

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

April 2018 Issue 86

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Please contact Liz@confor.org.uk

CONFOR CONTACTS



Stefanie Kaiser

Communications and editor FTN
T: 0131 240 1420
E: stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk



Caroline Harrison

National manager for England
M: 07500 927482
E: caroline.harrison@confor.org.uk



Jamie Farquhar

National manager for Scotland
M: 07817 374906
E: jamie.farquhar@confor.org.uk



Martin Bishop

National manager for Wales
Rheolwr Genedlaethol i Gymru
M: 07876 029482
E: martin.bishop@confor.org.uk



Andrew Heald MICFor

Technical Director and Northern Ireland representative
M: 07771 844653
E: andrew.heald@confor.org.uk



Confor head office and editorial office
59 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2JG



0131 240 1410



info@confor.org.uk



www.confor.org.uk



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For advertising, contact Chloe Hine
01502 725835
chloe.hine@micropress.co.uk

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Growing Trust

STUART GOODALL CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CONFOR

Do people trust forestry, and indeed those who practice forestry? This is a question I've been mulling over in my spare time after hearing John Blakey, who has written in depth on the topic of Trust in business, speak to an audience of business leaders.

John Blakey's analysis is that society is experiencing a rapid decline in Trust and that all parts of society – governments, businesses, NGOs and even the media itself – are open to potential exposure. Businesses (and possibly sectors) that are seen to be trusted will flourish. The word 'seen' is important because Trust relies on Transparency, underpinned by the knowledge that the internet provides instant exposure of 'wrong' behaviours.

Paul Polman, CEO of multinational Unilever, whose brands range from Magnum ice-cream to Domestos to Lipton teas, draws a direct line between Trust, Transparency and Business Prosperity. Unilever has committed to sustainability across its products, with an additional 'social purpose' focus on key brands. Those brands have grown twice as fast as other Unilever brands, while the company's growth has been twice the industry average since 2010.

Alongside Trust, an increasingly connected population is looking for solutions to global challenges, not least climate change. And this is where we have pole position. We know that more trees planted, more woodland managed and more wood products utilised will result in reduced carbon in the atmosphere. More new forests will support diversified rural economies post-Brexit and provide homes for

wildlife and places for relaxation.

Our arguments are compelling, but the struggle of course is always to communicate them to politicians, who are under constant lobbying from a dizzying range of sources, and to a public that has many other things on its mind.

One route is through new influencers and trusted platforms, outlets and individuals who can utilise new forms of media and communication to shape opinion and reputation.

Confor has established a core set of messages designed to communicate what our sector is really about, combating the negative and outdated perceptions that have hung over our sector and which undermine the ability of foresters, harvesters, wood processors, etc, to operate effectively. These messages are repeated in our communications activity at all levels - national media, printed and online media, and increasingly social media.

Alongside personal engagement, this communication activity has helped change opinions and supported our lobbying activity – for example, seeing more trees planted and action to deliver better regulation. There is now a growing awareness that wood products are an environmental good, and that more forestry can be a good thing. Of course, there is still work to do. For example, processes for new planting still need significant improvement and there are individuals and organisations who have yet to be convinced of increased tree planting or woodland management, but the tide is turning.

What we need now is amplification. We need the sector as a whole to pick up Confor's messaging and to repeat it. This can be through businesses' own websites, individuals using the high-quality video and animations that Confor has produced as part of presentations to local groups, through use of social media, or through companies sponsoring local sports teams and seeing that covered in local news.

Throughout it all, however, we need everyone in the sector to commit to the high standards that we have set for ourselves, for example in the UK Forestry Standard, professionalism in forestry and in health and safety.

If we are transparent and honest about what we do, and communicate that effectively, I believe that forestry and timber can be a sector that will really flourish in the 21st Century. A sector that can over-turn past perceptions and secure popular support and growth. Achieving that will be good for us all, but also good for society.



Timber forecasting - making sense of the numbers



Andrew Heald, Confor Technical Director, looks at the threats and opportunities in timber supply

Earlier this month I spoke at the TIMCON (Timber Packaging and Pallet Confederation) annual meeting in Manchester. The theme of the meeting was wood availability as the industry enters “uncharted territory.”

TIMCON has warned that shortages in the supply of small logs have reached an unprecedented level due to ongoing combination of high global demand and supply scarcities. I was speaking at the meeting to update TIMCON members about the work that Confor has been doing on timber availability.

Confor has been highlighting rising timber prices for several months now, and in February, I coordinated a meeting in Edinburgh with key stakeholders across the industry, with the Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise and the Scottish Government’s Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Fergus Ewing.

A more detailed review of the current timber market is contained in the regular market reports in this (and previous) magazines – see p33.

The meeting in February was held under “Chatham House” rules which means that none of the comments made are attributable to an individual or organisation but a number of key issues have been identified. These issues were taken forward into an action plan which I am leading on together with representatives from Forestry Commission Scotland.

Domestic timber – supply and availability
There are three key areas which were identified at the meeting in February:

Harvesting constraints from Long Term Forest Design Plans

Declining supply from the National Forest Estates

Data on timber forecasting, timber usage and prices

A key concern from forest managers, is the issue of “adjacency” when planning harvesting coupes. The UKFS requirement is that even-aged plantations are restructured over time, however, one of the UKFS guidelines associated with this requirement states that young crops should reach two metres tall before adjacent areas are felled. In some cases we are hearing that this guideline is being interpreted as a strict requirement, and is impacting the volume of

timber being brought to market. Confor’s Scotland Manager Jamie Farquhar will be at the Customer Reps group meeting later this month and will try to reach clarity on this issue.

Timber being diverted into biomass is another challenge. What is clear from the current statistics is that it is probably being under recorded. The stated figures is 1.6 million tonnes, however this is broadly similar to the figure that is reported by the larger biomass users under the Renewables Obligation scheme. There appears to be an under recording of biomass being used by larger RHI type customers for example, schools, care homes and hospitals.

One of the main action areas from the February meeting in Edinburgh, was a proposal to investigate how we can gather, interpret and publish more up-to-date UK wide information on timber and biomass markets in general, and price and availability in particular. There have been suggestions that this should be published on a quarterly or even monthly basis. Confor is working with a number of key industry stakeholders to move this project forwards.

Traditionally, the National Forest Estate has always supplied the majority of the timber reaching the UK market, however this percentage is declining and is now approximately 47% across the UK as a whole in 2016, and had been down to 42.5% in 2014 during the last peak in private sector harvesting. This difference is more pronounced in Scotland, with a larger proportion of privately managed commercial forests.

The National Forest Estates in each country are managed for a wider range of priorities than simply timber production. The age structure of these forests, means that they started restructuring and diversifying much earlier than some of the private sec-



We have a rising demand for timber and other forest products, and finite supply of available material to harvest.



We are now in uncharted territories for standing timber prices and whilst it is a golden opportunity for the growers, it is definitely not sustainable in the long-term

OLIVER COMBE, TIMBER AUCTIONS



Theoretically available v. actually harvested softwood 2013-2016



When we consider the current market situation, it is worth reviewing the Forestry Commission's forecast overview of timber availability, which was published in 2014 by the National Forest Inventory team. What is clear is that we are harvesting less timber than is 'theoretically available', the key issue is why? Some of the theoretically available timber might be too difficult to harvest due to steep ground and/or poor quality access. What requires further investigation is whether the additional 'available' timber that isn't currently being harvested will remain standing and be available at some point in the future, or whether it should actually be removed from these long-term forecasts.

WHY AREN'T WE HARVESTING ALL THE AVAILABLE TIMBER?



Data taken from FC 50 Year Timber Production Forecast, and Forestry Facts and Figures 2017 and is an average for years 2013-2016. We have assumed that 1m³ of softwood weighs 850kg.

tor forests, and their restocking proposals will see them become more diverse in terms of age structure and species.

The UK private sector is destined to become more influential in the coming decades, and the traditional Forestry Commission role of providing a "strategic reserve of timber" will gradually diminish. As a result, 'market forces' are likely to becoming an increasing feature of UK timber prices with growers and managers aware of the timber market and perhaps trying to adjust their harvest accordingly. The other elephant in the room is the steep decline in new planting in woodland creation after the Lawson Budget of 1988, now almost one rotation of Sitka ago. We have a rising demand for timber and other forest products, and finite supply of available material to harvest.

Conclusion

The UK has a thriving and dynamic forestry sector worth £2bn to the economy and employing 45,000 people. That growth has been dependent on an in-

creasing availability of softwood timber, and a general stability in the market provided by timber supplies from the National Forest Estate. If we want our industry to grow then we need a better continuity of supply than we've seen over the last 12 months. However it also shouldn't be forgotten that the current high timber process are a great opportunity to encourage more new planting.

The best time to plant a tree is often said to be 20 years ago, the second best time is most definitely now.

FTN WEB RESOURCES



50-year forecast of softwood timber availability

infographic to download

Confor *The Missing Millions* report

www.confor.org.uk/ftnweb

Young shoots: a new generation plants the future

As you grow up, these trees will grow with you.” That was the simple, poetic message from Andy Howard to the children of Glendale Middle School in Wooler as they planted the first trees at Doddington North Moor in Northumberland, *writes David Lee.*

Andy has been the driving-force behind Doddington, the largest forest creation project in England for 30 years. As the children, helped by experienced professionals, started bringing the forest to life, he said it was “the proudest day of my professional life”.

During the process of planning Doddington, Andy has worked closely with the local population, which has been positive about the access to the moor the project will offer. He told the children: “In future years, you can come back here to walk, ride your bikes – or even ride a horse.”

Hundreds more Glendale pupils will visit Doddington in the coming decades. Geoff Tong, Deputy Headteacher at Glendale Middle School, said: “It’s very exciting to have the largest forest for a generation here. Lots of our children live on farms in the

area and it’s right on their doorstep. We will be more involved as the site develops, especially looking at the biodiversity aspects.” Environmental benefits include the restoration of lowland bogs and rare peat mires on the site and the extension of a buffer zone to protect red squirrels.

The Year 5 pupils clearly loved planting the trees, helped by Orlando Correia and Oliver Day from the Forestry Workers’ Co-Operative, who will plant the first 65,000 trees by the end of April – mainly Sitka spruce, but also oak, birch, alder, Western red cedar and Noble fir. Next winter, the planting will be a mixture of Scots pine, Sitka, birch, aspen, oak and alder.

The trees to be planted at the site have been provided by regional nurseries – Cheviot Trees near Berwick-upon-Tweed and Trees Please in Corbridge.

The Doddington site is 354ha, with 268ha to be planted – 42% of the site will be planted with productive conifers (the majority Sitka spruce), with 20% native broadleaves and 13% mixed Scots pine and native broadleaf. Of the remaining 25%, 10% is open ground and 15% managed priority habitat.



The significance of the project was highlighted by the wide range of people from the forestry sector (and beyond) who attended the planting day. We asked what Doddington meant to them.

Ian Jack, former Head Forester at Lowther Estate, Cumbria, (pictured right) where a 170ha forest was planted this winter: “Forestry has taken a big leap forward this year and rightly so. It was really important to get children involved at Doddington as they are the ones who will enjoy the forest in the future. Some of them might even be thinning and harvesting it. The wide-ranging benefits of forestry are finally getting through – but there are many other sites where we could be planting, but aren’t. Let’s hope Lowther and Doddington are the first steps on a lovely long journey.”

Harry Frew, Managing Director, Cheviot Trees: “Doddington is a long-awaited

project and represents great progress for forestry in England. The ground here is very wet and not good for agriculture, but lends itself very well to trees. Planting on this scale is what industry needs as we have not seen enough planting, or the planting of the right trees, for a long time.”

Brad Tooze, Area Manager (Northumbria), Natural England: “This is an exemplar of where someone has worked with the biodiversity of an area to enhance it. The woodland itself will be of value but the areas which are more sensitive (like the lowland bogs) are being managed and issues with invasive species like rhododendron are being addressed. There is a real mosaic of habitats to support different kinds of wildlife.”

Ian Thomas, a Chartered Forester who designed Doddington: “The main challenge was for all the stakeholders

to understand how much forestry has changed, that the Flow Country era bears no resemblance to what we see now. With the UK Forestry Standard, everybody has upped their game to deliver multi-benefit forestry. It has been a real education; Doddington was outside everybody’s comfort zone because it had never been done. I do a lot of work in Scotland and everyone there is much more up to speed with modern planting. Now Doddington has given real impetus to forestry in England.”

Sarah Radcliffe, Woodland Officer, Forestry Commission England: “This is the largest planting scheme for very many years and it’s good to see commercial forestry being planted again, along with native species in the protected habitat areas.”

Andy Howard, Project Director: “I hope Doddington





Clockwise from left: Sebastian Howard, son of Project Manager Andy Howard, gets planting underway; Athole McKillop lends a hand as Glendale Middle School children start the Doddington planting; Oliver Day (l) & Orlando Correia (r) of the Forestry Workers Co-operative, which is planting the site.

can be a blueprint to help develop the resources future generations will need, and to restore and maintain some of the biodiversity that mankind's actions might otherwise have caused us to lose. I believe the children with us today, and their children in the future, will thank us more for being forward-looking in our actions, rather than arguing over past failures."

Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Conservative MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, which covers Doddington: "To see the largest forest in 30 years being planted here is wonderfully exciting. I have followed the progress of the Doddington forest plans very closely and I am delighted to at last see trees going into the ground. This is a victory for our countryside, for long-term forestry investment and for common sense. Hopefully, it will pave the way for more modern forests with a mixture of tree species to be planted in the North-East - to the benefit of our economy, environment and local communities."

Paul Brannen, North East England Labour MEP: "Doddington is very significant but why has it taken 30 years to create something like this? We need to plant many more trees and I hope this is the first of many large new forests, but we also need to plant near population

centres to make forests accessible to everybody. As we leave the Common Agricultural Policy, there should be many more opportunities for tree planting alongside farming. The two can work together - it doesn't have to be an either/or."



Paul Brannen, MEP for North East England; Crispin Thorn, Area Director, Forestry Commission England; Anne-Marie Trevelyan, MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed; Andy Howard, Project Manager.

Conference assesses future-proofing of timber transport

Rural Affairs Secretary, Fergus Ewing, speaking at the GB Timber Transport Forum Conference announced that the Strategic Timber Transport Fund would receive a budget of £7.85m for the coming year, 2018/19. This is the second year of an increased level of budget which has already allowed for substantial investment in rural public road improvement to improve the capacity of routes used for timber transport.

The conference, held in Inverness this year and sponsored by Volvo, was a sold-out event bringing together 150 foresters, timber hauliers, timber processors and local road engineers.

With a range of speakers from councils, forestry, timber processors, transport and civil engineering the conference covered many issues concerning timber transport that are being addressed by the Timber Transport Forum.

Fergus Ewing MSP addressed the conference noting the recent unanimous support for the Forestry Bill passed earlier in the week and welcomed the benefits of the forestry and timber sector to the Highlands and to Scotland. He recognised the valuable work of the timber transport groups and called on them to continue the good practice and assist in identifying mechanisms to encourage access to areas of land suitable for new planting of forests.

The day before the event, a group of delegates took the opportunity to take part in a guided tour of the Norbord Inverness plant. At the conference itself, attendees had a chance to admire the new Volvo timber lorry owned by James Jones & Sons, fitted with a VR controlled timber crane and were challenged to try the VR simulator for themselves, guided by the Hiab Loglift team.

As well as exploring how best to sustainably transport timber from forests over our rural road networks, the conference considered the infrastructure requirements of Scotland's expanding forests, the ongoing modernisation of the A9 and A96 trunk roads, and the impact on freight in rural communities of more autonomous, more electric vehicles.

Through Timber Transport Groups, the timber industry works with the councils to identify where timber traffic is likely to put a strain on the capacity of roads and draws on co-finance from the Scottish Government's Strategic Timber Transport Fund to help strengthen and improve the more critical lengths of roads to minimise disruption to other road users.

Jamie Farquhar Confor's National Manager for Scotland said; "We need to ensure that our transport infrastructure is suitable for forestry and the wider rural land-based economy. The Timber Transport Forum plays a vital role in highlighting transport constraints and finding practical solutions to mini-



Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing chats with timber hauliers (credit: SPP)

Left: Delegates raised some highly relevant questions for the conference speakers

mise the impact of timber haulage on rural roads and communities."

Timber hauliers have a role to play in adopting new vehicle technologies and in using agreed routes. There are opportunities too, for use of the rail network to serve more remote concentrations of forest.

