in the year with demand beginning to strengthen as the year draws to a close. This reflects the sawn construction market which most mills believe is set fair for next year, and are therefore looking to make sure they are well placed for log supplies going into 2017. The picture for the growers going into 2017 looks somewhat rosier than it did twelve months ago. Prices for sawlogs look set fair for next year with the only constraining factor on standing prices being the restricted outlets for small round wood.

## Investing in forestry


Asset manager Gresham House has announced the first close of the Gresham House Forestry Fund LP with £15m of commitments and finance raised, including £1.25m from Gresham House.

There is a new expression of interest window open for Enterprise M3 Wood Processing Grants in Sussex Surrey and Hampshire that Confor work has helped put in place. The

window closes on 09 December, but calls for Expressions of Interest are anticipated. [www.enterprisem3.org.uk/enterprise-m3-wood-processing-grant-programme](http://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/enterprise-m3-wood-processing-grant-programme)

The Wales Business Fund supports businesses looking to start up or expand through debt and equity investments. Funding is available for SMEs with fewer than 250 employees, based in, or willing to relocate to Wales. Details at: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/blog/news/wales-business-fund>





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# Plant Health Advisory Forum

The Plant Health Advisory Forum is the principal means by which Government officials and stakeholders can consider strategic plant and tree health policy issues together to help develop policy options and advice to ministers.

Established in April 2012, its focus is primarily on strategic, longer-term and cross-cutting matters with a potentially high impact, and where communication with and input from the various sectors are key to success.

Membership includes representatives of relevant industry and other interested stakeholder groups, Defra officials, representatives from the Devolved Administrations and the Forestry Commission. The forum provides an opportunity for early discussion on emerging or developing issues, as well as increasing transparency and understanding for all participants of positions across the range of interests.

While plant health is an area of devolved policy responsibility, the nature of plant health threats makes it important to have good co-ordination at UK level, involving all Devolved Administrations. This was vital in drawing up an agreed UK position in the negotiations on revi-

sions to the EU Plant Health regime including on policy options to deal with potential plant health threats associated with new trades.

While the forum has established good engagement and helped develop shared Government and trade positions on key plant health issues, it is always looking to improve this further. They regularly review membership and keep the forward agenda flexible to allow discussions on key plant health priorities or trade interests.

The Plant Health Advisory Forum is also reviewing how the group is positioned in relation to other industry engagement forums, including those that focus on tree health and also more technical trade engagement meetings to ensure it is coordinating as effectively as possible and covering a breadth of issues.

The forum will continue to provide the principal means by which Government officials and stakeholders work together to shape future policy, and wants stakeholders to have a say in how the forum can better serve them. Over the forthcoming months they'll be inviting people to suggest improvements – watch this space for your chance to get involved.

## TREE HEALTH UPDATE



### Confor supports biological control for *D micans*

As we move into winter control, monitoring work of most current threats reduces and it is a chance to take stock of where work has got to over the summer. The last major control programme of the season is the release of *Rhizophagus grandis* in infected spruce stands to control the Great spruce bark beetle, *Dendroctonus micans*. *R grandis* is a host-specific predatory beetle. This work is being undertaken in a collaboration between Confor and Forest Research, with generous support of Confor members. After some initial difficulty with breeding of *R grandis*, releases will have taken place on all reported infected sites in Scotland and Southwest England by the end of November. Results of the current work will be reported as the control work progresses but to continue the work we are still actively seeking donations from members. The control work will be featured on Farming Today in early December.

More about the management of the Great spruce bark beetle using *R grandis* can be found on the FC website: [www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/inf6d-6xpc8d](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/inf6d-6xpc8d)

### Keeping abreast of threats and best practice

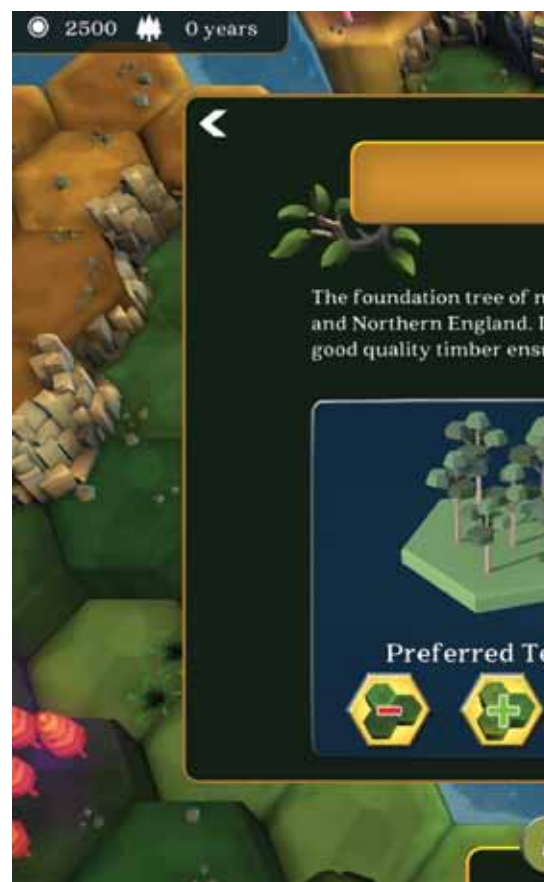
Confor is involved with a number of tree health groups to keep informed of changes to threat levels and also to put forward views on such things as the impact of possible bio-passports on timber movements within the UK. This includes regular updates of the Plant Health Risk Register which covers all potential threats with a given risk rating. It is impossible to report all new entries each quarter but of new potential threats it has been reported that globus scale, an insect attacking prunus species, has been moving north through Europe and could be present in southern England. Likewise, an incident of the fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica* has been found on Sweet chestnut in Kent. Sirococcus blight, a fungal infection, has also been found in the UK for the first time, effecting hemlock and cedar. Visit the Plant health risk register to stay up-to-date: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/phiw/riskRegister/>

### FC tree health day – and website

The Forestry Commission is running a tree health day on 24 January in Liverpool covering major tree health issues for the region.

Please contact the FC northwest regional office for more information.

The FC's tree health webpage provides a good compendium of current issues, future threats and action to be taken by owners, agents and anyone involved in the wood supply chain. The page can also be used to subscribe to the Commission's tree health e-newsletter. [www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases)



# Promoting resilience for tree disease prevention

Tackling the tree health problems caused by an ever expanding number of new pests and diseases is not just a matter of being vigilant and responding to outbreaks. Just as vital is the aim of building resilience into our forested landscapes. It is this second approach that has provided the focus of work by seven Scottish research institutes involved in the PROTREE project.

Drawing a parallel with health problems more generally, it can be said that PROTREE has followed the mantra that "prevention is better than cure". Resilient tree populations cope better when challenged and so need less human intervention. The attraction of this approach is obvious when you consider that the potential for tree health problems to go unnoticed is huge, new pests and diseases are continually arising, and climate change is likely to alter the environment for everything. It is not going to be possible to handle each new threat one-by-one and we need





Left: In CALEDON, players develop strategies to deal with pest and disease problems. Below: Scot's pine is being used as a case study to examine the role of natural processes in building resilience



to target more sustainable approaches.

Using Scots pine as an example of a widely grown economically and ecologically important tree, the PROTREE project has been exploring how a tree species interacts with a range of pests and diseases. The health problems of Scots pine studied by the project have included the already widespread fungal disease *Dothistroma* needle blight, Pine-tree lappet moth, the caterpillars of which eat pine shoots, and a fungal disease called Pitch pine canker. The last of these is not yet found in the UK, but is present in parts of southern Europe, where it poses a severe threat. Despite all being rather different health problems a common approach has been to explore how different individual trees respond to attack and so to forecast the consequences for the population as a whole.

### Nature vs nurture

By growing trees from different areas in a single place they experience the same environment. This means that any differences you see when you expose the trees to pests and diseases are down to genetic differences between the trees. Such 'common garden experiments' are a standard tool of plant and forest science and have been used several times during the PROTREE project to assess the potential of using genetic variation to manage tree health problems.

Genetic variation enables tree populations to change (to adapt, in the language of biologists) and track environmental conditions. If some trees are resistant to a pathogen, they and their offspring are likely to do better in the population and gradually the balance should tip in favour of trees that can withstand the threat. Under natural conditions, the rate of change in

forest populations can be slow as trees are often long-lived but, confronted by a new threat, some trees are likely to succumb, opening gaps for more resistant recruits. We might even consider intervening deliberately – opening gaps to allow new genotypes in and speeding the rate of change. Genetic variation can also be used in breeding programmes, to grow more resistant varieties for forestry.

### Comfortable trees are more resilient

Another important point is that trees under stress are more vulnerable to pest or pathogen attack. Planting trees in conditions to which they are adapted is vital, and tree species can be differently adapted to different parts of even a country as small as Scotland. So, for example, pines from the west coast of Scotland are better adapted to a wet, mild climate than pines from the east. PROTREE research has also shown that – under experimental conditions – pines from the west are less likely to be susceptible to *Dothistroma* than pines from the east, suggesting they have adapted to counter pathogens as well as the climate.

### Taking advantage of gaming trend

Getting across the message about genetic diversity and its fundamental role in enabling tree populations to become more resilient is ultimately the challenge that PROTREE faces and has called for an innovative approach. Working together, the scientists and a team of games designers have developed a computer game, CALEDON, which involves managing your own virtual forest and is targeted primarily at teens and secondary school teachers. In September 2016, CALEDON was launched at the Scottish

Learning Festival, hoping to inspire young people and kick-start a new generation of plant health specialists.

However, the game is not solely targeted at children and has already been used as a teaching tool in the forestry sector. As the way the species and pathogens interact with each other and the environment is informed by the real world the game is in effect a simple forest simulator. Although it is educational entertainment and not a tool for real-world planning, the game could be used to illustrate how differences in genetic diversity or species composition might affect response to a disease. The player is completely in control of the pace as time is only advanced when all the changes s/he wishes to make and can afford (the game has a financial aspect) have been made. Time is then advanced by five years and in a few seconds all sorts of interactions and random events will play out.

The hope for CALEDON is that players of the game learn something about the many threats our trees and forests face and the complexity of creating a sustainable forest landscape. In addition, a sense of the value of genetic diversity should become clear from experience, in-game prompts on good strategy and an encyclopaedia that can be consulted at any time. Ideally the game will introduce some new thinking and perhaps even stimulate a shift in direction for forestry that acknowledges diversity and its important role in tree health.