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 - Download conference presentations and photographs
 - Watch the conference video
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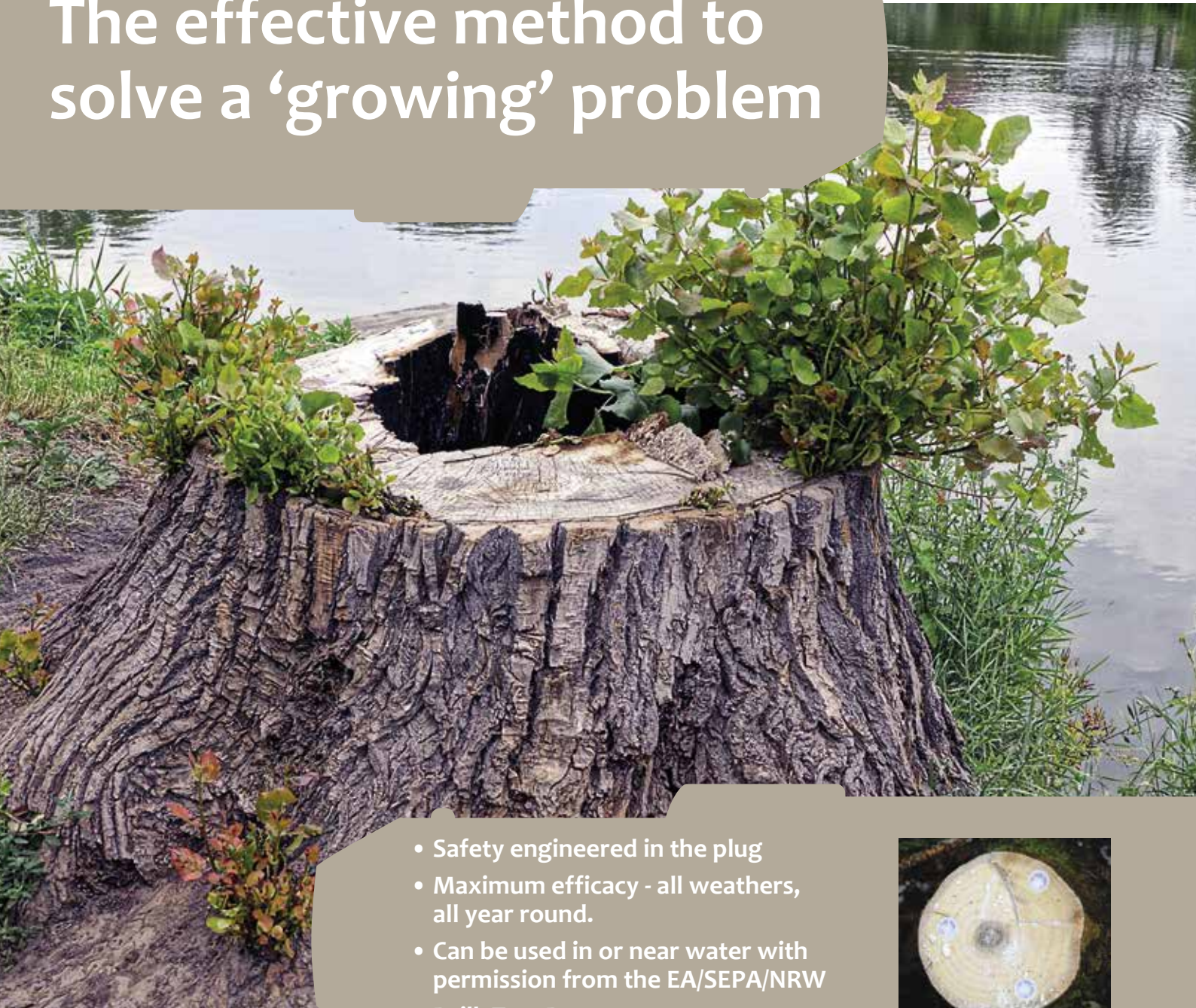
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Putting forestry at the heart of a 'Green Brexit'

Confor is urging members to seize the “once-in-a-generation opportunity” to shape the future of rural policy and funding after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union.

A ten-week consultation - ending on 10 May - has been announced by Environment Secretary Michael Gove as part of his plan to deliver a 'Green Brexit'.

Stuart Goodall, Confor's Chief Executive, welcomed the consultation, but called for more detail on the future role of forestry in the countryside.

The UK Government's proposals would see funding shift from direct payments under the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), which are based on the amount of land farmed, to a new system of paying farmers “public money for public goods” - such as enhancing the environment and investing in sustainable food production.

Confor has stressed the need for a broader approach to future land use, and worked hard to explain the triple economic, environmental and social benefits of forestry to Mr Gove - including arranging a visit for the Secretary of State to Jerah in central Scotland, the UK's largest modern productive planting scheme.

After the visit, Mr Gove said: “Forestry is vital to the UK's economy, and at Jerah I saw first-hand the role tree planting has to play in managing flood risks, helping wildlife to thrive, and simply providing a beautiful place for people to live and work.

“Through successful schemes like Doddington Moor in Northumberland and ambitious plans for a Northern Forest along the M62 corridor, planting more trees will be at the heart of our work to deliver a Green Brexit.”

Stuart Goodall said there was a more positive attitude to forestry from Michael Gove's department, evidenced by the call for a Tree Champion and a Scottish 'Mackinnon-style' review of barriers to new productive planting in England in the 25-Year Environment Plan.

He added: “I was delighted Mr Gove accepted Confor's invitation to Jerah and listened carefully to our messages. We had already presented him with our Common Countryside Policy document and we now need to drive home our key messages through this consultation.

“While we welcome the vision for a move away from direct payments to farmers to a new environmental land management system, this must provide a level playing-field for forestry. This should support new tree planting, although it is unclear whether existing woodland will benefit.”

Mr Goodall urged the forestry and wood process-



ing industry to take part in the consultation and to share their views with Confor.

He added: “This is potentially a once-in-a-generation consultation and it is important that businesses in the sector make their views known. Confor will share its views in the coming weeks - but a central plank of our thinking, as outlined in our Common Countryside Policy, is that all rural interests must be treated fairly. We need a blueprint which supports the whole countryside, including forestry.”

Visit to Jerah planting scheme: (l-r) Stuart Goodall, Confor CEO, Stephen Kerr, MP for Stirling, UK Environment Secretary Michael Gove; Tilhill Forestry Director Tim Liddon

CONSULTATION

The consultation will be discussed at the next meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry on 17 April. Confor is advising members to respond direct to the consultation and to share its response with Confor, which will publish its own thinking on the website well ahead of 10 May. Participate here: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment

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Involving members – improving results

Success breeds success and Confor is getting bigger and busier. With Brexit and the CAP reform, further devolution and declining public finances, this is a good time to review Confor's priorities and ways of working to ensure it provides the services that members want and continues to grow its influence and impact on behalf of members.

The Confor Board has established a strategy review working group, chaired by Raymond Henderson, with the objective of consulting members and preparing proposals for the Board to examine at its next meeting in May.

Key elements of the review

Ensuring members feel represented by Confor and involved in setting its priorities.

Capturing members' skills and expertise, and providing valued services, including technical committees and support.

Anticipating changes to public bodies and key industry services like research and statistics, to ensure that industry's interests are promoted.

Examining how Confor is structured and resourced to meet the arising opportunities and challenges of the next 3-5 years.

Confor: the current picture

How is Confor governed?

Confor is governed by the Board, which is made up of six chairs from the regional committees, the six largest companies, and the CEO.

The CEO also reports to the Board and is directed by them, and in turn manages the Confor team.

How is Confor policy made?

Confor's annual Business Plan sets policy priorities for the coming year.

The business plan is agreed by the Board with input from Members and Regional Committees.



You can have your say on Confor's future structure and direction by completing the survey online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ConforStrategicReview before Friday 13 April.

The questions are brief, and you can add further details if you wish.

A link to the survey will also be sent out by email. If we do not have an email address for you please send it to liz@confor.org.uk

We are always happy to hear from members at our email haveyoursay@confor.org.uk



THE FTN GUIDE TO DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

All you need to know about **Facebook**

There are more than 2.2 billion monthly active users on Facebook – one out of every three people in the world. Thus, some of your potential customers or people you want to influence are definitely using it, too. A lot of forestry professionals are constantly on the go. Their smartphone is their connection to the outside world, their chance to engage with virtual communities. If they are on Facebook, you have a good chance to reach them with your ideas! If you have never even seen Facebook before or don't really use it, check FTN web resources for a beginners guide.

Follow Confor at www.facebook.com/forestsandwood

In the second of FTN's new series of guidance articles, **Stefanie Kaiser** looks at Facebook



5 reasons to use Facebook

1 Campaigning

Engage with the general public to communicate key forestry messages and help change misguided perceptions.

2 Advertising

You can advertise your products indirectly, through posts that talk about your product, but embedded in a personal post. This works best if you already have an engaged followership. You can also ask your followers to post on your behalf.

A very useful tool is paid Facebook advertising. It allows you to reach very targeted audiences that are currently outside of your network. Visit FTN web resources for more guidance.

3 Event promotion

Any Facebook user or page can create an event and invite other organisations to co-host the event

and therefore reach more people.

More in FTN web resources.

4 Build your brand

With the right pictures and posts, you can 'humanise your company' and become more approachable for your clients. For the forestry sector, using photos of people is not a bad idea!

5 Create a community

A Facebook page makes it easier for people with an interest in your business to engage with you. If you offer interesting content and a good platform for others to interact with you, they will 'spread the word' to their facebook peers. Building a community will help you grow an audience – which is helpful for any future campaigns or advertising!

Get started

1 Define your objective

Do you use Facebook for advertising?

To raise your profile?

To engage with your clients?

To promote general messages that help the sector and your business?

2 Know your audience: Find out who is on Facebook

Your costumers?

Your competitors?

The general public – what kind of people?

Are these audiences relevant for your marketing objectives?

You might find out that Facebook is great for some of your business or campaign objectives, but that in other cases, maybe for political lobbying, other channels such as Twitter might be more suitable.

3 See what others are doing

How active are your clients and competitors on Facebook and what do they post? Let them inspire you!

4 Set up a page or account.

You can set up a personal page or a business page.

5 Think of what you are going to post

How would you talk to your target audience and what interests them? Think of content that you can produce regularly.

Use photographs and text.

Try to post several times a week, or daily for intensive campaigns (or if you have dedicated marketing people).

Have some content in stock, especially at the beginning.

6 Promote your page

Link and comment on other posts using your Facebook page.

Use targeted Facebook ad campaigns.

Link to your business page from your personal profile.

Link to your Facebook page from your other.

professional network channels.

Use your Facebook business page URL in your email signatures or adverts.

More on how to get started in FTN web resources.

Is Facebook safe?

There have been a lot of stories in the media recently about Facebook selling our data and using it to influence us. Facebook is still a useful tool to get your messages out, and following some common-sense rules will keep you safe:

Never put anything on Facebook which should be kept private. The simplest thing to do is to change your Facebook settings so that everything is 'public' and you will not be tempted to use it for private communications. **Don't use Facebook as your only source of information.** Facebook will show you things which your other posts suggest you are interested in, making it seem as if everyone is confirming your prejudices and conspiracy theories. This is why it is being accused of having undue political influence for example in electing Donald Trump. Read different news sources, and research stories you are interested in before weighing in to react.

As Stuart Goodall writes on p.5, rather than disengaging from the messy world of modern media, putting out trustworthy stories and information about our industry is good for us, but also good for our society.

Why I use Facebook

Forest Machine Operator Blog (23,000 users!) Mark Curtis

I use Facebook as I find it a quick and easy way for people like myself working in the wood to communicate worldwide and share different techniques on the way we go about our work. Also its good for guys who are staying away from home to have a chat and laugh with others in the same environment.

My tip to new users of the FMO blog:

Get involved and post things you think are relevant and always remember there is no such thing as a silly question, only a silly answer!

JAH Forestry Ltd Jonathon Hastie

We mainly use Facebook for advertising to our stakeholders.

It keeps a wide audience informed of our services and examples of the quality of workmanship.

It gives us great pride to share on Facebook brief snapshots of our efforts to deliver what we promise to our clients. It also creates a sense of community by sharing ideas and examples to improve the tree planting sector as a whole.

My tip for new users:

Content! Keep it fresh, topical and varied. Use high-quality pictures and videos to share your story, they can be worth a thousand words.

FTN WEB RESOURCES



Beginners guide
How Facebook can help a business
Promoting events on Facebook
Growing audiences
Facebook advertising
www.confor.org.uk/ftnweb



Forestry on Twitter

Recent highlights from the world of trees and timber on social media

This eclectic selection brought to you by @eleanormharris demonstrates the power of social media to generate a momentum which changes the way we see the world. For International Women's Day on 8 March, the Institute of Chartered Foresters asked its female members to post a photo of themselves tagged #ILookLikeAForester. This is part of a series of similar campaigns by female engineers, surgeons, professors and others to change perceptions of their jobs. It was a huge success: here is a small selection of Confor members who took part, but check out the hashtag on twitter to see the full list.



FTN WEB RESOURCES



All links to tweets can be found at
www.confor.org.uk/ftnweb

DETERMINED TO GROW



Liz Sharkey (Sharkey Forestry Ltd) is one of Midland's leading independent forestry consultants. **Stef Kaiser** meets her at the Hodscock Priory estate in Nottinghamshire

Liz Sharkey's independent consultancy Sharkey Forestry Ltd currently manages 2600 hectares of woodland for 29 client estates. The business helps bring woodlands into positive management, with a design focus on resilience in the context of the increasing threat of tree diseases. With over 15 years of both contractor and consultancy experience in the sector, Liz benefits from a wide range of skills covering all aspects of forestry - from the creation of new woodlands to the production of Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plans for mature woodland.

Although Liz' CV is a prime example of focussed career development, she initially had a very different *métier* in mind, and didn't get into tree work by design. After school, Liz opted for starting a degree in Fine Arts. However, it didn't take long for her to realise that she was more inclined to pursue her hobby, gardening. At that time, she was enrolled in a gardening course in her spare time and enjoyed other outdoors activities such as obstacle racing. To support her studies, she took a seasonal job in a warehouse driving forklifts.

Her career path quickly changed when she successfully replied to an advert for a landscaping job. Without experience and not knowing what to expect she took on the challenge and before long she was carrying out a wide range of forestry tasks, from planting, to establishment, maintenance and fencing. Being the only woman in the team of contractors was challenging (although character-building) as her presence and efforts were often met with mockery, rather than a supportive attitude.

Liz had to work triple hard to prove her capability to the contractors and eventually, they accepted and respected her. She stayed with the company for

four years and worked her way up to become an assistant contracts manager. She developed an interest in the biology and ecology of trees and decided it was time for the next step in her career. She started working for a consultancy firm, enrolled in a part-time degree in Countryside Management and eventually, set up Sharkey Forestry Ltd seven years ago.

Since then, she has written 47 management plans for her client estates. A task that, she says, is her bread and butter, besides advising on grants and tree surveying. She holds a professional certificate for tree inspection and advises her clients on woodland design and management. She arranges and supervises forestry operations, drawing from the solid network of contractors she has built over the years. With her practical experience, her academic training and her status as a Chartered Forester she is now one of the most sought-after forestry consultants in the region.

Talking to Liz, I would suspect that one of the secrets of her success is the genuineness and the humble self-confidence she exudes. She is proud to have achieved the career goals she has set for herself so far, but being a sole trader has come with its own set of challenges.

"People employed by companies often don't realise how difficult it is to set up a business completely on your own. You have to do everything by yourself, from fixing the printer to dealing with challenging professional relationships. I also don't come from a family with a forestry or farming background and didn't have a partner who could help out when needed. I have got to where I am without a support network and without a business partner. It's possible, but it's daunting."

After 15 years in the sector, Liz benefits from a close relationship with the contractors she employs. "I don't want to be the kind of consultant who makes it all about them and the client without recognising the essential role of the contractors on the ground. I am simply the link between the forestry worker and the client, although it's important to know a wide range of contractors to choose the right ones for each job. I want to make sure the contractors get a fair deal because they are the ones who actually do the work on the ground. They carry



I don't want to be the kind of consultant who makes it all about them and the client without recognising the essential role of the contractors on the ground



out tiring, physical work over long hours in weather conditions the rest of us can choose to avoid. In comparison, I now have it relatively easy, doing management work and supervising contractors. For me, it feels ok to be their boss, because I've done my stint on the ground and worked my way up. I value them as equal partners, and it is important to recognise their importance, and their need to make a living, just as I do".

But Liz Sharkey's relationship with male colleagues has not always been harmonious.

"My early career was marked by sexual harassment which was alive and well in forestry. Things may have changed but despite the current gender and diversity agenda, no one talks about what is happening on the ground, or how young workers should be educated on the matter. The amount of abuse I've put up with over the years is massive. Contractors work in isolated all-male groups and, to get through the day, they have to have a laugh now and then. They call it 'banter', but when dealing with women, this can easily turn into bullying and full-blown harassment."

Liz regrets that real-life barriers faced by female new starters in forestry are often overlooked: "When starting off as an entrepreneur, I didn't have the option to refuse to work with a sexist contractor. It is hard enough to get your first clients as an independent female forestry consultant. And you really don't want to flag up those things to your clients and say 'let's put the job on hold for a bit and get a new contractor in, because this one is being rude to me'. It would look unprofessional. And the client might start to doubt his initial decision to work with a woman because they 'just bring problems'. I hope that times are changing and that both men and women who are brave enough to choose career paths that are 'unconventional' for their gender can enjoy more support and acceptance in the future."

The driving force behind Liz' persistence and motivation to make her career in forestry work has been her passion for what she does. "I get to see some beautiful places and it makes me happy to know that I am making a positive impact on the environment. I am fortunate to have a great relationship with all my clients and my main aim is to make their woodlands more resilient in response to climate change and pests and diseases". She highlights forestry's most important 'selling point' - diversity: "Working in forestry is never monotonous; forestry can involve being out in the field planting, knapsacking, firewood processing or chainsawing which may not suit everyone, but there is plenty of other office-based work such as mapping and woodland design. There is something for everyone and there is space for personal and professional growth."

www.sharkeyforestry.co.uk

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Scottish Forestry Bill passed

The devolution of forestry to Scotland has been completed, and the legislative framework for forestry in Scotland modernised, after the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Bill.

Confor welcomed the legislation, and in particular the addition of a stipulation that creation of woodland and tree-planting targets must be included in a regularly-reviewed Scottish forestry strategy.

Confor has engaged in detail with the legislative process from the very beginning, providing written and oral evidence on a number of occasions. Our insistence on ensuring forestry expertise is protected and promoted under the new devolved arrangements resulted in the creation of a role of Chief Forester, which Confor suggested.

However, late on in the proceedings, a surprising number of opposition amendments to the legislation were presented and some were passed. Fortunately, the proposal to create a single agency, which gave us real cause for

concern as it would have threatened the ability of the public forest estate to be managed effectively while also merging regulatory and forest management functions, was amended at the last minute, partly thanks to pressure from Confor.

However, it remains unclear what the full effect of some of these amendments will be, and so Confor will seek to work closely with the Scottish Government and MSPs on understanding and implementing the new arrangements approved by Parliament.

Throughout the Bill process, we have received assurance from all parties that they recognise the importance of Scotland's forestry and wood-processing industry, which is welcome, and MSPs have repeatedly shown an understanding of its importance as a rural land use in Scotland. We will now seek to work constructively with Scottish Government and Parliament to ensure our sector can continue to grow and make a continuing important contribution to Scottish society.



Changes in financial transactions processing

Following the UK government's announcement of new arrangements for Forestry, the Forestry Commission in England (including Forest Enterprise England) will be changing how they process financial transactions **from 1 April 2018**. Firstly finance functions will transfer from their Edinburgh office to their National Office for England located in Bristol at the above address.

Secondly they will also transfer to new finance systems and so will have some periods of system downtime between March and April 2018. Consequently, invoice payment will be limited in early April 2018.

Please visit FTN web resources for further information on what the changes mean for their two main supplier groups, timber harvesting and haulage service and other suppliers. Please ensure that you read the relevant annex carefully, and make any required changes with effect from **1 April 2018**.

They will send a further reminder over the next few weeks. Please note that the changes outlined here relate to the Forestry Commission in **England only**.

FTN WEB RESOURCES



Annex A: Suppliers, excluding suppliers of timber harvesting and haulage services

Annex B: Suppliers of timber harvesting and haulage services

www.confor.org.uk/ftnweb

Stepping up the Tilhill Forestry career ladder

Tilhill Forestry has announced the appointment of Julian Hollingdale to the role of District Manager for its North Highland District office based in Inverness.

Julian graduated from Bangor University with a BSc Hons in Forestry and joined Tilhill in 2001 as an Assistant Forest Manager in their West Highland District. He then spent seven years in Southern England within the Forestry and Landscaping businesses before moving to join the forestry team in Inverness in late 2010. Julian has also been a professional member of the ICF since 2013 and an ICF assessor since 2016.

Practicality Brown expands

Practicality Brown Limited (PBL) has acquired the commercial business of Midland Tree Surgeons Ltd, effective 1 March 2018. With this acquisition, PBL reinforces its position as a leader in the land clearance industry. PBL operates its own compliant fleet of specialist mechanised resources including: five Dymax Tree Shears up to 16", eight mulchers up to 400hp, two whole tree chippers both 550hp, stump grinders, excavator-mounted winch, forestry forwarder, heavy duty flail mower, remote control tractor mulcher and two tree spades.

treeclearance@pracbrown.co.uk

[@PracBrownLtd](https://twitter.com/PracBrownLtd) [@PracBrownLtd](https://www.facebook.com/PracBrownLtd)

Create octagon-shaped beams

Octagonal timber beams and other shapes can be created using a new sawmill bed attachment from Wood-Mizer. The attachment simply bolts onto the sawmill bed rail (two units required; more may be needed depending on cant length and thickness). Square cants are placed inside and secured with the included clamp. Depending on the shape required and the size of the cant, the sawmill head is lowered to the correct position and cuts off one corner of the cant. The cant is turned 90 degrees, and the process is continued three more times, removing the four corners to produce the octagon-shaped beam.

www.woodmizer-europe.com



NEW MEMBERS

ADH Baseline Ltd, Shropshire
 Jim Wilmer & Sons Timber Harvesting Ltd, South Ayrshire
 Treeline Forestry Ltd, Inverness
 VEON Ltd, Ireland
 Volac International Ltd, West Glamorgan
 Wildtrackers, Powys
 Carol Boulty, Nottingham
 Matthew Plumb, Monmouthshire
 Michael J Mann, Cornwall
 Rita Razauskaite, Aberdeenshire
 Terry Batson, County Durham



George McRobbie – a stalwart of the 21st century forestry and timber sector – has been named as the winner of Confor’s Dedicated Service to Forestry Award for 2018.

OBITUARY



Roger Clough Williams-Ellis OBE DL
1923-2018

Roger Clough Williams-Ellis, who has died aged 94, was a dedicated and practical advocate for commercial forestry in Wales. He was the scion of an old Welsh gentry family that trace their ancestry back to the Princes of Gwynedd and includes Sir Clough Williams-Ellis of Portmeirion fame.

Born in 1923, Roger spent his youth in the rugged countryside and mountains of Snowdonia. He preferred the wilds of his homeland to the refinements of Eton, which from his point of view provided little practical education to suit his outdoor lifestyle. He left at 17 and found an apprenticeship in land agency till WW2 intervened. He volunteered at 19 and was commissioned into the Royal Engineers at 20 and was promoted to Major by the age of 21. He saw service in India and the recapture of Singapore. He was demobilized in 1947 and proudly retained his much repaired ‘Demob Suit’ until his death.

After the war, he immediately plunged himself into his life’s work of revitalising his family’s estate and in doing so singlehandedly created one of Wales’s largest privately owned commercial forests.

Roger was at the heart of Wales’s post war commercial forestry boom, and in 1948 he established the Glasfryn Forest Nursery which for the next 25 years became the main source of the Principality’s Sitka Spruce seedlings. Dennis Healy’s ‘pip squeaking budget’ of 1975 ended Estate Duty relief on commercial woodlands and brought an abrupt end to the nursery and with it the loss of 12 jobs and the destruction of two million trees, actions deeply felt by Roger.

However the poor low grade agricultural land around Glasfryn proved ideal for his high yielding Sitka Spruce and a chance meeting with a commodity broker developed a lucrative trade in exporting green softwood thinnings to Dubai during the 80s/90s, as a part of the aluminium smelting process. He even added Christmas trees gratis, for the ex-pat population at Christmas. Having ceased to be a nursery man, Roger became a mill owner and established the Glasfryn Sawmill, which continues to thrive today, and is a major local employer.

He was ever the practical forester as demonstrated by a shortage of fingers! But above all he was a great ambassador for the forest industry in Wales, lecturing on its virtues and needs to anyone who would listen. He practised what he preached and was a regular contributor at the Royal Welsh Show, winning over 25 prizes in their woodlands competition. His own donation in 1965 of the Williams-Ellis Perpetual Challenge Cup was a much prized forestry trophy. In 1994 he won the prestigious Sir Bryner John award for agriculture from the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, and was awarded the OBE in 1998 for his services to forestry.



Ron Mitchell

1938-2018

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of our great friend and colleague Ron Mitchell who passed away on 31 January 2018, *writes Jamie Kirkman (Balcombe Sawmill)*.

Ron’s career in the timber industry spanned some 65 years (with only a short break for National service). Starting at John Stenner’s Sawmill in Robertsbridge at the age of 14, Ron went on to be a sawyer and timber buyer across the length and breadth of England. Later in life, he continued to work for Balcombe Estate as advisor, sawyer and yard foreman for 20 years. His expertise in timber and sawmilling was a key part in the development of Balcombe’s sawmill. His legacy is not only the knowledge and work ethic imparted to colleagues but also fond memories of his dry sense of humour and the lasting friendships forged throughout his career.

Ron is pictured (left) working the old Stenner bandrack with lifelong friend Ernie Fry.

Packed schedule for UK's largest forestry, woodland, trees and timber show

Exhibition secretary **Ian Millward** looks forward to the UK's leading forestry event

APF 2018, Confor's flagship show, is by far the UK's largest exhibition for the tree and timber industries. In 2016 it attracted 320 exhibitors and over 22,500 visitors from all over the UK, Ireland and Europe.

It is returning once again to Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire on the 20/21/22 September. The show is ideally located in central England with easy access from main motorways and only 40km south of Birmingham International airport.

There will be over 4km and over £50m of working machinery on show.

In 2016 we saw an increase of 15% in exhibitor numbers and 25% in visitor numbers. The show really has become the 'must see' event of the year. To cope with demand from exhibitors we have increased the size of the static area for 2018 and nine months before the show, we had over 210 exhibitors booked in for this year. APF 2018 is already shaping up to exceed those numbers.

The show has become an essential meeting place for networking, for manufacturers to seek new distributors and a place to meet old colleagues to catch up on news. It is the place to come to see the very latest in machinery and compare different manufacturers side by side. There will hardly be a machine out there that will not be being shown demonstrated at the event. Many dealers report a dip in sales in the run up to the event as buyers wait until the show before making purchasing decisions.

The show is of equal importance to both the forestry and arboricultural sectors. It is not just about the big forest machines but the smaller machines and equipment used day to day in tree surgery businesses across the UK. It is one of the few events where machines can be seen working and with increasing emphasis on the environment and maximising returns there are a lot of machines designed for smaller woodlands, estates and farms from firewood processors, mobile sawbenches, fencing equipment and biomass production, all designed to add value to woods and timber.

Entertainment

When the serious business of buying machinery is done there is a host of other features to enjoy. The **Husqvarna World 25m pole climbing championships** return with 50 of the world's best climbers competing for the world crown. Some 25 of Europe's finest chainsaw carvers compete in the **A W Jenkinson and Tilhill European chainsaw carving championships**. We welcome the return of **Stihl Timbersports** for the first time since 2008 as Europe's top lumber-



jacks warm up for the world championships later in the year in Liverpool. There will be the UK's largest demonstration of **traditional woodland crafts**, everything from charcoal to coracle making. **The UK forwarder driving championships** supported by Komatsu will take place to find the UK's best operator.

A new feature for 2018 will be the Fencing in **The 21st Century Arena**. There will be daily demonstrations on the latest machinery, equipment, materials and techniques by leading manufacturers. The **Forest Worker Zone** will see a series of short, practical, drop-in sessions aimed specifically at the forest worker and contractor with subjects as varied as chainsaw maintenance, avoiding back pain, accessing grants for machinery and many others with opportunities for one to one discussions. For the arborist there will be a similar zone devoted to the tree climber and the latest in techniques, equipment, safety and training.

There is far too much to do in one day!

Who said forest machinery is only for big guys? A group of school children don't let the late summer rain spoil their excitement when shown impressive pieces of forestry equipment for the first time, on a APF tour guided by Confor staff.

Event information

Date Thursday 20 to Sat 22 September 2018, 9-6pm

Venue Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5PS

Accommodation Camping available on site; local accommodation available but early booking is recommended

Tickets (available online) One-day ticket (£18) Two-day ticket (£30)

Tickets are free for Confor members. Individual Confor members get in free on production of their membership card. Confor trade members need to apply to Confor HQ for their allocation of free tickets.

Event contact Exhibition Secretary

E: info@apfexhibition.co.uk T: 01428 723545

f Find APF 2018 on Facebook!

More visitor information, current exhibitor list, information on how to book a stand and all other details can be found at www.apfexhibition.co.uk

Plant health beyond Brexit



Caroline Harrison, Confor England manager, outlines Confor's vision for protecting UK forestry.

In October 2016 Confor produced its report, *A thriving forestry and timber sector in a post-Brexit world*. With input from members, this document asked five big questions and set out policy recommendations that could allow the forestry and timber to thrive post-Brexit.

"How can we strengthen plant health and protection without restricting domestic trade?"

This was one of the five questions. The recommendations to make this happen were:

- **Phytosanitary certificates** should be required for all imported material: Better regulation of all plant material (horticultural products as well as forestry)

would limit the chance of new exotic pests and disease entering the UK.

- **Restrict importation of firewood:** This would reduce the risk of pest and disease entering the UK and increase demand for low-grade fuel wood from the UK's under-managed woods.
- **Achieve consistent levels of new planting to enable nurseries to plan effectively:** Short-term, inconsistent grant schemes lead to yo-yoing in planting. Long-term, consistent support for woodland creation enables nurseries to better plan production, reducing both reliance on imported plants and disease risk.

Since this report Confor has gone further and produced its position on the import of live plant material and firewood.

FTN WEB RESOURCES



Download Report: *A thriving forestry and timber sector in a post-Brexit world*
www.confor.org.uk



Where do we want to be in five years?

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

LIVE PLANT MATERIAL

Government and public forests should...

IMMEDIATELY

Ban imports of mature trees in pots
 Address the significant biosecurity risk from plants in soil in the horticulture, landscape and amenity sectors

IN THE NEXT YEAR

Stabilise grant schemes and meet adequate deadlines for granting planting permissions
 Allow flexibility in grant years to enable planting to be deferred if necessary until home grown stock is available

IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS

Require phytosanitary certification or imported cell-grown stock
 Tender for plant supply on long-term contracts specifying home-grown stock

WITHIN FIVE YEARS

Specify that grants will only support home-grown stock

Landowners, management companies, contractors and nurseries should...

IMMEDIATELY

Ensure compliance with basic biosecurity measures

WHEN GRANTS AND APPLICATIONS ARE STABLE

Plan applications to allow time for growing of stock (2-3 years)
 Specify and supply only home-grown trees

In five years we would like to have no trade in high-risk imported plant material, driven by a lack of demand for them.

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

WOODFUEL

Governments and regulators should...

IMMEDIATELY

Increase monitoring and reporting to include the majority of imported firewood and wood packaging material.
 or
 Ban imported firewood.

IN THE NEXT YEAR

Report area of woodland under management in annual Forest Statistics.

IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS

Promote UK-grown firewood.
 Provide adequate grants and support for woodland management and streamline the process of approving felling permissions.

In five years, financial and regulatory incentives must make it easier and cheaper to supply firewood by managing UK woodlands, than to import it.

Landowners, management companies and nurseries should...

IN THE NEXT YEAR

Explore opportunities to bring unmanaged woodlands into management and help government create suitable support.

IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS

Take up and promote opportunities provided by government.



Should we ban pot plant and soil imports?

Buglife is the charity that sticks up for invertebrates, but there are some invertebrates that we do not appreciate - species in the wrong place, **writes Buglife's Matt Shardlow.**

Invasive alien species are a growing problem for our native wildlife. When humans introduce a species into a completely new environment it is like Russian Roulette, and when it goes wrong, the result can be dire for struggling native species.

While deliberate releases of non-native species in the UK are now illegal, imported soil material, particularly in pots with live plants is an open door for invasive species. Recently, Buglife has recorded mole-crickets, Egyptian grasshoppers and huge flatworms being imported in pot plants. If animals as big as clothes pegs are arriving, how many tiny eggs are there that no-one notices? The Obama flatworm (*Obama nungara*), one of the new arrivals, had only recently spread from Brazil, had just been named by scientists, and is already considered to be a major risk to French agriculture.

In the tropics, Asia and the America hundreds of thousands of species of animal, plant, fungus and bacteria wait to see if they will be mobilised by humans. Many are of course tree living species: think of the worst pest you have encountered, we know that worse pests are on the move, and there are certain to be even more harmful pests yet to leave their native forests.

Should we leave the door open and welcome in the pot plant stowaways, or should we stop the importation until new biosecurity measures can be developed and be shown to be safe? Buglife believes that both the economy and biodiversity will be safer if we ban pot plant and soil importation. If we do not there will be economic and societal impacts, that may include forestry and horticulture being seen as dirty industries. We can grow all the whips and garden plants we need in the UK and we should do so, this is wise, not isolationist!

www.buglife.org.uk



Buy local, burn local

The growth in popularity of wood-burning stoves has put pressure on firewood supplies, **writes Caroline Harrison.** As a result, imports have increased; latest available figures show England and Scotland imported 32,000 tonnes of firewood in the first nine months of 2017, predominantly ash. This might seem harmless, but it poses a substantial risk to our economy and environment. Why? Because bringing in firewood from outside the UK can also mean bringing in pests and diseases, in the firewood or in its packaging.

Pests we want to keep out include the Emerald ash borer beetle, which has killed millions of ash trees in Canada since it arrived from Asia. There is uncertainty about the bug spreading towards Europe from Russia but the evidence from North America is devastating - firewood has been a major factor in the rapid spread of the beetle.

Firewood imports into the UK are inspected under the Statutory Notification Scheme implemented by the Forestry Commission on a risk basis. In the nine months to the end of September 2017, spot checks revealed 28 per cent of imports inspected did not comply with UK regulations.

These cases mostly relate to paperwork inconsistencies or packaging being non-compliant. However, they raise a fundamental question - why take the risk and import firewood at all?

There are two simple actions we can take on firewood - the UK should refuse to import firewood with bark still attached or firewood that hasn't been properly dried. This would reduce the risks

of importing pests and diseases dramatically, but also help to stimulate domestic firewood markets. Phasing out firewood imports will protect the UK's native broadleaf woodlands from pests and disease, and deliver wider economic benefits by fulfilling the demand for firewood from home-grown sources.

Another 8,000ha of managed broadleaf woodland could provide the 32,000 tonnes of firewood imported in the first nine months of 2017 - and there is plenty of opportunity to do this.

The clear message is Buy Local, Burn Local.

Helen Bentley-Fox, Director of Woodsure, adds:

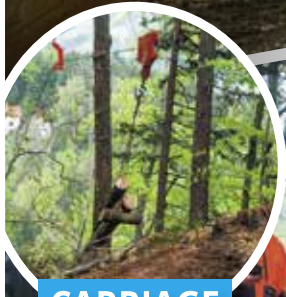
Woodsure is the UK's only wood fuel quality scheme dealing with a wide variety of domestic and commercial wood based biomass fuels. In operating the Ready to Burn campaign and scheme, Woodsure understands the risks of introducing pest and diseases with imported firewood. As part of its assurance schemes it raises awareness with all suppliers that import firewood on biosecurity requirements. The Forestry Commission has a digital learning site at www.forestrylearning.org.uk/login/index.php

Woodsure recommends that all the suppliers complete this sort of training in biosecurity and that they put procedures in place to ensure that any potential issues are either prevented or dealt with in a timely manner. The importance of biosecurity cannot be overstated and we have seen from the recent past that diseases and infestations can spread rapidly undermining our native stock.

>>

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DEPEND ON IT



>> *Phytophthora ramorum*: impact on the market



by **Martin Bishop**
National
Manager for
Wales

Since 2010, when *Phytophthora ramorum* (*P ramorum*) was first identified on larch in the UK, the total area affected has grown to over 14,000ha UK wide. Whilst that is an appalling figure we have to be consoled by the fact that this is still a small percentage of the larch area in the UK at 126,000ha (10%), according to Forestry Statistics 2017.