Play CALEDON online at <http://hyperluminalgames.com/caledon/> or download for iPad at the App Store





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## PEOPLE

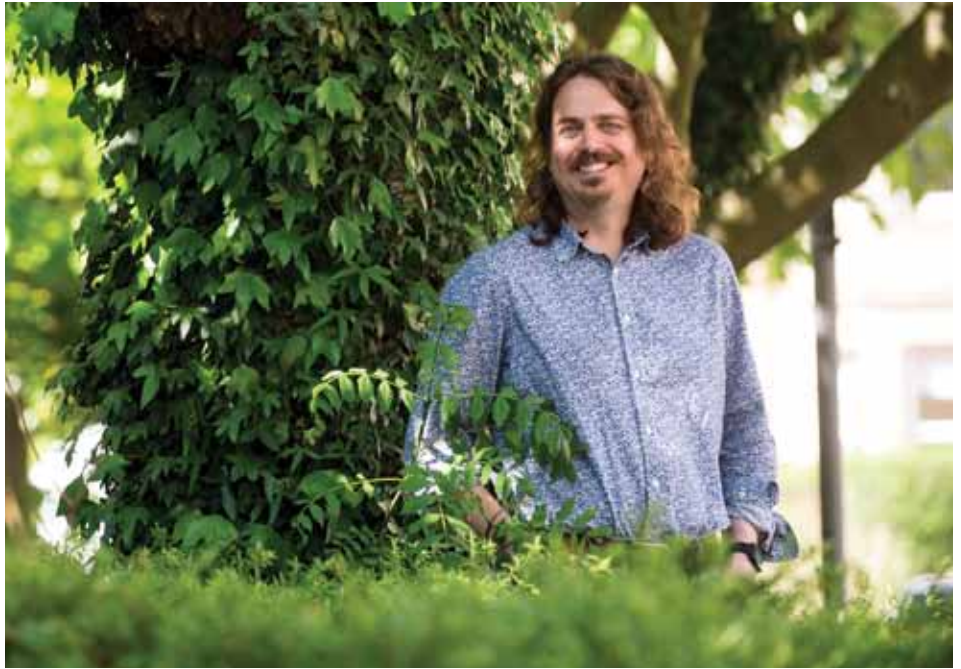
# Professor is a Woodland Hero

A university professor has been crowned a Woodland Hero by Grown in Britain for innovative research into the properties of home-grown timber. In being named Woodland Hero 2016, Professor Dan Ridley-Ellis was praised for his and his team's research into the growth and use of domestically grown timber and how this may be affected by a changing environment and by forest management.

Their work has changed the perception of the quality of the wood, enabled better processing and grading, and is providing information to support new planting that will shape the forests for decades to come, improving species diversity and resilience against pests, diseases and climate change.

"Like Grown in Britain, we have a tremendously positive vision for sustainable forestry in the UK and are excited about the opportunities for more home-grown wood in construction and other products. While wood and trees are fascinating scientifically, our real motivation comes from knowing that we are doing something good to support growth of the forest and the economy", said Professor Ridley-Ellis

Dougal Driver, CEO of Grown in Britain, said:



"Dan is a world expert on timber grading, resource assessment and segregation of timber into the most appropriate markets and we are fortunate to have him on the Grown in Britain 'team' and leading the charge for home-grown timber.

"The Woodland Hero award is aimed at the

people who make things happen, whether in the public gaze or in the vital work behind the scenes. Dan's work on standards, grading and British Standards is largely unseen, and we want to change that as he is a true Grown in Britain Woodland Hero."



Chris Sparrow (left) receives the Beacon Bowl trophy from John Clegg

## Foresters' Golf Society

Chris Sparrow, Head of Rural at The Duchy of Lancaster, for the second year running took the individual honours and retained the Beacon Bowl Trophy at the Foresters' Golf Society meeting held at Whiteleaf Golf Club, Buckinghamshire on Thursday, 06 October 2016.

On a fine day for golf Chris had a winning score of 34 Stableford points. In 2nd place was Paul Krafft of Farrer & Co, closely followed by Alastair Sandels and Tim Crow (also of The Duchy of Lancaster) in third and fourth places respectively

Ray Hawes (National Trust) and Oliver Mead

(Carter Jonas) won the two nearest the pin competitions with fine tee shots.

The team event was won by Dougal Driver, Paul Krafft and Andrew Ingram.

The Foresters' Golf Society is open to anyone with a forestry interest – owners, managers, agents, contractors, timber merchants, surveyors, accountants etc. The next event is scheduled to be at Whiteleaf Golf Club in Autumn 2017. Anyone interested in playing who would like to be notified of the date should contact John E Clegg – [jec@johnclegg.co.uk](mailto:jec@johnclegg.co.uk) or Tel: 01844 291384.

## New Head of UK Forestry Investment for Savills

Savills has made a senior appointment to its Rural, Energy and Projects team with the addition of Director, James Adamson, who will be responsible for forestry investment across the UK. James is a Chartered Surveyor with extensive experience of forestry markets. He was latterly an Investment Manager with Scottish Woodlands Ltd, specialising in the acquisition and valuation of commercial forests.



James Adamson (left) and Colin Morton

## Colin Morton retires

Head of FC GB Communications, Colin Morton, has announced his intention to take early retirement in December this year. "The organisation of our government communications here is changing rapidly and this seems a good time to hang up my keyboard and move on", he says. "I now have a new set of objectives: to get my golf handicap down (it is so bad that it can only go downward); do more photography; buy a motorcycle; and be a great grandad."





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## PEOPLE

### Eleanor Harris joins Confor team

In response to a surge in work related to Confor's success in promoting the sector, Eleanor Harris will provide support for two days a week up to February 2017. The nature of Eleanor's role will be to develop evidence, articles, consultation responses, etc and to support enhanced links to organisations such as those in the farming, land-management and environmental communities.