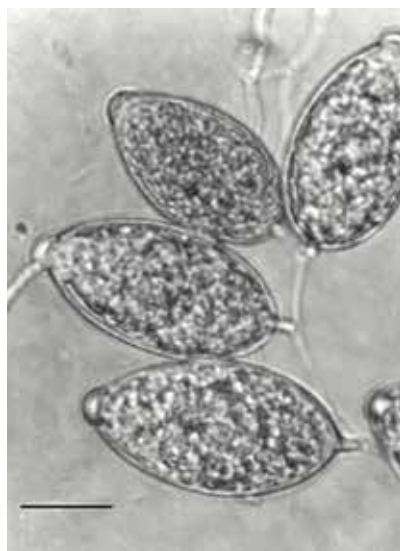
The picture is very different in the devolved regions as in England and Scotland there is still substantial areas of larch not affected so far, whereas in Wales the infected area is by far the largest percentage. There was in fact a substantial new area of infection detected in early 2017 in West Wales due, we think, to the combined effect of heavier than average rainfall in the summer of 2016 followed by a wetter than average and very warm winter in 2016/17. There have also been a few cases detected on spruce and noble fir, both of which were close to heavily infected larch. The full situation report for the UK is available in FTN web resources.

Hard facts about the exact volume of timber felled are difficult to find and is not helped by a lot of pre-emptive felling being done to combat the spread of the disease, and rightly so. But this actually raises an interesting issue regarding marketing of minor species.

Pre *P ramorum*, larch was considered a minor species, with little large scale demand although many smaller mills did process a reasonable volume. Supply and demand was in balance. As the mills became aware of the increasing volumes that would be available they did what any business would do and reacted to it, engaging with their customers and generating a demand for it; this was no easy task as customers are always right and do not like being told what they can have.

The outcome of this is that larch has changed from being a minor species into a species that is now in demand, arguably demand is now greater than supply if the almost weekly requests I get for larch from sawmills is anything to go by. Interestingly, with hindsight, maybe demand was constrained by the perception of supply. If mills perceived there was not much available then they did not gear up to take it. It seems crazy that a perceived glut has changed the supply/demand balance in the opposite way to what we would expect.

The lesson perhaps we have learnt here is that any species (well almost any species) could be marketed if it is presented in sufficient quantities to generate interest from wood processors and their customers. A lesson for how we diversify our forests and the impacts that will have on the supply and demand balance.



Sporangia of *P ramorum*

FTN WEB RESOURCES



Forestry statistics 2017
P. Ramorum Situation Report
www.confor.org.uk

Importing and nurseries



Contributed by

In an ideal world, forestry and hedging plant needs, whether for new woodland creation or restocking, conifers or broadleaves, commercial or landscape, grant aided or not, would be known in good time for UK nurseries to produce the necessary material, across the range of species and provenance that is required!

In our not quite so ideal world such long term planning is many a forester's goal but less than often achieved. Long discussed delays in awarding of grants, changes in demand for timber, delays in felling and ongoing restructuring change the needs and mix of forestry transplants for new planting and restock. These transplants don't appear overnight. It's a two to three year process from seed sowing to transport to site – assuming the seed is available to start with.

That's a big ask for a nursery without knowing that there is an end market. Many a nursery has produced what they thought was needed only to have a large bonfire at the end of the season – soul and business destroying.

That's where imports come in – to balance the supply and demand – economics really!

However that's also where pests come in to the mix – not intentionally but we've seen our fair share in the last few years – *Chalara* dieback of Ash, *Dendroctonus micans*, *Phytophthoras* and Sweet Chestnut blight to name a few, and not to mention the serious new threat of *Xylella* on our doorstep - already creeping north from the Mediterranean countries.

If our UK nurseries can grow the planting stock we need here at home, that can only increase the resilience of our forests, woodlands and environment. But this needs better identification of what species, in what quantity, and when required. Our nurseries operate on thin margins, and our sector cannot afford to lose their supplies. This will become even more important as we enter an era of increasing climate change targets for new woodland creation, coupled with increasing restocks as the harvest of the 20th century peaks. That requires everyone involved in the process to be better at their job, especially:

- For the plant purchasers to up their game on forward planning, placing forward orders and contract grows.
- For government and authorities to process approvals quicker, to be more flexible in plant provenances and planting years (should stock not be available), and to ensure any appropriate public funding is available to satisfy demand.

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Plant passporting of timber and co-products



Timber movement is just one aspect of the plant health regime. Confor Scotland manager **Jamie Farquhar** looks at the small print of plant passporting regulations.

The 2016 EU Plant Health Regulation is binding on all Member States, and has to be implemented by December 2019. It is unlike the previous Directive which gave some latitude in interpretation, so that presently we move timber within the protected zone of GB under a 'local' movement exemption. The UK Government has agreed to full implementation despite date of Brexit.

The regulation demands that the movement into or within a protected pest free zone of coniferous wood, and that of sweet chestnut and plane, that is not bark free or has been heated treated, is passported. GB has for some time declared pest free status from several Ips beetles. Specifically timber from forest to mill (and chips from mill to secondary processing site) will have to be accompanied by a passport which declares that it is free from the respective protected zone quarantine pest - in our view this is an impossible assertion to make. And the passport has to be affixed to the "trade unit" - what does this mean?

Passports can only be issued by a "professional operator", who is registered with a "competent authority", and who can demonstrate a certain level of competence (will an exam be necessary?) to carry out a "meticulous examination" of the timber - to

make the impossible statement of "free from"

Assuming the "trade unit" were to be a lorry load, we calculate that blind compliance means 660,000 lorry loads of timber and co-products will have to have this "meticulous examination" in forest and mill every year. A conservative estimate means this could entail 200 plus FTEs for the industry, and assuming there is full cost recovery from industry, including that of examination and monitoring by the competent authority, could mean a bill running into many millions.

What is particularly galling about this whole matter is that the impending EU regulation is supposed to be on a risk-based approach, and to improve biosecurity. Yet nothing in the idea of plant passporting the movement of timber within GB would improve biosecurity. There is an overwhelming need for industry lobbying!



Confor is part of a Defra-led technical working group on this issue, and we are proposing a more simple solution:

The "meticulous examination" will be done via the existing aerial and follow-up ground surveys of GB woodlands by Forestry Commission, who can then make a declaration that timber is "free from pests"

The "Professional Operator" will be the FC Conservators - they issue the felling licences and so can issue the requisite passport.

The "trade unit" can then be deemed to be all coniferous wood moved within the PZ of GB from forest to primary processor, and between processors (woodchip, etc).



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PROPERTY MARKET REPORT
Fenning Welstead

John Clegg & Co

What has been happening in the forestry market since we last reported? The main thing that comes to mind is the value of location and quality.

Scotland

Bidwells sold two properties; one in Angus, the other in coastal Argyll, both being commercial forests. Kynaballoch in Angus is a compact 128ha with crops dating from 1954 to 1983. With a guide price of £1.2m and the prospect of very immediate timber income, this appealed to the market; especially so because logs and small round wood have been in short supply. A competitive closing date saw the property sell for approaching 50% above the guide, representing a price per stocked hectare in excess of £16,000.

Acharossan, on the west coast of the Cowal Peninsula, is a much larger forest at 1023ha. The oldest crops were planted in 1966 and significant areas have been felled and restocked. Bidwells had set a guide

price of £5.25m at which level it attracted good interest. It is now under offer at about one third over guide, equating to £8300 per stocked hectare. The difference in price per hectare with Kynaballoch relates partly to the age and the immediate ability to extract timber and partly due to location, cost of operations and distance to market.

Moving into south Scotland, Wallets Marts sold Bargatton Plantation. Extending to 117ha in total, it was planted in the early 1990s. In addition to the commercial forestry, this property offered attractive sporting with some loch fishing. With a guide price of £650,000, it sold at a premium of circa 25%; equivalent to about £8763 per stocked hectare.

A more complex property was John Clegg & Co's marketing of Newton Estate. Situated adjacent to the M74 and containing some very fast growing spruce crops, it extends in total to 202ha. The property includes commercial forestry, but also some useful agricultural fields capable of silage cropping, fishing on the River Clyde and two cottages. The most intriguing aspect, however, was an annual income of £116,000 arising from a mixture of radio masts, a wind turbine and access rights. The property was put on the market with a guide price of £2.95m and sold at a premium. Depending on how one analyses the figures, the price breaks down in different ways. A reasonable assumption might suggest that if the variable income was valued at a yield of around 10%, and, therefore, worth something over £1m, the forestry was worth in the region of £16,000 per hectare. For crops planted in the 1970s and very much like Kynaballoch, ie ready for harvesting into a market with strong demand, there is some comparable value evidence there.

Finally, from the Scottish perspective, I am going to mention a small amenity woodland with loch frontage. A small woodland near Loch Earn on the side of the water, extending in total to less than six hectares, sold for over £22,000 per hectare. With no realistic value in timber other than the odd bit of firewood, this is a useful guide to the value of real amenity and enjoyment in the countryside.

England and Wales

As ever, in England and Wales properties for sale have been few and far between. However, even without many opportunities, the market is obviously keenly observed by the investing public due to the fact that anything put to market usually sells quickly and nearly always at a price above expectations.

In the north of England, there has been a very strong market for a number of years with considerable investor interest in acquiring property and not very much by way of supply. John Clegg & Co and Savills marketed Dipton Forest, to the south of Hexham. Extending to 224ha of which 206ha were stocked with commercial crops of Scots pine and Sitka spruce, this property was put on the market with a guide price of £1.6m. It sold at an extremely competitive price equivalent to over £15,000 per hectare. On the face of it, this seems comparable to some of the evidence from north of the Border, but the substantial element of pine at Dipton suggests that this was a very strong bid. In part, this could be due to higher land values but also to the significant sense of place that Dipton offered. It is all too easy to ignore these less tangible aspects of property. As we see an increasing focus on Natural Capital, perhaps an >>



Newton Estate

>> agreed method of ascribing monetary value will develop, but for now it is very much in the eye of the beholder.

John Clegg & Co marketed Hollin Cleugh Forest near Newcastleton; 146ha in total, of which 110ha are carrying young, restocked crops. This was put on at a guide price of £550,000 but sold at double that; equivalent to £11,350 per hectare. This is almost a repeat of a forest sold in that part of the world a few years ago – Stonechest - which had secured very strong bidding also. Part of this, in our view, is a matter of land value aided by perceptions of stronger political stability being in England, the prospect of young crops requiring little in the way of maintenance and potentially strong capital growth. Ideal, in other words, for long term investment.

With plenty of heat in the north England market, it is inevitable that forestry investors start to look at other routes to investment. With this in mind, we are aware that C&D Rural in Carlisle has recently sold Snowden Close, a 263ha piece of good quality grazing land with house and buildings, for around £2.4m. It is understood it is hoped the majority of the farm will be planted with commercial tree species before the unplanted area, farmhouse and buildings will be sold on.

Ley Park Wood just outside Gloucester and marketed by John Clegg & Co was launched just before Christmas with a guide of £1275m for 93.48ha – a large and quite commercial offering for this part of the world. It is understood a sale was agreed at a figure well above guide and potentially rivalling the best prices in Scotland for wall to wall conifer of £16,000 per hectare.

Flakebridge Estate, with 152ha of forest and sporting rights over a further 938ha close to Appleby in Yorkshire, appeared from Davis Bowring late in 2017 after being withdrawn from the market for a few years after a failed sale. Clearly, with the guide price being set at a similar level to the previous marketing exercise at £1.75m and forestry land now being regularly fought over, this figure looked attractive. As such, we understand the agent managed to achieve in excess of £2m for this stunning and interesting property.

Further south, business has continued as usual with the normal quantity of smaller, more amenity focused properties coming to the market with a variety of agents. As ever, success is mixed with some generating competitive interest, while others sell after a bit of a struggle. Prices have been strong with many unsatisfied buyers being left to find alternative properties in which to invest.



The real value of amenity... a small woodland near Loch Earn, extending in total to less than six hectares, sold for over £22,000 per hectare

George F White marketed the 84ha Hyons Wood in Northumberland in the summer and achieved a figure rumoured to be well above its modest £315,000 guide price. This sale illustrates that correctly priced, the current market is well prepared to offer well in excess of guide on almost any woodland property, even if there is no prospect of immediate timber production.

Other significant sales include Pennal Forest in North Wales by John Clegg & Co, 77.5ha of high quality, young replanted woodland, sold for over £6,400 per hectare, nicely above the guide of £5,600.

Going forward, we are seeing a slightly larger crop of spring sales and it is hoped our next report will indicate a few more significant properties selling into what is

clearly going to remain a buoyant market under-pinned with a strong timber market.

The Influence of forestry funds
Funds accumulate the investment wishes of many individuals and effectively bring ownership of forestry to a much wider market than direct purchase. The nature of large-scale commercial forestry is changing, with a high percentage now owned by funds with the consequent spread of risk and economies of scale. There is a knock-on effect to the timber market where there are now several portfolios able to supply substantial annual tonnages. Changed days from when only the Forestry Commission could fill this role!

www.johnclegg.co.uk



Pennal Forest

A 'golden opportunity' or the 'perfect storm'?



TIMBER AUCTIONS MARKET REPORT
Oliver Combe
Timber Auctions

Since Christmas the UK standing timber market has reached unprecedented levels and continues to defy expectations of a cooling-off period.

New record prices for standing timber are being posted on a monthly basis and whilst this is fantastic news for the grower there is increasing concern in the sector that the market is seriously overheating (no pun intended). Will there be crash or a soft landing? One sawmill has closed at Christmas, is there enough wood to keep everyone going?

Domestic trends

UK demand is reasonably good, the economy is better than most expected it would be and timber sales have been going well in volume terms although price has continued to be an issue.

The main timber importing countries have become focused on new, more lucrative and less demanding markets like the US and China and appear to have been landing less stock in the UK over the last six months. This has limited the amount of quayside stock at the same time as demand has picked up a little bit better than expected, with lower levels pre-ordered and better home elsewhere in the world there is not much sign that this will change until there are substantial improvements in

the prices that merchants and end users are prepared to pay. In addition, the UK producers have had significantly less stock in their supply chain than in the previous year due to a number of factors. "25 to 33% less stock than last year" is the common message, whether by accident or design.

In an industry where the whole supply chain has been reducing stocks and increasingly living hand to mouth this has stretched stock availability to breaking point. At the beginning of March, customers were reporting two and three-week lead times on key products.

Winter of 2017/18 had seen significantly more extreme weather and disruption to harvesting activities than recent years so harvesting companies has been struggling to produce material for their customers. This was on the back of an apparent shortage of timber being offered to the market in the last six months of 2017. So not only did the harvesters have less material to cut they were also struggling to deliver it to the processors. Then came the 'Beast from the East' which brought widespread disruption to the supply chain at a time when stocks were at a bare minimum. Many harvesting sites have been completely shut down for several weeks which have caused processors log yards to empty at an alarming rate to the point where many have had to take production breaks.

Impact on the market

The lack of timber being brought to the market in the second half of 2017 had already put upward pressure on timber prices. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the extent of this shortages some sources have

identified a shortfall of 600,000m³ obs below what had been offered in previous years. This shortfall has impacted across all market sectors and lead to a general shortage of timber for all the processors, whether sawmills, board mills or biomass plants.

Purchasers were competing hard to secure volume and prices of £40 to £50 per tonne standing were seen in the final quarter of 2017. These prices were determined by the need to secure wood now due to shortages and not by a surge in end product prices.

The first quarter of 2018 saw more timber coming onto the market but also further restrictions in supply due to the weather and as the restrictions have increased panic appears to have set into the standing timber market as buyers faced with empty log yards and the prospect of stopping plants for prolonged periods of time have "thrown the book" at key strategic log rich parcels to ensure they have wood to cut tomorrow. It is now a battle of those with the deepest pockets.

Recent reports have prime standing parcels in the North of England making over £60 per tonne standing, these are unprecedented and in the current market unsustainable prices. Hopefully the price increases on end products will be accepted by the market, the standing prices will stabilise and we will all be able to make hay!

Whilst the rapid escalation in standing timber prices is well documented this has not been followed by corresponding increases in finished product prices. There has been a steady stream of price increases for sawn timber in the second half of 2017 and into early 2018 the log price increases have wiped these out on a monthly basis. >>

£ per tonne delivered to customers in Wales, central and south England				£ per tonne delivered to customers in north England and Scotland			
Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend	Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£70.00	£85.00	=	Log 18	£65.00	£80.00	= ↑
Bar/pallet 14	£45.00	£55.00	=	Bar / pallet 14	£50.00	£60.00	=
SRW	£35.00	£45.00	= ↑	SRW	£40.00	£45.00	= ↑
Fencing	£50.00	£55.00	= ↑	Fencing	£50.00	£60.00	= ↑
H Wood firewood	£45.00	£50.00	↑	H Wood firewood	£50.00	£55.00	↑

These prices are for guidance purposes only and are based on historic market information.



>> Processors margins were under severe pressure prior to the shortages caused by the weather and the last few months will have been very tough trading conditions so there are good reasons to be very cautious about the current state of the market.

As log prices head towards £80 per tonne delivered and beyond, sawmills need to get the price of sawn timber increased by somewhere around £60 per m³ just to stand still (£180m³ delivered to £240m³) and this has to be done pretty rapidly.

Will the market be able to absorb this level of price increases without a significant reduction in demand? If the processors can get the price increases to stick will this then lead to a flood of imports and a collapse in demand?

Summary

We are now in uncharted territories for standing timber prices and whilst it is a golden opportunity for the growers it is definitely not sustainable in the long-term. The ability of the consumer market to absorb price increases and the willingness of importers to return to the UK if the prices increase substantially this spring are key factors in determining demand levels. Supply to the market appears to be better this spring than for a number of years but will this increased supply continue into the second half of the year. It is uncertain times and there is significant risk but it also a huge opportunity for growers.

Whilst in the short-term prices may ease as more supply becomes available and competition eases there remains an ongoing question as to whether there is enough timber to sustain the current demand. This presents an excellent opportunity for growers to bring marginal crops

GLOBAL TRENDS



The global market for timber continues to be strong and the US market highlights the developing supply and demand imbalance. Globally, demand is rising faster than supply; in the US, this has lead to record breaking prices for sawn timber despite slower than anticipated new housing starts whilst the market is becoming increasingly dependent on imported timber. With the Asian and Chinese markets also performing well there are strong draws on available supplies which are putting consistent upwards pressure on timber prices.

For the main timber producing nations there is increasing demand and on the

back of this an emerging trend of increasing prices. Producers are now focusing on increasing harvesting rates to ensure that there is enough round wood available to capitalise on this opportunity. This is not without its challenges as weather conditions become more erratic, environmental regulations and controls become more stringent and the expectations of the consumer increase. Through 2017 there were strong signs that the timber market would become supply rather than demand driven, 2018 has seen this become a reality.

Roadside hardwood prices (£ hft) March 2018

	Oak planking	Oak beam/fencing	Oak cordwood	Export ash & beech	White ash sawlogs	Export sycamore	1st grade firewood
High price	9.00	8.00	1.40	3.25	5.00	5.00	2.00
Mid price	8.00	6.50	1.25	2.75	4.00	4.00	1.80
Low price	7.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	1.60

These prices are for guidance purposes only and are based on historic market information

back into production. Prices are excellent for all products across most species which is unusual and should allow growers a great opportunity to thin or fell almost any site.

2018 is the opportunity to revisit all those compartments and woods that you have worked around, ignored or forgotten about and see if they can be brought to market and become productive woodlands.

With current prices levels most woodlands can be harvested and return a cash

positive sum, speak to your forest manager, walk through your woods and see what can be brought forward.

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Demand continues to outstrip supply



**TIMBER
MARKET
REPORT**
Tim Leavers,
Euroforest

As I write, the last vestiges of the recent heavy falls of snow are disappearing, here in the south of England. Nothing unusual about that, but these cold easterly weather systems have had an impact on all business activity, not least for the forest and timber processing industries. As you go further north barely a week has passed this year without weather related disruption.

In contrast to the weather, the wood processing sector has seen an early season heating up reflected in record standing prices across all sectors.

Processers under pressure

Sawmillers are reporting significant demand for finished product from both construction and fencing customers. This demand is driven by a number of factors. Imported prices are remaining robustly strong due to the weak pound. The Swedes are reported to be holding back volume in anticipation of further price rises. Earlier, some weather-related production issues in the Baltics slowed extraction. Added to all these is the volume moving from other European producers, eastwards. These circumstances are keeping the roundwood delivered prices high, arguably not perhaps enough to justify the typical £70-75/tonne being paid regularly for spruce and pine logs, with reducing top diameters. Many

mills across the UK started the New Year with depleted round stocks, only to have their wood intake further jeopardised due to adverse weather; at present any large volume cache of logs offered and immediately available, can attract even higher prices. Sawmills are forced to face the dilemma of either shorter time working or paying more. Drawing volumes to mitigate against the shortfall, from beyond typical catchment areas, is compounding the cost pressure on the purchasing mill and on their competitors from the area the purchase is made. Sawn prices are continuing to hold, demand is strong, order books are full but stock shortages mean customers are having to be patient.

A drying out supply

So, demand continues to outstrip supply. Many growers have reached or exceeded both their volume and income targets. Effort is being put into bringing felling coups forward in Scotland, a short-term solution; whilst others are looking hard at the inventory and forecast figures, seeking for justification there to increase the volume brought to the market. Further south, FC volume shortfalls in conifer are being offset by the promise of 100,000m³ of infected ash. Standing volume seems to be elusive at present but the season has yet to see the normal influx of parcels from the pri-



Sawmills ... face the dilemma of either shorter time working or paying more

vate sector. The promise of higher rewards might well encourage the woodland owner and investor to open the forest gate.

Some log supply volumes are being swallowed up in the biomass and energy markets. With falling production levels, reducing the quantity of sawmill chips, this too, is adding to the log shortfall. Susceptible to the grabbing of otherwise millable logs are the sawn pallet producers. This situation is more of a fundamental and long-term change rather than a seasonal one.

Small roundwood

Fencing has yet to get into gear as projects are waiting for more favourable weather, but demand is expected to be intense as stocks are equally low. Pallet wood is being chased but with no expectation of further improvement to prices for boards. The colder weather has kept the interest in combustible wood volumes alive with ever growing capacity in new large and small energy schemes coming on stream. Worldwide OSB production has already been sold and raw material is required to meet that, in addition, the chipwood producers are competing for the wood being burnt.

This febrile market place has already taken its toll, yet might not be soothed easily, and some might be in jeopardy because of the fever. The expectation of some is that late in Q2 into Q3 we could see demand ease. In conclusion, whilst the UK is never going to be anything other than a net importer of wood and wood products, we will face ever-growing competition for those products from across the world, making our home-grown product a valuable commodity. With good advice behind you, it is an excellent time to sell timber now; for those who can, why not consider planting some trees too!

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Aligning education with the forest industry

The Forestry Skills Study for England and Wales shows that getting hold of suitable staff to fill job vacancies is a challenge for employers in the tree work industry. **DC Vickers** points at secondary school curriculums as part of the solution.



Reasons for skills shortage

The exact reasons for this human resource challenge are not entirely clear but, according to the Forestry Skills Study, most employers still consider that there is a shortage of new entrants coming into the sector due to incorrect perceptions of the industry. The study also states that “[senior managers] are concerned over the general aptitude of people entering the sector, with an absence of potential ‘leaders of the future’ and a lack of innovative and ambitious thinking”.

It would seem, therefore, that there does exist a problem not just in the quality of candidates coming into the industry, but also with those pupils even knowing about the forestry sector: none of the forestry professionals interviewed for the study had come across it as a result of careers advice at school. The report considered the links between FE / HE provision as well as the apprenticeship options but is the real issue to do with the lack of links between the industry and secondary schools?

A disconnect between two struggling opposites: employers and graduates

The industry view would appear to suggest that those coming into the industry also soon tire of the physical hard work required, as the Forestry

Skills Study puts it “with manual operations where perceptions of forestry as being hard physical and potentially dangerous work remain to the greatest degree and impact on the sector’s ability to recruit young staff”.

At the same time, there is a large pool of school and university leavers keen to enter the job market:

“Young people, collectively, have never left education more highly qualified, with more years of schooling behind them and yet they are facing unprecedented struggles to succeed in the early labour market.”¹

Is there a disconnect between those leaving the education system and the industry, whereby the industry sees school- and college-leavers as not ready for work, and young people attempting to get into the industry are struggling to compete with older workers for economic opportunities?

With the prospect of many traditional manual jobs declining and the trend towards more skill-intensive jobs at all levels, the need for improving student skills and knowledge through greater contact with business during their studies becomes ever more important. Careful curriculum design then offers a better alignment with the needs of the labour market and enriches student learning².

Integrating real-world forestry into high-school mathematics

This article looks at how forestry skills could be incorporated into mainstream education at secondary schools, providing both an awareness of the sector and real-life problem-solving which is important “as students aspire to achieve better grades when they know requirements of employers”³. Whilst there are several areas where this could be integrated, we will focus on mathematics here: “everyone uses maths in their daily life... we need to do a better job of introducing concepts and skills that create the connec-



Forestry mensuration could be used as real-life examples for high school mathematics. (Credit: Forestry Commission)

FORESTRY AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

According to the Department of Education (2013) pupils should be taught to:

“Use Pythagoras’ Theorem and trigonometric ratios in similar triangles to solve problems involving right-angled triangles”

This basic example could be met by calculating the height of a tree using a stick, which fundamentally uses Pythagoras’ Theorem to achieve. Another key benefit is that integrating common forestry tasks within the maths agenda would present a wide range of possible scenarios utilising both classroom- and practical-based activities, bringing experiential learning to maths

“Derive and apply formulae to calculate and solve problems involving: perimeter and area of triangles, parallelograms, trapezia, volume of cuboids (including cubes) and other prisms (including cylinders)”





tion between the real world and the math classroom more often”⁴.

The National Curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools. At Key Stage 3, maths provides a number of options to integrate real-world forestry management examples into teaching and perhaps the industry needs to work much closer with teachers to highlight this particular sector. “Despite [numerical skills, literacy and use of information and communication technologies] being the sorts of skills that should be developed at an early age, there are repeated calls from employers for their development to be improved and concomitant complaints that today’s students have insufficient grasp of such skills”⁵.

Curriculum design with industry relevance Curriculum design must be relevant to today’s industry and that relevance is important; it should be “designed to develop declarative (knowing about), procedural (knowing how) and conditional knowledge (knowing why and when) in the learner... these distinctions are important because to design a curriculum that captures the full range of learning, all three types of knowledge must be part of the process”⁶.

There is another issue that is not directly related

to school – according to the Forestry Skills Study, most employers “have little understanding of the current system of educational awards and qualifications. Indeed this lack of understanding is a significant issue for the sector as it leads them to disengage from the formal educational system”. Yet this link between the industry and education is exactly what is required, providing the ability to highlight the practical application of the skills and knowledge learnt in the classroom and the work-place. The sooner we can bring the forestry industry and education together at all levels – not just FE and HE – the quicker we can expect a workforce that is more able to react to the demands of an industry that is rapidly changing.

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FTN WEB RESOURCES



Read and download the Forestry Skills Study
List of bibliographic references for this article
www.confor.org.uk



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Course selector

Higher education courses in forestry, arboriculture and urban forestry in the UK, commencing academic session 2018-2019.

Compiled by
Adam Todd

INSTITUTION	COURSE	FT	PT	DL	ICF pts
UNDERGRADUATE					
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN School of Biological Sciences	BSc (Hons) Environmental and Forest Management	•			NA
ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE Professional Tree Surgery and Management	FdSc Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•		NA
BANGOR UNIVERSITY School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography (SENRGY)	MFor (4-year Master of Forestry degree)	•			8
	BSc (Hons) Forestry	•			8
	BSc (Hons) Conservation with Forestry	•			6
	BSc (Hons) Geography with Environmental Forestry	•			NA
UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA National School of Forestry	BSc (Hons) Forest Management	•	•		8
	BSc (Hons) Woodland Ecology and Conservation	•	•		6
	BSc (Hons) Forestry (Top-Up)	•	•		*
	FdSc Forestry	•	•		5
HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY Department of Crop and Environment Sciences	BSc (Hons) Countryside Management	•			5
	BSc (Hons) Countryside and Environment Management	•			5
INVERNESS COLLEGE UHI Scottish School of Forestry	BSc (Hons) Forest Management	•	•		TBC
	HND Forestry	•	•		5
	HND Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•		5
	HNC Forestry	•	•		NA
	HNC Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•		NA
MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE University of Central Lancashire	BSc (Hons) Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•		•	8
	FdSc Arboriculture & Tree Management	•		•	5
NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE Kirkley Hall Campus	FdSc Arboriculture and Bsc Arboriculture	•			TBC
	FdSc Environmental Conservation and BSc Top-Up	•			
PERSHORE COLLEGE University of Worcester	BSc (Hons) Arboriculture and Tree Management (Top-Up)	•			8
	FdSc Arboriculture	•			5
PLUMPTON COLLEGE University of Brighton	FdSc Arboriculture	•	•		5
	FdSc Forestry and Woodland Management	•	•		5
TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE					
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN School of Biological Sciences	MSc Environmental and Forest Management	•			NA
BANGOR UNIVERSITY School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography (SENRGY)	MSc Environmental Forestry	•			6
	MSc Agroforestry)	•			5
	MSc Forestry			•	5/6
	MSc Tropical Forestry			•	6
HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY Department of Crop and Environment Sciences	MSc Forestry Management	•	•		6
	MSc Conservation and Forest Protection	•	•		6
MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE University of Central Lancashire	MSc Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•	•	6
	PGDip Arboriculture and Urban Forestry	•	•	•	NA

Course accreditation (ICF Points)

Many Forestry and Arboriculture courses are accredited by the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF). Points are awarded based on course content: a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 points can be awarded to individual courses. Points are credited as partial fulfilment of the requirements for Professional Membership Entry (PME) to the Institute. New or re-validated courses require assessment from ICF and point scores are to be confirmed (TBC), while points awarded for others are dependent on prior qualifications and learning (*). Several courses are not accredited (NA) at the present time. Further information about course accreditation and the PME process is available from ICF: www.charteredforesters.org/join-us.

Course delivery modes

Professional Forestry and Arboriculture courses are offered in three delivery modes: full-time (FT), part-time (PT) and distance learning (DL). For many of the full-time courses there is an additional option to complete an industry/work-based placement (sandwich-year). It is important to check with each institution for information about course content, options and delivery, all of which can change at relatively short notice.

Information sources

Information contained in this note is based on an email consultation conducted by RFS, and the review of college and university websites with courses commencing in Academic Session 2018-2019. The UCAS website (www.ucas.com) was also consulted. Last updated: 04 March 2018.



Education and Learning
Royal Forestry Society
Adam Todd
01295 678 588
www.rfs.org.uk

Transatlantic taskforce finds design solutions

Students from Edinburgh Napier teamed up with colleagues from America's elite Harvard University to explore the challenge of creating the sustainable communities of the future.

The two groups joined forces for a learning week which focused on the use of pre-manufactured timber construction systems.

The event saw them travel to forests, factories and construction sites across Scotland to get an insight into the work of architects, engineers, manufacturers and developers. They enjoyed a guided tour of the CCG off-site facility in Glasgow.

Edinburgh Napier's Dr Robert Hairstans hosted the week after an earlier conference meeting with Harvard's George L Legendre underlined their shared belief in the importance of off-site manufacturing, where the pre-assembly work is done in a controlled factory setting, enabling homes to be built faster and to higher sustainability standards.

It is seen as a potential solution to the UK's housing crisis and a way of tackling existing challenges which include an ageing construction workforce, skills shortages and planning constraints.

They also heard from experts at the 1735ha Falkland Estate in Fife about the rich conifer and broad-



The students during a visit to the CCG factory.

leaves forestry there, and future development plans.

Other highlights included a master planning seminar, a look at the New Waverley regeneration scheme in Edinburgh city centre, visits to Carbon Dynamic in the Highlands and a cross-laminated timber project in Bath Street, Portobello, and a guide to the architecture of the capital's Royal Mile.

Guy Watt, of John Clegg Consulting, added: "The speed with which they picked up Falkland Estates' social and cultural philosophies and values and included it in their individual group presentations at the end of their workshop session was very impressive. It would be good to make this an annual event and develop stronger links with Harvard GSD and Edinburgh Napier BeX as we benefitted from the visit as well."

Pioneering operator course a success

The latest Forest Machine Operator Skills Development course delivered by the established partnership of UKFPA, the Barony campus at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), John Deere Forestry and Forestry Commission Scotland is nearing completion.

This intensive and practical course offers four training places and addresses all aspects of mechanised harvesting and forwarding operations. Candidates are selected from people working in the forestry sector who demonstrate promise as forest machine operators.

Jake Richardson, Matthew Ralph, Aidan Fitzpatrick and Robert Cowie started on the latest eight-week course in January. Having completed two weeks' intensive instruction at Barony, which included the use of machine simulators, the trainees moved to a large harvesting site at Knockespan Forest for the remaining six weeks of the course.

The training on-site included hands-on working on both harvesters and forwarders as well as maintenance under supervision and instruction.

Jake works for Kingdom Farming in Fife and had previously done some work with chainsaws and forwarders. He said: "I have enjoyed the hands-on training. We have covered a lot of machine maintenance,



which has been very useful, and I have learned quite a few tips for the forwarder. The course has been a great experience for me."

Matthew Ralph from Aberdeenshire grew up in a rural community and developed a strong interest in land-based industries, particularly farming and forestry. He said: "I have been involved with practical farm work over many years and gained most of my work experience on farms. My father works in forestry so I have been to many forestry sites and have had experience of felling and processing trees but I wanted to gain more knowledge and get some certification. Working on the steep slopes has been challenging but it has been great learning more techniques that I can make use of going forward."

The trainees will be assessed this week under the Forest Machine Operator Certification scheme.

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FTN visited Barony College in April 2017 – read the article

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The central UK location of Harper Adams in Shropshire enables access to a wide range of forest resource types for teaching and study.

Key facts

Final award: MSc (ICF accredited)

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Contact

Heather Hogan

Postgraduate Administrator
01952 815289

Jim Waterson

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AUTOTREK MOBILE WIDE BANDSAW



Systems thinking in forestry certification training



Clive Thomas
on certification training with the Soil Association

Twenty-five years on from FSC's foundation, forest certification is now an integral part of our industry and an intrinsic component of career development. In 2018, the critical issue is to ensure that we have the correct knowledge to handle forest certification effectively. While the key architecture of forest certification is necessary – the standard setters that make up the framework (FSC and PEFC), the certificate holders (organisations responsible for meeting standard requirements) and the certification bodies (those that audit organisations against the standards) – its complexity can hinder more integrated understanding of the ultimate goals of certification.

Might a better understanding by certificate holders of the audit process and its benefits as a continuous improvement tool, help forest managers meet certification requirements? Similarly, if auditors had a better understanding of the forest industry and why organisations want certification, could this support both the professional development of auditors and the certification body they work for? Using an integrated, systems approach to answer questions like these and implementing that methodology where forest certification is taught and delivered is precisely how Soil Association Certification, a leading FSC and PEFC certification body worldwide, has developed its training services.