Dr Eleanor Harris is an Edinburgh-based historian, novelist and founder of Wild Reekie, who runs the Scottish Parliament Species Champion Initiative and who researched and wrote Confor's ground-breaking *Gender and Diversity in Forestry in Scotland* report.

@eleanormharris



A husband and wife team from Dartmoor have claimed seven prizes in this year's British Christmas Tree competition – and earned themselves a trip to Downing Street. Stuart and Jennie Kirkup, who have been running Dartmoor Christmas Trees since 2002, were standout winners in the categories of Champion Christmas Tree and Champion Wreath, in the British Christmas Tree Growers' Association's annual contest.

### Confor award for contribution to safety in the forest industry

Emily Ramsay – who has won the Forest Industries Safety Trophy – has headed up the Safety, Health and Environment team in Forestry Commission for 26 years. She was presented with the award by Gillian Clark, CEO of FISA.

The citation read:

*Emily Ramsay has been active across the whole of our industry and beyond. Her direct effort and influence as a Chartered Safety Practitioner has improved safety for FC staff, contractors, merchants, licensees and visitors whether on the public forest estate or elsewhere.*

*Her insight and drive helped with the formation of the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group, whose work sets guiding principles for landowners where visitors or recreation safety are one of their concerns. She has helped to raise awareness, and therefore safety standards, where managers or landowners don't realise they have those concerns.*

*In the "traditional" forestry industry she is acknowledged as taking no nonsense in practical discussions about safety in forest operations. In a male dominated industry she gained the respect of the major players and together they have made significant inroads to many aspects of forest safety.*

*As Health and Safety Executive handed the baton for change to the industry Emily was a key contributor in the formation of the Forest Industry Safety Accord. Her work in steering its development and contributing to its Working Groups' output has been significant. An example of output would be the revision and republishing of FISA's "Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry". It took the strength of many, including Emily, to see that through given the range of views that had to be accommodated. That publication now though provides essential information and guidance on health and safety for all those working in the forestry industry or woodlands. Those with longer memories will recall that Emily had a key role in that document's first existence when it was developed and published under the HSE banner.*

*At a practical level, many have Emily to thank for her part in making their work safer,*

Emily Ramsay (left) receives from Gillian Clark



*with trees, chainsaws, harvesting equipment and much more. Our visitors' experience on mountain bikes, horses and walking trails has similarly been improved. Much of this driven by the aim that we all get home at the end of the day, safe and well.*

*With division and devolution of the once FCGB safety team to Scotland and England Emily has decided to do other things with her time, some of which will involve a wetsuit and aqualung.*

*Her contribution to safety in the forest industry is likely to be unparalleled.*

### Staff changes at ICF

The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) has welcomed a new Development Director, Andy Lederer. Andy brings with him over 11 years in the arboriculture sector, having worked with both the London Tree Officers Association (LTOA) and the London Borough of Islington. He will replace outgoing Director Russell Horsey MICFor in January who, after four years with the Institute, is leaving to spend more time with his young children and working on his small holding in west Wales. In December ICF also says farewell to Julie Thomson, Marketing & Communications Officer, with her replacement to be announced in the new year. Julie is moving



to the charity sector where she will be leading marketing activities at the Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home.

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## MEMBERS' NEWS



### Outstanding attendance at live demo

Tilhill Forestry was glad to invite representatives from all stakeholder groups across the forest industry to a winch assisted harvesting demonstration on 04 October 2016. The systems being demonstrated were the Ecoforst T-Winch and the Highlander harvester/clam bunk skidder with on-board winch. These two systems demonstrated the capabilities of the machines, but also the two generic types of winch assist, on board and additional machine. The use of the Highlander, operated by Mike Gillet of MG Harvesting Ltd, was being used on a section of windblown trees on steep ground. Without the winch assisted machine these windblown trees would have had to have been felled by motor manual techniques, placing an operator at high risk.



### Expansion for British Hardwood Tree Nursery

After 2015 sales performance unprecedented in its previous 25-year history, British Hardwood Tree Nursery (BHT) plans to invest, expand and promote into 2017 and the changes are already taking shape on site. Investing over £90K on the expansion in Lincolnshire, the developments include a fifth shed, additional mezzanine and refurbishment in an existing shed, new staff quarters and a dedicated commercial site entrance. It is not only in market presence, turnover and profitability where the company have enjoyed growth this year. The team has swelled with three new office and sales members now entering their second season.



### Award for work with young people

BSW Timber picked up an award for its commitment to helping young people this autumn – and just missed out on being an overall winner at the Highland Business Awards. Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Inverness and Central Highland launched earlier this year and forms part of the wider Scottish Government Youth Employment strategy. BSW was lauded for its apprentice programme, which actively engages with school children from a young age through its presence at career fairs and other events. The company currently has seven apprentices working at its Fort William site across a variety of disciplines, including a bespoke saw doctor apprenticeship – the first of its kind in the UK.

Calling all Confor members... Keep us up-to-date with your news.  
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## WOODFUEL & BIOMASS

# Fees introduced to Biomass Suppliers List



From 01 January 2017, all BSL suppliers will have to pay to have authorised fuels on the Biomass Suppliers List (BSL)

### Why are fees being introduced?

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS; formerly DECC) has funded the BSL since its launch in April 2014. This funding was always intended to be a transitional arrangement to help establish the BSL and this funding ends on 31 December 2016. The scheme administration is necessary to ensure that fuels can be registered on the BSL, that they remain compliant with the sustainability and legality requirements, and that RHI participants are able to easily source RHI compliant fuel. To ensure the continuation of the BSL from January 2017, all BSL suppliers will need to contribute a fee.

### How have the fees been decided?

From 10 August to 4 September 2016, the BSL Administrator ran a consultation seeking views on the proposed charging structure that is being introduced to the BSL from January 2017. We would like to thank those BSL suppliers who responded to the consultation. Together with BEIS and our technical partners, the BSL Administrator has now reviewed, considered and incorporated feedback, where possible, into the final charging structure.

### What fees do I need to pay and when?

This is different depending on your supplier type, how big your company is (based on specific criteria) or whether you are classed as an individual. On the Confor

website, you will find the following documents, which provide the definitions of company size and an 'individual', contains feedback on the consultation and explain exactly how much you will have to pay:

- Final BSL charges and consultation feedback report
- BSL charges – Questions and answers document for suppliers

Charging will be introduced from 01 January 2017. You'll be sent an email in January that will tell you that you need to pay and provide instructions on how you can do this.

Remember the date  
01 Jan 2017

### Do I need to do anything before 01 January 2017?

Please read the documents available on the Confor website to understand the charges and how they will impact you. Your membership fee will be charged per account. If you have multiple accounts for the same company, eg separate Producer-Trader and Trader accounts, it is important you confirm to us immediately if you wish to group these accounts together. This will have implications on your membership fee and making payments so please read the guiding documents. If you want to group multiple accounts together, please send an email from the primary email address of each account that you want to merge together to this mailbox ([bslhelpdesk@gemserv.com](mailto:bslhelpdesk@gemserv.com)). In each email you need to state which email address you want to have as the primary login and a reference number for an application registered to the account for verification purposes. Once this account has been created, you will be able to add additional email addresses that can have access to the account (ie if you are an organisation with multiple users).

If you have any further questions please contact the BSL helpdesk by emailing [bslhelpdesk@gemserv.com](mailto:bslhelpdesk@gemserv.com) or calling +44 (0)20 7090 7769 between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday. See also [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)



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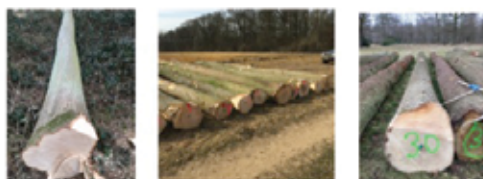
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## Woodpicker's mission to "make biomass easier"



A newcomer to the renewable energy market, The Woodpicker brings a brand new service to make biomass easier for domestic and commercial users.

Wood pellet boiler owners and entrepreneurs Charlie Henderson and Tim Barlow recently launched an unprecedented service after deciding that getting prices for pellets could be so much simpler. After an efficient start-up and only a few months down the line, The Woodpicker is already the first place in the UK where it's possible to order blown wood pellets from anywhere at any time.

The achievement of this goal is really the starting point for the business because Charlie,



“Opting for biomass was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.”  
Tim Barlow

an environmental consultant, and Tim, a digital marketing expert, together plan to systematically bring digital technology to tackle niggly aspects of the whole boiler owner experience.

Tim says: “Opting for biomass was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I love my boiler! However, biomass heating isn’t quite as easy as oil: buying pellets isn’t straight-forward, there’s more maintenance, there’s cleaning and generally just a little more monitoring to do. Our aim is to change that. Little things will make a difference and ultimately lead to greater uptake of biomass.”

The Woodpicker intends to make suppliers’ lives easier, too. The company operates as a broker-like business, with no set-up fees, giving access to more orders and saving time on administration by collecting all the information needed, while making orders fit with suppliers’ existing systems.

For Charlie and Tim, The Woodpicker is more than a business: “As biomass enthusiasts, we are passionate about this project as a way preserving the environment. We hope that our dedication shines through in the service we offer.” says Charlie.

The initial concept behind this digital start-up was to help people to easily find good quality, price-efficient fuel online. “Charlie and I found that as well as filling in complicated forms, comparing quotes was difficult - and that ringing around suppliers during office hours was time-consuming for everyone concerned, leading to apathy which isn’t good for the market overall. We’ve introduced a friendly service, offering transparency around pricing and allowing people to order instantly, 24/7. Our customers tell us it’s saving them time and hassle every time.” says Tim.

“We knew that in order to get to this stage, our challenge would be to make this work for

suppliers as well as customers; we have made some headway towards this and are driving orders to both national and local suppliers across the country. We want to support those suppliers who focus on quality of pellets and service.” he added.

With less than £1000 of initial investment, the Woodpicker was set up in just ten hours on this year’s leap day (29 February) with help from staff at Tim’s digital marketing agency, Attacat, and students from the University of Edinburgh Business School. Together they worked on market research, creating a company name and brand, building an initial website, setting up supplier lists and developing online tools and resources.

Things have since moved on, with The Woodpicker now investing significantly in marketing, customer service, technology and developing supplier relationships. The co-founders have been joined by biomass trader and consultant, Brodie Govan of Voyage Power Ltd; relationship manager, Lisa Lumsden; and the sales team of Juliet Henderson and Clare Calow. The new website went live in September, offering instant quotes and 24/hr ordering, and a high quality supplier list has been assembled. Making quick progress, the company has handled hundreds of enquiries and is successfully fulfilling an increasing number of orders and annual contracts with suppliers across the country.

“The Woodpicker is and will remain an agile business.” comments Charlie. “Right now we’re speaking with additional suppliers to grow our contacts in the industry and we are considering diversifying into other biofuels, starting with bagged pellets.”