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Main training programmes currently on offer

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We are one of a small number of training providers able to provide these courses worldwide. Those who successfully complete the full FSC Forest Management, Chain of Custody and Auditing to ISO 19011 course receive a valid certificate as part of a crucial step towards becoming a qualified FSC auditor. These courses are of special interest to certificate holders and other providers of certification services.

Our PEFC Chain of Custody training programme is recognised by PEFC International and offered as an integrated option with the FSC Chain of Custody Course.

forestrytraining@soilassociation.org

innovative approaches. We actively encourage trainee auditors, current and potential certificate holders to attend the same Chain of Custody or Forest Management courses together, to bring a range of perspectives together. We also make our training 'audit real' by instructing in the field, for trainees to experience how real forest management challenges are addressed on the ground.

Frequent changes to certification standards means it makes little business sense for employers and academic training providers to independently keep up to date with new forest management standards, chain of custody requirements, and the interface between certification and timber legality legislation. These are gaps we aim to close.

Clive Thomas is the Course Director for all Soil Association Certification (FSC®A000525) training courses.

RFS launches new one-day courses

Five new topics – Woodland Archaeology, Tree Health, Tree ID, Forest Soils and GIS management planning – have been added to the Royal Forestry Society's popular one-day courses for 2018.

Back by popular demand are courses on Grading and Measuring your Timber, a Guide for Caring for your Wood and Essentials for Measuring Woods and Trees.

The first of the courses, Woodland Archaeology and Tree Health are being held in April. All course are open to members and non members.

Upcoming courses

Tree Health - pests and diseases

6 April 2018, led by Adam Sharman (right)

Woodland Archaeology

16 April 2018, led by John Morris

Tree ID

29 June 2018, led by John Morris

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BSW and Inverness team up to train saw doctors

Inverness College UHI has developed the first bespoke saw doctor qualification in Scotland in partnership with the BSW Timber Group.

Until now this highly specialised traditional skill-set has lacked any formal training structure and Inverness College UHI has worked with some of the most experienced saw doctors in the country to develop the new qualification, which responds to industry needs.

Saw doctors are vital to the running of a modern sawmill, with the role combining traditional hand finishing skills with the use of modern computer numerical control (CNC) processing technology.

The university currently works with BSW to deliver modern apprenticeships in a range of disciplines, including engineering maintenance, which allows its employees to combine work-based learning with study over four years.

Latterly, BSW has provided its own in-house saw doctor training, complemented by external supplier courses, to its saw doctor trainees on modern apprenticeship pathways.

Development of the new qualification means all BSW saw doctor training will now be delivered through Inverness College UHI, with assessments taking place in the workplace.

Kate Ellistone, Inverness College UHI business solutions co-ordinator, said: "The course has been developed in partnership with experienced BSW saw doctors to create a structured, fit for purpose qualification which can be studied in tandem with the existing engineering maintenance modern apprenticeship or in its own right over 18 months. On completion of the course, students will receive a joint Inverness College UHI/BSW certificate."

Inverness College UHI now plans to seek Scottish Qualification Authority accreditation for the qualification, which will be delivered at SVQ Level 3. The university is also working closely with other employers to roll-out the qualification to the wider industry in Scotland.

For more information, please contact Helen Aird
E: Helen.Aird@uhi.ac.uk T: 01463 273315



Saw doctors play a vital role in a modern sawmill.

How student placements help the forestry sector grow

We encourage Confor member companies to get in touch with education providers to discuss any placements you could offer to current students and graduates. Two universities give you an idea of what students are looking for and whom to get in touch with:



National School of Forestry (NSF)

The NSF at the University of Cumbria runs two BSc and one FdSc programme. The BSc Forestry Management and BSc Woodland Ecology and Conservation students have the option to take a work placement year and as part of the FdSc Forestry programme the work placement is a mandatory element. Our students are looking for work experience in all aspects of forest and woodland management including supervisory roles for up to 1 year across the UK. Please contact Mark to learn more about the range of subjects studied in years 1 and 2, or to arrange a meeting.

Mark Tomlinson, Senior lecturer

T: 015394 30622 Ext: 5622

E: mark.tomlinson@cumbria.ac.uk



Scottish School of Forestry

A one-year industry placement is mandatory between the first (HNC) and second (HND) year of our BSc (Hons) Forest Management programme. Students can apply for and undertake a wide range of placements, both nationally and internationally, and with a wide range of organisations including: Scottish Woodlands, FC Scotland, Mark Seed Forestry, BSW, Maelor, James Jones and Sons, GM Forestry, Forest Facts, Reay Forestry, Roxburgh Estate, Amber Trees, Treewise and Scotwood. However, we are always looking for more partner employers. If you are interested in finding out more, or and to get involved with the Scottish School of Forestry, please contact Neil.

Neil Cleland, Forestry lecturer

T: 01463 273 616 E: Neil.Cleland.ic@uhi.ac.uk



Bangor

A one-year placement is optional for our BSc Forestry and BSc Conservation with Forestry degree programmes. Host organisations can advertise their placements with us and then interview students, with no obligation to host.

Students apply for and undertake a wide range of placements both within the UK and abroad. Recent / current host organisations include: Scottish Woodlands, FC Scotland, Maelor Forest Nurseries, Crown Estates, Pryor and Rickett Silviculture, Hayden Associates, National Trust, Northern Ireland Forest Service, Furlong Forest Surveys.

We are always looking for more partner employers. If you are interested in finding out more about what is involved with offering a placement to a Bangor University forestry student, please contact Sopan.

Sopan Patil, Lecturer/School of Environment,

Natural Resources and Geography

T: 01248 38 8294 E: s.d.patil@bangor.ac.uk

#2 Timber Lorries

The right vehicle for the job



Jonathan Ritchie of James Jones & Sons looks at timber lorry technology and how it contributes to safe, quality haulage.

Timber lorries are public road vehicles which are also used on forest roads that are becoming longer and steeper. Specifying a vehicle can therefore be a challenge, particularly as the range of optional extras, such as emergency braking, lane recognition and driver alert systems, continues to expand.

Overall vehicle configuration is perhaps the first choice. Should we go for the standard 44 tonne articulated HGV, skeletal trailer with a timber crane which has a 26-tonne payload, or a 6-wheel rigid lorry with a drawbar trailer and timber crane. The 'six and drag' is a couple of metres longer but follows the curves better on narrow roads and less likely to cut across the verges. However, because they are longer, they carry a smaller payload of around 24 tonnes.

Double drive axles with twin wheels provide more muscle, but the tag axle configuration replaces the second drive axle with a single wheeled non-drive axle that can be raised off the ground when the vehicle is unloaded, saving tyres and fuel and improving manoeuvrability.

Trailer length will depend on the lengths and range of products. Most trailers have three axles, some with front or rear lift axles. Wheels can be super singles, wider 'maxi' tyres or twin wheels. The latter two are most requested by landowners as they have less impact on forest roads.

Many timber lorries and trailers are now fitted with **tyre pressure control** systems that can adjust the tyre pressures to suit the situation while the vehicle is in motion. Lower tyre pressures give a larger footprint on the ground providing better traction and reducing the potential for damage to roads. The Timber Transport Forum's *Tread Softly* publication provides more detail on these aspects of vehicle configuration.

Adding a **timber crane** takes two tonnes off the payload but makes the vehicle self-reliant for loading. Traditionally, the operator climbed exterior ladders to sit on top of the loader. Cabs were then added to provide some protection from the weather. James Jones & Sons is now trialling the first **Hi-Vision system** in the UK where the operator controls

the loader remotely from passenger seat of the lorry wearing 3D goggles. Vision is provided by four cameras fitted to the crane. The system is expected to improve operator safety and comfort.

The company is also testing a **Wire-Watcher high voltage cable detector** to detect the proximity of overhead cables. A flashing light warns of a nearby cable and an audible warning will sound if the crane is powered up.

With 10 million tonnes of timber on the move, secure loading is vital to protect the public and the driver in the cab. *The Road Haulage of Roundwood Timber Code of Practice* goes into detail on how the pins, headboards and straps work together to prevent movement of the load.

A **full height headboard** is definitely preferred but not always possible on all vehicle configurations. Most James Jones lorries have a three-quarter height headboard which have proved their value in past accidents. The bolsters and pins come in various metals, designs and strengths. It's vital you use the right ones for the job and that they are adjusted to support the size of logs. The rating and condition of straps is as important as the number being used.

Tracking and security

Vehicle tracking systems used for routing lorries and efficiently managing fleets can also improve safety for lone workers in remote sites. James Jones & Sons use a NAVMAN system on their own and sub-contracted fleet. The system allows two-way messaging and the route maps can be annotated with site details. A virtual 'geofence' created around a stretch of forest road will automatically warn drivers of known hazards. The company can also use the tracking data to respond better to complaints about lorries convoying and speeding.

Mobile phones remain vital communication tools and CB radios are still used to communicate with other drivers and machine operators in the forest or timber processing yard.

All new James Jones lorries are now fitted with five monitoring cameras and a display screen in the cab. One camera faces forward through the windscreen, there is a camera looking down each side of >>



TAKE THE HIGH ROAD

A CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER, SAFER TIMBER HAULAGE

TIMBER TRANSPORT



Well specified, safe vehicles are essential to the reputation of timber haulage and the forest industry as a whole.

>> the vehicle, activated by the indicator, a rear facing camera on the end of trailer and one on the back of the cab facing the loader. As well as improving visibility the cameras help reviewing any incidents (usually in defence of the driver). Remote access to cameras is possible at additional cost.

Most vehicles now come with good all-round LED lighting allowing operators to work more safely and effectively during darkness. Extra lights are activated by using the loader.

Well specified, safe vehicles are essential to the reputation of timber haulage and the forest industry as a whole. The testing and adoption of beneficial new technologies together with driver training is part of the continuing improvement required in areas such health & safety, environmental protection and driver ergonomics.



FTN WEB RESOURCES



Download the publication
Tread Softly: Lower impact vehicles for timber haulage
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Timber harvesting has changed drastically over the last few decades. Not too long ago almost all the trees felled in the forests were extracted to roadside by a skidder. Most of the skidders used by private forestry contractors and firewood merchants were merely standard agricultural tractors with a forestry winch attached. This period (the 1970s) saw the Forestry Commission harvesting a high volume of the timber used in the UK and they had their own mechanical engineering division for servicing/repairing vehicles and modifying agricultural equipment for forestry use. A successful product of this era was the Faulstone Skidder, a converted Ford County 754 with an Igland double drum winch, logging blade, robust safety cab and forestry guarding. Many are still in use today.

Another large company supplying skidders was James Jones & Sons Ltd, who had their own engineering division at Larbert which was also heavily involved in timber haulage. They were once a major force in the supply of forestry equipment with their products shipped worldwide.

Skidders have now been eclipsed in the UK by the 'cut to length' system which uses harvesters and forwarders and is generally a more efficient, less labour-intensive method of harvesting timber.

While this may sound like the demise of the skidder, this is not the case and they still have a key role to play in modern forestry.

Skidders are a much safer alternative for extracting trees on steep ground working in conjunction with harvesters/forwarders; they can extract large volume trees that would otherwise have to be processed on site or left to decay. They are also ideal



Rab Easton looks at how skidders are still used in modern forestry.



SKIDDERS

for estate work, small volume harvesting contracts and excellent for clearing smaller windblown areas/roadways.

Many skidders have a high road speed of around 40km/h and are "road legal", which reduces transport costs when needed to be moved frequently.

A high volume of the global timber production is extracted by skidder as many forests grow on steep, high-altitude mountainsides for which the process would otherwise be extremely difficult and time consuming.

Although in the UK we only extract a small percentage of our timber by skidder, we greatly benefit by having the latest in skidder technology due to the high demand for skidders in other countries.

Many manufacturers are offering a wide range of skidder models which will handle tree sizes up to large mature hardwoods. Here, we are listing a selec-





Left: John Deere 640
Below: Welte W130

The Equus is a solid and well-built skidder using tried and trusted components. It is available with an extensive selection of extra equipment including a remote control for winch operation and another for driving from outside the vehicle. It is proving to be popular and Equus is currently producing three to four skidders every month. They are 2.45m wide and weigh 8.5 tonnes and can easily be converted to a clam bunk skidder, forwarder or harvester by attaching a telescopic loader. They also include a well laid out cabin with good vision.

Contact: c.s.burton@btinternet.com

HSM Forest 805HD

This is an established German manufacturer which was created in 1957 and was initially involved with the sales and distribution of the Canadian Timberjack skidder. In 1978, the company introduced its first skidder, the HSM 704 fitted with an Adler winch.

This model uses the four-cylinder IVECO 170hp Tier 4 engine with the HSM high-speed drive and a NAF two-step transfer gearbox and axles. A choice of double drum Adler winches provides a maximum 16 tonne pulling capacity and 100m drum capacity for 16mm rope. It has a tilting, panorama, comfort safety cabin (for easier servicing) and an air suspended swivel seat. It is easily manoeuvred with a 45-degree steering angle and 530mm of ground clearance.

This skidder is popular in central Europe due to its long service life and reliability. They are comfortable and easy to operate with excellent vision. Moreover,

POWER ON



tion of mid-range 4WD models suitable for dragging small to mature trees up to 14 tonnes.

Equus 175N Frame Steered Skidder

Slovenian company Equus was active in forestry engineering for many years before producing its first skidder in 2014. It manufactured and sold 30 skidders in its first year.

The engine is a four-cylinder IVECO 170hp Tier 4 engine with hydrostatic drive and a two-speed gearbox: first gear 0-18km/hr, second gear 0-40km/hr (on the highway 4WD can be disengaged and the unit is capable of travelling 100km without stopping) - with NAF Axles. A double drum winch with a pulling capacity of 16 tonnes is also included and has the drum capacity for 200m of rope. It has a two-door safety cabin fitted with Lexan Magard safety windows and the seat rotates 270 degrees.

there is an option for remote operation of the winches and drive and a Mesara or Epsilon telescopic loader can be fitted in order to convert the unit into a harvester or forwarder. A customer at HSM has a lot of input regarding his or her machine and equipment, colour scheme extras, etc. can be specified. This skidder is 2.36m wide in standard form but has wider wheel options for extra stability and flotation, taking it up to 3.0m wide.

www.hsm-forest.net

John Deere 640/648L Grapple Skidder

John Deere's roots in forestry go back to the 1930s when the Model D agricultural tractor was used as a skidder. JD was active in the forestry equipment market throughout the decades until the purchase of Timberjack in 2000, which transformed the company into one of the world market leaders in timber >>

>> harvesting equipment.

John Deere's own six-cylinder 237hp Tier 4 engine is used along with their Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) to provide smooth and fuel-efficient operations and a top speed of 24km/hr. It is fitted with an 18 tonne pulling capacity winch and 1.63m³ hydraulic grapple, complete with a continuous rotator. The spacious cabin has excellent noise reduction, a rotating seat and tilts for easier servicing. It weighs almost 18 tonnes and is 3.23m wide with 555mm of ground clearance.

This is a solid, heavy duty out and out skidder designed to extract trees in extreme conditions. The L series machines benefit from 'extended life axles' for a service life of at least 15,000 hours. It has a well laid out cabin with the latest JD Link (remote monitoring of machine health which can troubleshoot problems and track equipment activity) as well as Timbervnavi, which is a jobsite mapping system.

www.johndeere.com

Pfanzelt PM Trac

A family business established in 1991 and still owned and managed by Paul Pfanzelt in Bavaria, Germany, Pfanzelt started off by manufacturing geared and chain-driven cable winches and developed the PM Trac skidder in 2005.

The PM Trac uses a six-cylinder 178hp Deutz engine and a ZF type S-matic gearbox with three driving ranges from 0-50km/hr. A configuration of Pfanzelt manufactured winches can be fitted to both the front and rear of the tractor, giving it the ability to pull up to 12 tonnes. The pneumatic safety cabin has an electric rotating 350-degree seat which weighs 11 tonnes, is 2.3-2.5m wide and has 600mm ground clearance.

The PM Trac might look fairly similar to an agricultural tractor but don't let that fool you - it's built on a strong chassis designed to work in tough forestry conditions. The cab is mid-mounted so all attachments are mounted above the rear axle using the quick and easy Pfanzelt System for Attachment. Attaching cable winches or other Pfanzelt/forestry equipment takes less than 20 minutes without using tools. This is a versatile skidder with a quadruple PTO (540, 540E 1000, 1000E rpm and PTO management) for multiple forestry applications.

www.pfanzelt-maschinenbau.de

Tigercat 610E

Tigercat was created in 1992 when a small group of experienced Canadian forestry professionals teamed up with the Ontario-based fabrication company MacDonald Steel to design and build the 762 feller/buncher.

Tigercat uses its own FPT Tier 4 205hp engine with a hydrostatic drive managed by Electronic Control Technology for increased fuel economy. With a maximum speed of 21km/hr, the skidder is 3.3m wide and has 635mm clearance weighing 15.875 tonnes. The large tilting safety cabin has a rotating seat, good visibility and is neatly laid out.

There is an option of a 16-tonne double drum winch with a capacity of 220m or 180m with 14 or



16 mm cable or a single drum 18-tonne winch with a 1.21m³ hydraulic grapple. Tigercat uses Remotelog Telematics to monitor fuel consumption, work activity, geographic location, etc. and is capable of sending diagnostic messages to the operator. The winch, blade, grapple and drive can be operated remotely from outside the cabin. This is a strong, stable, powerful rugged skidder and if it is maintained properly it will have a prolonged service life.

www.tigercat.com

**Top: Pfanzelt PM Trac
Above: Equus 175N**

Welte W130

Founded in 1952 by Alexander Welte, the organisation was initially involved with making superstructures for timber hauliers until designing and manufacturing the Forstmann cable skidder in 1965.

This model uses the Volvo Penta four-cylinder tier 4 190hp engine with an SCR catalytic convertor and driven by a hydrostatic two-speed power drive capable of 40km/hr. It is 2.6m wide and has 689mm of ground clearance. The two-door tilting safety cabin is spacious, comfortable and has a rotating seat.

It is 2.6m wide with 689mm of ground clearance and different sized winches with up to 16 tonnes of pulling power are available. The W130 can be used as a forwarder or harvester as well as a skidder and >>

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HSM Forest 805HD


there are many other attachments available. Welte work closely with the engineering university in Freiburg and incorporate the latest fuel saving and world leading environment protection technology into their machines. This is a robust, strong, reliable skidder which is both strong and operator friendly. www.welte.de

I have listed just a small selection of the skidders manufactured. This is not favouritism on my part; I have chosen them because I have either tried them personally or know of someone who uses them. Other manufacturers produce equally good quality skidders but with such a large selection it was impossible to list them all.

A last point to consider is the availability and cost of spare parts/servicing kits and whether engineers with specialised equipment are essential for repairs and servicing.

RESOURCES

It is well worth using social media logging sites/forums to contact operators who are using the skidders that you are interested in which should give you an honest and accurate opinion of performance and reliability from operators using them daily which will be a big help in making your final decision.

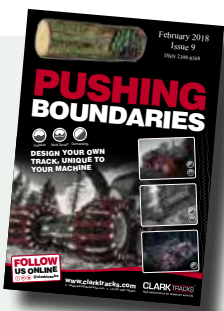
 Tip: Become a member of the **Forest Machine Operators Blog** on Facebook. This very active group has almost 23,000 members!

Rab Easton is the editor of the bi-monthly Forest Machine Magazine. He is a second generation logger with over 40 years of hands on experience in timber harvesting. Rab's magazine is available both in print and online and he is very active on Twitter and Facebook.

www.forestmachinemagazine.com

 [@forestmachineoj](https://twitter.com/forestmachineoj)

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An opportunity not to be missed



Tim Liddon FICFor looks at the Mackinnon Report and Recommendations

Following Jim Mackinnon's report and recommendations published late in 2016, work to improve the planting approvals process is now all but complete.

Confor has been working to support the Forestry Commission and other stakeholders to make the approval of sustainable forestry planting schemes simpler, quicker and less costly, so that more trees are planted in the right places more quickly. This is not just the application process but rather end-to-end - from gestation to planting.

Following a recent meeting to review progress, Jim Mackinnon, the author of the report, said that re-

cent progress was 'highly encouraging, not least the way in which recommendations have been refined and developed with a view to achieving better outcomes'.

The 2018 training seminars are being run in March and if you are considering a woodland creation application I hope you will have attended and are now putting into practice the guidance that is being made available. By doing this we can work together to deliver Scotland's ambitious woodland creation targets.

I would just end with a challenge. The guidance and process have been refined and I am sure that they will be fit for purpose. However, during this process it has become very apparent that culture needs to change on all sides - if it does not then we, the whole Forest Industry, will have missed its opportunity.

Applicants need to engage, consult and seek views on their proposals and they need to follow due diligence. Stakeholders need to positively engage. I hope that FCS can move to a can-do culture, and draw back from the minutiae recognising professionalism in the industry.

Mackinnon Report highlights

Improvements to how the Forestry Grant Scheme is publicised and how woodland creation is promoted

Better reporting of data on woodland creation to track progress and help businesses plan ahead

Agreement on an approach to reduce the bureaucratic burden through earned recognition

Improved Woodland Creation guidance drafted and nearing publication

Programme of woodland creation training seminars developed and delivered jointly between ICF and FCS involving the industry as well as FCS and stakeholders to help embed the new guidance across all sectors



UK interest grows in Eucalyptus silviculture

Eucalypts address many of the concerns of today's commercial forestry sector, says **Bryan Elliott**

Eucalypts have been a focus of recent attention in the UK being fast growing exotic hardwoods that have the ability to produce quality wood which is entirely suitable for the supply of woody biomass over a short-term rotation of around 20 years. Eucalyptus species are being considered as species that will produce wood at a high annual yield and meeting industry concerns over climate cycling and the risk of growing traditional forestry species because of new pests and diseases. Some of the Eucalyptus tree species also have potential as timber species and with specific silvicultural strategies in place, could provide an alternative to productive exotic conifer species in southern England.

Species

Suitable species that are considered for planting in various climatic zones in UK are sourced from Australian regions that have temperate climates experiencing cold winters either to the mountains of Tasmania, or the sub-alpine parts of the Great Dividing Range in Victoria and New South Wales.

Eucalyptus glaucescens has proved to be the most popular planted species over recent years due to its exceptional cold tolerance, its general unpalatability to deer and its adaptability to diverse site types. Provenances of Guthega and Mt. Victoria are the preferred seed source. *E. glaucescens* has been successfully established throughout Wales, Midlands and Scotland with annual yields in the region of 25m³/ha/annum.

Throughout the southern part of Britain *E nitens* and *E denticulata* are two similar species that are well suited to temperate climates with cool, wet winters. With good planting procedures in place and timed spraying interventions, these two species will command world class growth rates. Basic Wood Density is in the region of 480 to 530 kg/m³. Permanent sample plots on the award winning Treworder Plantation in Cornwall show yields more than 30m³/ha/annum. In September 2017, the average tree height was 10.1m and the average DBH is 10.2cm at 40 months. As the stocking density is quite high at 2000sph, canopy closure was achieved at around 18 months. As light competition has now become

critical, at the age of 47 months a felling licence has been applied for.

Other Eucalyptus species are important in the opportunities that each possess to meet UK climatic and site characteristics. *E rodwayi* (Swamp peppermint) has a low site nutrient requirement and an extensive rooting ability which translates to land reclamation and shelterbelt qualities. As well there is *E johnstonii* and *E dalrympleana* that have characteristics that support establishment on waterlogged sites. Species that have significant cold temperature tolerances throughout UK are *E subcrenulata*, *E gunnii*, *E parvula*, *E nitida*, *E coccifera* and *E urnigera*. Timber producing species that will flourish on protected sites through southern England are *E delegatensis* and *E fastigata*.

Silviculture

Eucalyptus respond well to intensive silviculture and will produce trees of a size and quality suitable for biomass supply from rotations of ten years. Excellent young stands have been established on short rotation forestry (SRF) principles throughout UK, but not all recent plantings have been successful. However, there has been little evidence of cold-damage to well-established young trees that have canopy closure, which is consistent with the winters in the most recent period being relatively mild; the failures of establishing various Eucalyptus species are mainly due to poor weed control, and subsequently browsing.

With cold tolerance adaptation of various Eucalyptus species, the key factors are air temperature, the degree of hardening that has occurred and cool, but not freezing soil temperatures. The historic occurrence and frequency of absolute minimum temperatures in any location appears to be a reasonable guide to the Eucalyptus species that may be grown at that location. The hardiest species can be expected to survive short periods of screen temperatures of -15°C in their first winter with little damage.

Eucalypts benefit from some sort of soil cultivation, as an imbalance develops between stem growth and root development and instability can result. Tree guards with a larger cross-sectional area and stakes are important to support the early growth response of the tree canopy when planted out. Spring planting using plugs are the best option as it is critical to avoid any frost incidence when small and the trees are always growing so all roots can be considered vulnerable. Planting spacing is in the region of 1600 stems



Top: *E nitens*, aged 7 years, Dartington Agroforestry

Above: entire room constructed and panelled with *E saligna*, Wellington NZ.



Above: *E nitens*, aged 21 years, 2.5m³ average tree size, standing at 1500m³/ha, ready for clearfelling, Southwood Export, Southland NZ, Jan 2018

per hectare as tree competition will soon become an important silvicultural consideration. Poor weed control during the months following planting leads to poor establishment, slow growth and low survival. Tree height following summer weed control will be in the region of 1.5 to 2.5m for the following winter which will encourage the development of a plantation microclimate. Second year rotations will benefit

from nutrient balancing with intimate fertilising.

Eucalypts in Britain have been relatively free of pests and diseases. Some serious insect pests have become present in southern Europe, though biocontrol measures are proving effective. Britain's cooler climate may mitigate their impact if they do reach our shores, though it is unlikely that we would have extensive plantings to facilitate their spread. Eucalypts seem to be unaffected by grey squirrels or voles. The impact of deer browsing is dependent upon location and Eucalyptus species, and as these trees grow all year round, often the only growing leaf matter is Eucalyptus, even though the leaves are not very palatable. A lack of weed control over summer will limit the expected potential tree height in the following winter to an acceptable browsing height for deer. Lovely.

Water availability (due to both rainfall and soil water-holding capacity) was the largest determinant of yield in Eucalyptus. By contrast yield was little influenced by altitude or average temperature.

There are more imaginative approaches to planting Eucalyptus with substantial sections of new plantings carried out in Brazil with broad bands of native plants planted alongside quick rotations of pulp quality Eucalyptus species. This has created the benefit of microclimate stability and establishment potential for fragile native plants that will in the long-term encourage vast habitat corridors throughout the shorter timber productive life of the plantation. This philosophy would work in UK situations with the benefits of an almost immediate canopy supporting and nourishing sections of native broadleaf planting. Our prime native broadleaves (and Douglas fir) would establish and grow better with a nurse crop creating an over-storey microclimate, rather than as commonly, an open field filled with native broadleaves that struggle.

Summary

With the uncertainties posted by climate cycling and new pests and diseases, the prospects of growing trees on much shorter rotations than the norm in Britain, is a requirement posted by the industry to meet biomass wood supply demands on current and planned CHP Installations. The rapid early growth of eucalypts, the substantial Basic Density and the relatively quick reduction in moisture content, makes them suitable to this application. Planting to date has been on a small scale, though with an increase in silvicultural understanding through suitable establishment and protection alongside the matching of suitable species (and specific provenances) appropriate to particular locations will encourage commercially driven opportunities.

Bryan Elliott is a forest manager for Devon Forestry Consultants and managing director of Eucalyptus Renewables

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More haste, less speed

Shelagh McCartan, seed biologist at Forest Research, on potential benefits of longer pre-chills for Douglas fir seeds

In forest nurseries, production is a balancing act with trade-offs between resources particularly in labour- and space-intensive container systems. Sowing, thinning, transplanting, weeding, and grading are often done manually, which leads to conflicting demands on labour and reduces the cost-efficiency of plant production. The crops are also often slow-growing with many species taking 18 months or more to reach industry benchmarks. However, there is an opportunity to improve nursery throughput with a better understanding of the dormancy-germination cycle of conifer seeds.

Like many temperate conifers, Douglas fir seeds are relatively dormant at dispersal. The seed lots, therefore, are often subjected to a short pre-chill to promote rapid, uniform germination. This is critical in container systems where poor, uneven germination causes operational issues. In many cases, however, these seed lots benefit even further from substantially longer pre-chills, which reduce the temperature threshold for germination. This effectively extends the growing season as the seeds germinate earlier and at lower temperatures.

Douglas fir seeds are usually pre-chilled for three to six weeks, sown in April or May, and then dispatched 18-24 months later when they have reached an industry specification (18cm height with a 3mm root collar diameter). So we set up a pilot study to determine whether we could exploit the benefits of longer pre-chill durations to produce saleable Douglas fir seedlings in one year. We pre-chilled the seeds for 0, 6, 12 and 18 weeks, sowed them in mid-January 2017, and then tracked the seedlings over the year in a container system.

We found that the seeds subjected to 18-week pre-chills germinated earlier and more uniformly than control seeds. These seedlings emerged by mid-March, grew rapidly, but only reached 13-14cm height by mid-October 2017. The seedlings also failed to meet the required root collar diameter by February 2018. In contrast, the control seedlings reached 15-16cm height despite emerging almost eight weeks later. This suggests that potential benefits of earlier seedling emergence can be thwarted by the vagaries of the weather; the average temperature for March/April 2017 was 9.034.6°C in the nursery.

Critically, height and root collar diameter are not the only seedling quality measurements. In some countries, a 'sturdiness' index (height over root collar diameter) is the preferred industry benchmark.



Using this index, we found that the longer pre-chills resulted in sturdier seedlings (8.4), which may withstand rough handling better than the control seedlings (10.0). Another important factor, however, is good plug formation, which was variable in this pilot study. So it is not clear yet whether we can adapt current practices (better climate control, larger plug trays) to produce Douglas fir as a one-year crop.

Nonetheless, there are clear benefits to using a longer pre-chill (12-weeks); not only do the seeds germinate rapidly and uniformly, which reduces labour costs (thinning and transplanting), but there is less risk of accidental selection against slow genotypes. This is particularly important where bulked seed sources are part of an adaptation strategy to climate change. In addition, the shorter crop cycle would effectively double production capacity on the same footprint, and thereby improve the cost-efficiency of container systems.

You can find out more about our seed research at www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/seedbiology

Clockwise from top: Douglas fir seedlings in lab test; seedlings at 14cm high; and Rob Needham doing QA on the seeds in the lab

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A new online portal offering market and management resources for hardwoods should encourage woodland owners to bring more valuable timber into the supply chain.

Active management is a vital and important aspect for any woodland owner. It allows many benefits to be accessed and utilised, enhancing the wildlife and producing a valuable income through timber production.

Grown in Britain started under a cry of “bring woodlands back into active management” and whilst there has been a welcome shift both in the statistics and attitudes, there is still the potential for several million more tonnes of wood which could be brought into the supply chain. With the increase in demand for assured wood which is demonstrably British

The value of hardwoods has been a particularly difficult for owners to get to grips with, especially if they don't have professional knowledge or advisors. To help lift the lid on selling hardwoods, Grown in Britain has created an online portal containing a table of prices for each hardwood species. The tables include average potential price for each product in a tree and average harvesting costs. There is also a price size curve for each species.

The portal is complemented by a Grown in Britain video made with the help of The Forestry Commission and Woodland Herit-



age. The video is designed for people with no particular expertise in woodland management for timber harvesting and selling. It includes guidance on how to plan, value and sell your trees and what to look for that might impact the price you are paid. The film is 15 minutes, in short sections, and features a Chartered Forester, trustee of Woodland Heritage and managing director of Pryor & Rickett Silviculture, Graham Tay-

lor, in discussion with forestry student Kelly Morss and Grown in Britain CEO Dougal Driver.

Brand gains greater retailer recognition

The most rewarding aspect of a maturing Grown in Britain, is that along with the construction sector, we are now getting unsolicited approaches from major players outside of the sector, such as national home style stores and popular restaurant chains. They see the GiB brand as a way to engage with their customers though the woody materials they use and this is pulling and adding value to the market for everyone down the supply chain.

So if you are part of the Grown in Britain assured supply chain then thank you for helping to get us here. If you are not yet part of the movement and can see the commercial advantages, do get in touch and have a chat through the options. enquiries@growninbritain.org

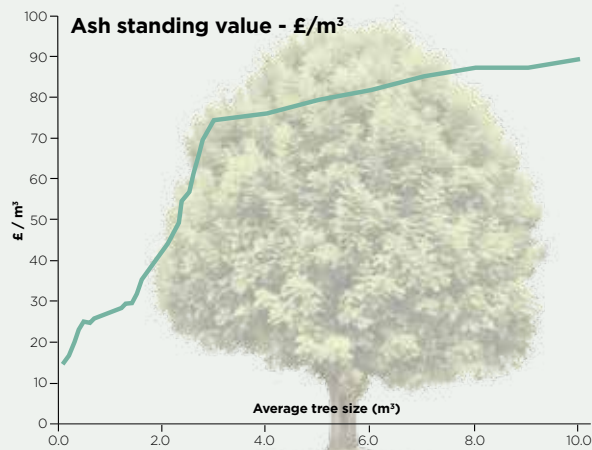
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Online market resources for hardwoods

Grown in Britain offers price/size curve data for

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www.growninbritain.org/selling-hardwood-trees-2



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Pesticides in forestry: the issues

Queries from members to the Confor Pesticide Helpline provide a useful insight into the hot pest and weed topics concerning foresters and managers who are aiming to cost effectively establish and protect our forests and woodlands.

So, what pesticide issues have concerned Confor members in 2017?



CONFOR PESTICIDES HELPLINE QUERIES IN 2017

Total number of calls	126
Specific herbicide queries	62
Specific weed queries	34
Specific crop related queries	9
Application	6
Other	17

1 HERBICIDES

Asulox, glyphosate & Kerb were the three most discussed herbicides.

Asulox
Two issues were of particular concern over bracken control with Asulox - the operation of the Emergency Procedure, and how to apply the product.



The rather unnecessary EC registration delay for Asulox approval has meant that for the last few years, an Emergency Approval permitting use has been required. The 2018 conditions are likely to be - storage 14 May to 31 October, and use from July to 10 September. Application may be by helicopter, tractor sprayer or by knapsack, but the onerous 1000l/ha water rate for knapsacks means that scattered clumps of bracken are best controlled with glyphosate.

Glyphosate
The threat of loss of glyphosate lead to considerable concern - but we should have it until at least the end of 2022. Questions also focussed on the weeds which may be less successfully controlled, such as on gorse, rosebay, willowherb, calamagrostis grass and Salmonberry (a new one for me). In these situations the addition of an adjuvant such as Validate to assist penetration will help. Validate will also assist foliar rhododendron and laurel control, and is preferred over Mixture B NF due to its better operator and environmental characteristics.



Significant interest was also generated

by the revised version of Ecoplugs which contain glyphosate for cut stump control. An offlabel approval also permits use for chemical thinning and removal of the stems of invasive species.

Kerb
The removal of propyzamide from the FSC HH list meant that foresters needed to update themselves on the current recommendations. Kerb remains a very useful residual herbicide for grass control in areas where wind and rainfall make glyphosate application problematic.



Other Herbicides
Other herbicides also had an airing, particularly north of the border where farm forestry was requiring pre emergence control of annual weeds with products such as Stomp Aqua or Flexidor, or foliar control of perennial weeds such as ragwort, dock, nettle and thistle, where 2,4-D and MCPA were often mentioned. Note that MCPA has no approval for use through knapsack sprayers.