The Woodpicker is keen to build relationships within the industry. Whether you’re interested in joining the supplier list or just want to chat, contact: [lisa.lumsden@thewoodpicker.com](mailto:lisa.lumsden@thewoodpicker.com) [www.thewoodpicker.com](http://www.thewoodpicker.com)

## OBITUARIES

### Frank Sheridan

(1938 – 2016)

It would not be an overstatement to say that forestry was Frank's life. Along with his many other achievements, Frank – who was born in Portaferry, Northern Ireland – was responsible for the last truly large-scale new conifer forest planting in the UK under the old forestry grant scheme in the 1980s at Glendyne, planting 3,000 acres of new planting requiring 3.6m trees. This was a project he fought tooth and nail for, planting many trees himself and was something he could be truly proud of.

Reviewing his diverse forestry career and professional achievements would be beyond the scope of this obituary.

But many will remember how he helped form the Norfolk Forestry Club and was elected their first chairman in 1969. The club still meets every month – a tribute to Frank's efforts nearly half a century ago.

After his "formal retirement" from his last post as Head Forester at Glendyne (Scotland) in 2001, he became heavily involved in Grampian woodlands and was instrumental in the development of The Bellwood, the community woodland in Aboyne together with other forestry activities including Chairman of the local RSFS.

Frank has been involved in helping to set up and run the APF Exhibition since 1982. After very limited catering at Beercraigs, Frank, being devoted to his food, strongly recommended to the APF committee that the catering needed to be drastically improved and volunteered his wife Aileen to come along to the next Exhibition at Windsor to remedy this. Both have since been core members of



the Demo team. As a co-ordinator Frank's job was to help exhibitors unload and set up their stands, keep traffic flowing and generally maintain order; it was a job his forestry experiences made him very well suited to. Aileen kept the team fed and watered with home cooked food throughout the Exhi-

bition. Despite being retired they both made the 450 mile trip from Northern Ireland this year to once again help.

Frank's soft Northern Ireland accent, his quiet way of talking and his sharp sense of humour might lull some to think he was a "soft touch" but when he did make

his views known they were short, sharp and to the point!

Frank was famous for his dry Irish humour. An example of this was when a wagon driver, concerned about getting stuck off road, asked "What is the grass like?" Frank looked down and said "Green and about 4" long"!

Frank and Aileen had been married for over 50 years and she supported him throughout his long career. They lived many years in Banchory, Kincardineshire and only recently moved to Banbridge in Northern Ireland.

Frank died, aged 78 years after a tragic accident on the APF Exhibition 2016 site two days before the show began whilst helping out, as ever, to keep the preparations running smoothly. Aileen insisted continuing with her essential work in the canteen and set a shining and inspirational example in keeping the team going through the tragedy.

Frank's loss will be keenly felt by all who knew him. Donations in excess of £2000 from Frank's thanksgiving services in Banchory and Banbridge, have been sent to Warwickshire Air Ambulance and the St. John's Ambulance.

### Arnold Grayson

*An appreciation by Julian Evans*

Arnold was one of the great luminaries of the Forestry Commission in the post-war decades retiring as Director of Research in the late 1980s. He was an economist through and through.

Arnold was appointed Director of Research when I was a project leader in silviculture. His reputation went before him and his prodigious intellect was soon in evidence. When summoned to his office you would leave after-

wards wondering whether you had grasped all the points as his train of thought would jump, logically enough for him, from issue to issue while the listener struggled to keep up. Arnold was demanding of his research staff, but always scrupulously fair and objective. I count it a privilege to have served under him in my career and to see how taking one powerful tool - in his case, economics - helped make informed choices. The forestry profession has lost a great servant.



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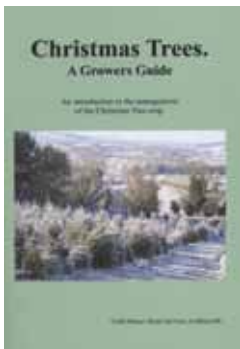
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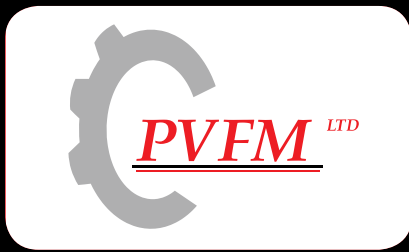
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# Fund helps students visit APF

Senior instructor **Callum Crawford** reports on a visit to the APF Exhibition by a group of students from Barony Campus SRUC. Some of the students give their feedback

A group of enthusiastic first year forestry students were recently given the opportunity to travel down from SRUC Barony to Warwickshire, to visit the APF Exhibition at the Ragley Estate.

Following an overnight stay at YHA Stratford-upon-Avon, the group arrived at the event, well rested and ready to go, early on the Friday morning. On arrival at the Ragley Estate the student group were taken aback by the scale of the event and the potential learning to be had from attending. They were all encouraged by SRUC staff to ask plenty questions and speak to as many exhibitors as they could during the visit.

The student group all thoroughly enjoyed their visit with the APF Exhibition once again living up to, and in many cases, exceeding their expectations. On the journey home there was a definite buzz of enthusiasm for what had been seen and plenty of thought provoking discussion ensued.

As the feedback suggests, I know that every student took away valuable experiences from their visit, some have made very firm industry contacts and all had their eyes opened to the breadth of opportunity that exists within the sector. This is something that can be difficult for school leavers to imagine without seeing it for themselves.

*The visit was made possible by Confor, through the Forest Industries Education and Provident Fund, which helped meet the cost of accommodation and entry tickets for the student group. We are very grateful for the help to make this visit possible.*



## What the students said

- “ Nearly every stand was welcoming and enthusiastic... I joined BHL and Confor, coming for two days next time... Thanks to Confor for help with our funding!
- “ I expected the APF to be good and it lived up to my expectations, I learned a lot about Forest Industries.
- “ Seeing the machinery and technology available made me certain that forestry is the industry that I want to be involved in.
- “ The visit gave us 'newbies' a clearer insight of the sectors within the industry... Allows us to see the relevance of our training at Barony.
- “ It helped me get contacts for a future career; I was offered training by a potential employer!
- “ When I was there I saw a manufacturer demonstrating battery-powered equipment and explaining what the future holds for this type of technology.
- “ Impressed by the layout of the show and the sheer size and value of the equipment displayed... I hope to spend a fair amount of time planting in my career, thanks to encouragement from Forestry Commission staff.

## MEMBER SERVICES EDUCATION & PROVIDENT FUND

For details of eligibility and how to apply to the Education and Provident Fund, see: [www.confor.org.uk/resources/education-provident-fund](http://www.confor.org.uk/resources/education-provident-fund)

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# Pesticides post-Brexit

Unease in the farming and horticultural communities about the increasing politicisation of the EC approval system appears to be receiving a sympathetic ear with UK Ministers.

Defra Minister George Eustice has revealed to an NFU meeting that the UK will develop its own approach to pesticide regulation, advised in part through working with technical groups in Europe, Australia and the USA.

In particular, George Eustice said the UK government will pursue a science-based approach to pesticide authorisation decisions. These could be evidence-based using a precau-

tionary principle assessing risk rather than the current EC system, uniquely is based on hazard.

George Eustice does have some positive form in this arena as he previously lobbied Brussels to re-approve glyphosate, pointing out that the European Food Standards Agency had stated that it was "unlikely to cause cancer" and so was not linked to potential ill health. However, politics is a highly movable feast, so it is unlikely that the UK will make any major moves away from the EU regulatory system for some years to come – and in any case will be subject to those imminent Brexit negotiations.

## New rules bite over rodenticide use

We are reminded that from 01 October, foresters and gamekeepers will require a certificate of competence in order to purchase professional rodenticides. This comes into force as a result of the UK Rodenticide Stewardship Scheme, which will also require all products to display stewardship conditions on the product labels by the end of March 2017.

Some 16 courses are available around the UK, and once a certificate has been obtained, certificate holders will be expected to demon-

strate their competence though membership of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme.

For information on a free online course, see [www.rodentcontrofarm.co.uk](http://www.rodentcontrofarm.co.uk)

Membership of an approved farm assurance scheme which has a structured rodent control programme (currently not UKWAS) will also demonstrate competence, and if non of these are followed then the user will be limited to using amateur products.

## Christmas trees growers' guide

It has been my intention to provide an updated version of the Pest and Weed book as pesticide approvals have changed significantly since publication. However, the products used in forestry, amenity and Christmas trees have diverged considerably in the meantime, so it seemed appropriate to instead publish separate books for each sector.

The Christmas tree version is now available ([www.ruralservices.info](http://www.ruralservices.info)), but has expanded to cover all aspects of the crop – budgeting, species choice, planting, nutrition, harvesting and marketing as well as an expanded section on pest, weed and disease control – as our picture of the back cover shows.

**Read the book review on page 50.**

## GLYPHOSATE BRIEFING



### Amenity applications

Contractors and advisors operating in the amenity sector will no doubt be aware that the 2009 Sustainable Use Directive amendments is being interpreted by some member states as prohibiting glyphosate use in amenity areas. However, to date, only Italy and Slovakia have taken this approach, although limited restrictions are pending in France, Germany, Belgium and Holland.

In the UK, no change amenity use is envisaged as the UK's National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides already requires that users should ensure '...that the amount used and the frequency of use are as low as reasonably practicable' when treating "Specified Areas" including '... areas used by the general public, vulnerable groups, areas in the close vicinity of healthcare facilities as well as conservation areas, areas close to groundwater, sealed surfaces and recently treated areas accessible to agricultural workers.'

### Regulatory update

At time of writing, no announcement has been made over the decisions affecting the future of glyphosate products. Two decision are pending:

- i) Whether the EU will re-approve the use of glyphosate in Europe following the latest carcinogenicity review.
- ii) The list of UK glyphosate formulations containing POE tallow amines which will be revoked in the very near future. It is likely that around half of the current glyphosate products will be lost, and some popular products such as Clinic Ace are already no longer available, with the price of others rising steadily.

On the other side of the Irish Sea an announcement will be made on 21/22 December, but HSE here are not committing to a date. It is planned to provide a review of glyphosate product availability in the next edition of FTN.

## 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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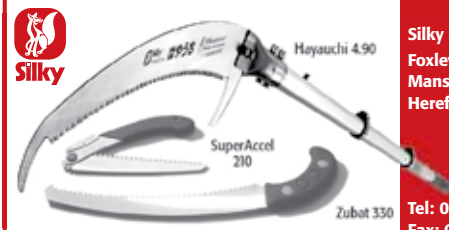
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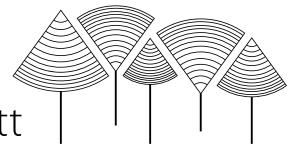
Suitable candidates will have relevant academic qualifications and/or associated experience with wood fuel procurement and trading. The wood fuel specification requires knowledge and understanding of all wood fuel properties in particular: moisture content, calorific values and chemical composition. Individuals should be able to demonstrate strong commercial awareness and excellent interpersonal skills.