2 WEEDS

Difficulties with the control of gorse was evident as a result of the lack of any approved triclopyr product for use in forestry. Glyphosate, even at high rates tends to produce variable results, so we must hope that the long awaited Timbrel Pro will emerge in time for use in the autumn. This will also resolve the lack of a reliable herbicide for rosebay willowherb and provide improved control of nettle.

3 INSECT AND MAMMALIAN PESTS

Hylobius and Gazelle
Unsurprisingly, Hylobius control with Gazelle generated a great deal of interest, particularly as FSC will no longer permit the use of Forester. The mode of action differs from Forester in that while much of the longevity of Forester reflected its strong anti-feeding properties, Gazelle, instead, provides a relatively rapid kill - so that dead weevils may often be found at the transplant stem base compared with Forester affected weevils which walk away and expire elsewhere.



Gazelle is supplied as a crystalline powder which is difficult to weigh out in a breezy forest. The best solution is to accurately weigh the correct quantity for a knapsack fill into a 250ml jug or beaker, and mark the height of the volume on the side of the container with a waterproof felt pen. Then for each knapsack fill, the product can be added to the jug / beaker up to this mark. As the formulation may be slow to dissolve in cold water, it may be advisable to pre-mix in a large (5 litre) jug prior to adding to the knapsack to ensure that the product is fully dispersed.

Forester continues to be available for use in PEFC certified or non-certified forests, and plants treated in the forest nursery with Gazelle, Alpha 6ED or Merit Forest may be used in all forests.

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>> Rabbits and Deer

Rabbits and deer are the bane of many a forester trying to establish woodlands in the absence of effective fencing. We do have a couple of products which can assist - ASBO (or Curb) to deter rabbits, and the newly introduced Austrian sheep fat remedy Trico to deter deer. Trico is unusual in this field as it is pleasingly rainfast.

4 APPLICATION

Two topics particularly found their way onto the agenda - knapsack use close to water, and the potential for drone spraying.

The rules changed last year over the off-label approval for knapsack sprayer use. Previously knapsack off-label approvals were rejected where the product had an aquatic buffer zone in excess of 5m, but this has now changed so that new applications in this situation may be considered. This is only likely to be useful in farm woodlands, though, where weed spectrums require the use of agricultural products.

The potential for drones for bracken spraying provoked a lot of interest, and the regulator is now looking at procedures to assess this use. In reality, it will probably not be before at least 2020 that this use will be authorised.

5 REGULATION

Always a thorny topic, where it can seem that politics and an overly bureaucratic process is designed to be frustrating to the user. Fortunately, so long as we have access to glyphosate and some effective insecticides, then forestry is not as badly affected by product withdrawal as other

specialised areas. Horticulture in particular is finding it increasingly difficult to control key pests and weeds, and in the longer term this could be equally damaging for the forest nursery sector.

Operator certification has generated a lot of angst, and yes, the current rules on which equipment may be used by which PA6 holder do fall in the category called 'bizarre' - but hopefully the chart published in the December issue of FTN will provide a degree of clarity.

For those advising on pesticide use in forestry, the only currently available certification route is via the organisation BASIS, but the forestry requirements fail to meet our needs, and it is doubtful if more than a handful of advisers manage to fulfil the annual registration requirements. The solution is probably one which Confor in liaison with the Forestry Commission will need to resolve.



**MEMBER SERVICES
Pesticides helpline**

Pesticides helpline is a free service operated by Confor's crop protection adviser Colin Palmer on behalf of Confor members. The helpline operates by email and telephone 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday on 01531 633500 (leave a message if necessary) or by email to: branchline@xln.co.uk

Reds find a friend

BBC News reported in March that there is now hard evidence that the pine marten can indeed be a valuable ally for the beleaguered native red squirrel. Scientists at the University of Aberdeen have studied the relationship between pine martens, grey squirrels and red squirrels. The pine marten is a predator of the reds, but in areas where it thrives, the number of grey squirrels reduces. "Where pine marten activity is high, grey squirrel populations are actually heavily suppressed. And that gives the competitive advantage to red squirrels," says Dr Emma Sheehy.

This evidence - that their comeback has given a boost to red squirrel survival - could indicate that they are able to catch and eat the non-native greys more easily.



Pine martens are gradually becoming re-established in parts of Scotland, after their near extinction in the UK. The BBC also reported that the first ever video footage of a pine marten in Northumberland has been captured by the Brinks's Pine Marten project, led by the Vincent Wildlife Trust.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-43308588



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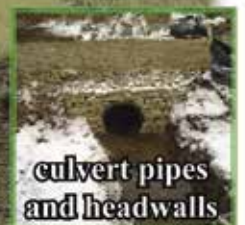
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Pickup with a touch of class

Liam Campbell

crosses the Atlantic to put the new Mercedes-Benz X-Class to the test.



It's finally here! The world's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer has, at long last, launched a pickup truck. Developed in conjunction with its partners, the Mercedes-Benz says the X-Class raises the bar in terms of style and comfort and invited us along to the global launch in Chile, to test it for ourselves.

X-Appeal

Mercedes-Benz has made no secret in that it is aiming the X-Class at the premium, one-man bands, and it has therefore been sculpted and finished accordingly. While most pickups strive for the 'macho' and 'rugged' look, Mercedes has opted for beauty.

With its distinctive twin louvre grille, sleek design and the three-pointed star, the vehicle brings a touch of class to the pickup segment. The 18-inch alloy wheels, chrome detailing in the bumper and grille and LED lights add to its luxury presence, but would it be the same story on the inside?

With the standard set high on the walk up to the vehicle, I was surprised to find that the designers

had managed to replicate, and possibly exceed, the high-quality feel inside. The dashboard has concave trim design that runs the width, creating a spacious and 'purist' feel, while the dash top is made from leather, although we note a distinct lack of useful storage spaces and pockets.

There are many features that have been plucked out of the passenger car line, like the round ventilation outlets, the round dials in the instrument cluster and the multifunction touchpad for the infotainment system.

The touchpad itself takes some getting used to but, once cracked, the COMAND Online multimedia system is easy to navigate and responsive. Its 8.4-inch touchscreen display is the largest in the segment, and it comes with satellite navigation and 360-degree camera, which was a great help on the tight Santiago streets.

In and around Santiago

The 2.3-litre power plant is the same unit in the Nissan Navara and there are two outputs currently offered, the X220D (161hp/403Nm) and X250D (188hp/450Nm). Our X250D model achieves 0-62mph in 11.8 seconds - which isn't exactly hair raising - although a vigorous 3.0-litre V6, producing 258bhp/550Nm and reaching



>>

>> 62mph in around 8 seconds, will be available later in the year.

The X-Class is outpaced by less powerful pickups due to its weight at over 2.2 tonnes, making it the heaviest pickup. A lot of the weight gain is down to the increased lead soundproofing, which has helped give the X-Class the most refined ride in the pickup segment.

Handling is also second-to-none thanks to coil-springs at the rear and well-optimised steering, which is accurate and provides ample feedback. Unlike most pickups, the X-Class isn't plagued by exaggerated bodyroll in the bends, either.

Handy in the Andes

After the run around the city, we headed east out of Santiago and into the Andes. At around 2000 metres we leave the tarmac roads behind us, and I engage four-wheel drive using the electronic switch. The smaller engine (X220 and X250) models use part-time, or selectable, 4WD, but the 3-litre V6 X350 will be permanent 4WD.

The independent rear suspension takes to the inconsistencies and bumps of the dirt track much better than the traditional solid live rear axle with leaf spring arrangement for a number of reasons. The most obvious advantage is that there isn't the loud 'bang' and 'shudder' when you hit bumps, although the second is a little more obscure.

The X-Class is a lot more stable and the braking is more effective on these types of roads due to the coil springs pushing the individual wheels down into the divots much faster than leaf springs. This increases the amount of contact between the wheel and the ground and gives the driver more confidence to put their foot down.

The independent suspension, however, becomes a bit of a hinderance on more rugged terrain as it is not able to articulate to anywhere near the degree of a solid rear axle - but then again, how many people will take their X-Class rock climbing?

The X-Class rides fairly low (201mm ground clearance), but the approach and departure angles are quite high (29 and 24 degrees) - which helps avoid nasty bumper scrapes. The 500mm wading depth came in handy as we crossed the Mapacho River.

Can it graft?

Sadly, there wasn't any opportunity to test its loading and towing capabilities in Chile but, according to the tech specs, payloads vary between a respectable 1066 and 1087kg and there's an industry-leading 3.5t towing capacity. However, we have our reservations about going anywhere near that with coil-spring suspension so you'll have to wait until we get one back to our farm for a real assessment.



Quality comes at a cost

The X-Class has been in UK dealerships since December and our version is priced at £34,100 plus VAT - making it by far the most expensive pickup on sale. The X-Class, however, is expected to hold its value well and it is backed by the most respected LCV dealer network with a three-year, unlimited mileage warranty.

One of the downsides of the X-Class's weight is its fuel economy. Combined figures on the smaller 2.3-litre engine vary between 35.8mpg and 37.2mpg, depending on transmission and output, which falls slightly short of pickups with a similar performance.

Summing up

After the arduous trek across a broad expanse of Chile's rugged landscape, the new kid on the block has earned our respect as a tough cookie. No squeaks, no rattles, no hissing. But, perhaps the biggest surprise is the effect that it's had on our mental state, or lack of.

While most modern pickups look the part nowadays, the high levels of road and engine noise, accentuated body roll and dentist waiting room seats is enough to drive anyone mad after such a long time in the vehicle - but the X-Class doesn't have any of that. This is the first pickup that ticks all the boxes in terms of looks, luxury and refinement.

Liam Campbell is editor of Professional Pickup and 4x4 Magazine.

“The new kid on the block has earned our respect as a tough cookie”

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SMALL WOODLAND OWNER
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Training for small woods owners

Many owners of small woodlands are unfamiliar with forestry or woodmanship – to use the late Oliver Rackham’s fulsome expression. Some will have only recently acquired their property, others may simply not have had much time or inclination to devote to management. Whatever the reason, in the last decade or so many new opportunities have emerged to provide skills and offer training needed to do woodland work, or at least much of it, safely and successfully.

A preliminary point for anyone contemplating getting upskilled is to join an organisation to network, exchange ideas, see how others are getting on before embarking too far on one’s own. Why are many of us reluctant to learn from others and rely almost wholly on the the classroom of ‘experience’? I leave the question for readers to reflect on.

One must begin with the Small Woodlands Association. The SWA, perhaps unfamiliar to some in Confor, is the ‘must join’ organisation for aspiring and actual small woodland owners. Their magazine Smallwoods is always full of helpful advice, they run practical courses on almost every topic, and they hold field meetings. Some of their publications are free.

Similar to SWA but arising out of the sale of small parcels of woodland, typically around the two hectare mark is the Small Woodlands Owners Group (SWOG). As the name implies, almost all members are owners of small woodland and SWOG is excellent for networking and exchanging ideas, with regular newsletters, training days, woodlands TV, and a rich website full of information for the beginner and small woodland enthusiast.

A rather different genre of opportunities to upskill are the one-day courses increasingly being provided by the Royal Forestry Society in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Today, as I write, an email came in from them announcing eight training courses for 2018 one of which is on my own patch where we look at first essentials when starting out as a new owner or manager of a small woodland. The fact that

a body like the RFS with its long history is now running such days indicates the pent-up demand there must be.

Of course when it comes to matters of chainsaw usage – and forest machinery in general – training by accredited bodies such as many colleges is a prerequisite for successful and safe operation. Similarly if application of pesticide or wildlife control is envisaged proper training is essential. The excellent research updates provided by Forest Research (FR) remain a valued resource though perhaps less immediately relevant to the everyday needs of the small woodland owner. That said, FR’s website is a ‘regular must visit’ for all woodland owners and managers as a way of keeping abreast of the latest news.

Many of the above have in mind growing good timber as a component of management, but if conservation is a priority then The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), local natural history groups, and friends groups offer practical experience on their sites. Also there are subject specific groups such a coppice associations, hedge laying groups and the like.

Today we have a richer variety of opportunities then perhaps ever before; let’s make us of them.

New owners assembling for a training day





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Forestry at war

The poster was given to George Walker Ltd (long established homegrown sawmiller and timber merchant) by my mother, Dorothy Toon (93), whose husband worked for the company for 45 years. Like many sawmills in the war era the company was called upon to raise output to ensure sufficient supplies of timber to the coal mines – those 'Bevin Boys' had to keep digging! The poster is a great reminder of

the importance of the forestry and timber industry in our history, and what can be achieved through collective effort. I think we must now call upon our government to reciprocate by acknowledging the continuing importance of commercial forestry, and the need to expand the planted area to ensure increasing future supplies of roundwood timber to a loyal industry.

Rob Toon, MD of George Walker Ltd

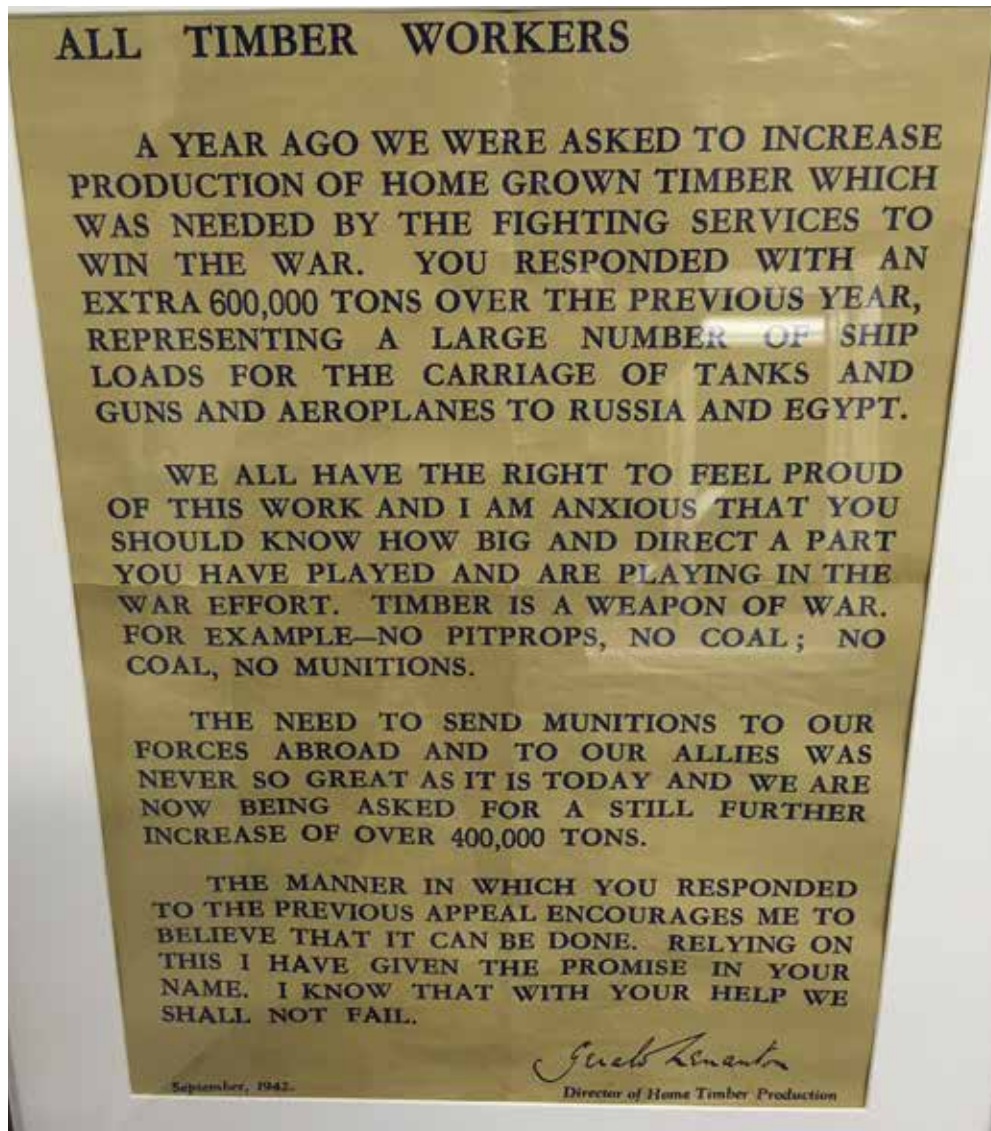
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Forestry in Pictures is a new regular feature in FTN. For every issue, we will select the most impacting photograph sent by a reader. If you have a photo you would like to see published here, please send your file to Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org before 11 May 2018. Please include your name, brief description of yourself and the picture and a credit.

Photos should relate to forestry and timber and be of high-quality (minimum resolution 300dpi).

Exceptional pictures might be considered for the front cover of a future FTN issue.

By submitting a picture to Forestry in Pictures you give Confor permission to use the file for non-commercial purposes in Forestry and Timber News or the Confor website. Photos will always be credited.



COMING UP IN JUNE – GET INVOLVED

In June, we will run our regular feature on Biomass/Woodfuel plus a new feature on Environment. If you have a related news item or story or would like to suggest an article, you might still be in time to include your editorial. Get in touch with the editor by 25 April the latest.

We encourage our members to inform us about what is going on in their businesses or to let us know about interesting topics that ought to be discussed in future issues of FTN. We offer member profiles and have a dedicated section for news from our members. And, of course, letters to the editor are always welcome.

Don't forget that your opinion counts. If you would like to comment on any of the articles published in this issue, please don't hesitate to send a letter to the editor.



A reminder that additional information and downloads on topics and articles throughout this issue is available online. FTN web resources is accessible from the Confor homepage or directly via www.confor.org.uk/FTNweb
Watch out for the mouse icon in this magazine!



Paul Vidgen

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