The ideal candidate will be highly motivated with good organisational, communication and supervisory skills. They should be fully competent with IT and able to manage and develop complex spreadsheet analysis. They must bring a high level of professionalism to the position.

The post offers an attractive salary, company car and other benefits with the opportunity to grow and develop in a new and exciting renewable energy investment.

For more information and to apply please contact:  
Annetta Henry at Estover 0207 042 9470 or email:  
annetta.henry@estoverenergy.co.uk  
Closing date for application Friday 06th January 2017

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# An ageing operator

I am writing this in the week I turn 70. Nothing very special about that for some readers, but the passing of the years has led to both gently diminishing stamina

and declining ability to carry out woodland work. For example, the basic skill of operating a chain saw is still there – and I remain mercifully accident free over the 40+ years of using one from time to time – but I find I cannot keep going for as long before becoming a bit slack and inattentive. This got me thinking about woodland management and competencies of those who try to do most of the work themselves.

For health and safety reasons and for preparing risk assessments many woodland operations are proscribed by the requirement for proper training and certification. This is pretty well essential if you are working in someone else's wood or getting paid for the work you do. There are many websites to consult and sources of advice, not least Confor's own. The reminder on the 'Health and Safety' page in our Confor diary warns every year that the forestry industry is one of the most dangerous sectors in which to work in the UK. So do have an H&S policy, a workplace assessment and do consult HSE and FISA websites – the latter for free safety guides offering practical advice.

Back to my personal reflections, I used to be able to work with a chain saw, whether coppicing or thinning trees up to, say, 20 or 30 years old, for about three fuelings before getting tired. I find this is now down to two, and sometimes just one. No amount of

training can inform you of this, it is a question of knowing yourself. There is, however, an upside. I find that once winter work begins – this year it will be largely hazel coppicing – the



Even if you are lucky enough to age in style, don't forget about health and safety! Photo: Shutterstock

wielding of a chain saw does wonders for the back. Aches and pains disappear and thus, surprisingly, it is quite therapeutic. After some initial stiffness at the start of winter, the better

exercised back is a benefit.

Setting and maintaining grey squirrel traps requires some dexterity, whether live traps and dispatching humanely the wretched animal or setting spring trips that my dispatch your fingers. The passing years has just made this job a tad more time consuming. Similarly, checks of the boundary, which I try to do about once per year struggling along just inside the perimeter fence fighting head high nettles, thorns, and overgrown hazel, take a bit longer. A third more circumscribed activity is high pruning using greatly extended equipment because my shoulders are not as strong thanks to rotator cuff damage.

Another almost imperceptible change is unsteadiness walking over rough ground or the woodland floor. My wife is a bit more uncertain than I am, and she puts it down to vari-focal glasses, which is understandable. We both keep reasonably fit in terms of exercising and keep our tools and equipment 'fit' by oiling, sharpening and servicing and related maintenance.

This catalogue of the geriatric is not meant to depress. Recognising our limitations is surely sensible while not wanting to consign ourselves prematurely to the bathchair! I hope I will be able to write an update of what I can still achieve when I am 80 if, god willing, I am still able to pen these endpieces for our excellent magazine. The important point is surely the Ancient Greek aphorism, 'know thyself' when it comes the hazardous work within our woodlands, small or large.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Christmas Trees. A Growers Guide

An introduction to the management of the Christmas Tree crop by Colin Palmer

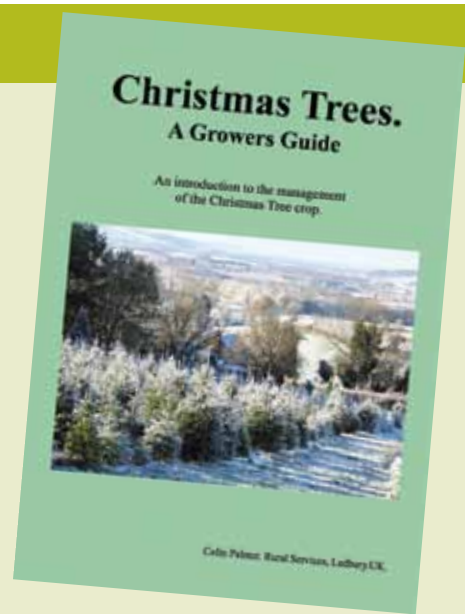
This is a comprehensive guide which contains essential information for anyone who wants to grow, or is already growing and selling Christmas trees. Presented as a well laid-out, detailed and easy-to-use handbook, it draws on Colin's knowledge and experience in all aspects of Christmas trees including:

- Planning, budgeting, site preparation, fixed costs
- Nutrition & crop shaping
- Use of pesticides
- Harvesting & sales

- Plus a useful calendar of when operations are best planned

There are answers to most of your questions in this handy little book. It has good photos of most weeds, insects and fungal problems and the methods to deal with them. In addition, there are useful tables to check chemical approval and the most effective chemical control.

I would like to thank Colin for producing this book, put together with the expertise of many years. Whilst growing and selling trees myself for over 35 years, I have never found such useful and up-to-date information in one place before. This is a "must have" for any Christmas tree grower, large or small. I will use it often.  
*Review by John Osborne (Osborne's Christmas trees), Somerset*







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